

*254. [*The questioner was absent.*]

Pathetic condition of landless agricultural labourers

*254. SHRI SHAMSHER SINGH DULLO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Minimum Wages Act is not being effectively implemented for agricultural labourers;

(b) whether landless agricultural labourers have also been provided with land during the last four years, if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether it is also a fact that landless agricultural labourers continued to languish in a state of weakness and vulnerability, if so, the steps taken by the Central Government to uplift the landless labourers and bring them to the mainstream, economically?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI RADHA MOHAN SINGH): (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) According to information received from the Ministry of Labor and Employment, under the provisions of the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, both Central and State Governments are appropriate Governments to fix, review and revise the minimum wages of the workers employed in the scheduled employment under their respective jurisdictions. Rates fixed in the Central sphere are applicable to establishments under the authority of Central Government, railway administration, mines, oil-fields, major port or any corporation established by a Central Government. Employment other than the scheduled employment for central Sphere come under the purview of State Government and accordingly State Government wages are applicable in such employments.

Under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, the enforcement is secured at two levels. While in the Central Sphere the enforcement is secured through the Inspecting officers of the Chief Labour Commissioner (Central) commonly designated as Central Industrial Relations Machinery (CIRM), the compliance in the State Sphere is ensured through the State Enforcement Machinery. The designated inspecting officers' conduct regular inspections and in the event of detection of any case of non-payment or underpayment of minimum wages, they direct the employers to make payment of the shortfall of wages. In case of non-compliance, penal provisions prescribed under Section 22 of the said Act are taken recourse to.

Under the provisions of the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, the wages fixed by the appropriate government are equally payable to both male and female workers and the Act does not discriminate on the basis of gender.

(b) The subject relating to Land and its management falls within the jurisdiction of States as per Entry 18 of List-II (State List) of the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution. The role of the Central Government in the field of land reforms is only of an advisory nature.

However, to address the issues in the area of land leasing, NITI Aayog has developed The Model Land Lease Act, 2016 for adoption by States and circulated to all the States. The Model Act offers an appropriate template for the states and UTs to draft their own piece of legislations, in consonance with the local requirements and adopt an enabling Act. Key elements of the Model Land Leasing Act are to Legalize land leasing to promote agricultural efficiency, equity and poverty reduction; Facilitate all tenants including share croppers to access insurance bank credit and bank credit against pledging of expected output; and Legalize land leasing in all areas to ensure complete security of land ownership right for land owners and security of tenure for tenants for the agreed lease period.

(c) Agriculture being a State subject, the State Governments undertake development of perspective plans and ensures effective implementation of the programmes/ schemes. Also Government of India supplements the efforts of the State Governments through various Schemes/Programmes. The Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers' Welfare has taken a number of measures for welfare of farmers including agricultural labourers.

The Government has set a target of doubling of farmers' income by the year 2022. The Government has constituted an Inter-Ministerial Committee under the Chairmanship of Chief Executive Officer, National Rainfed Area Authority, Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare to examine issues relating to doubling of farmers' income and recommend a strategy to achieve doubling of farmers' income in real terms by the year 2022.

The committee has identified seven sources of income growth *viz*, improvement in crop and livestock productivity; resource use efficiency or savings in the cost of production; increase in the cropping intensity; diversification towards high value crops; improvement in real prices received by farmers; and shift from farm to non-farm occupations. The committee is also looking into the investments in and for agriculture e.g. increasing public investments for agriculture-rural roads, rural electricity, irrigation; the need for policy support to enable investments by corporate sector in agriculture.

The Government has been reorienting the agriculture sector by focusing on an income-centeredness which goes beyond achieving merely the targeted production. The income approach focuses on achieving high productivity, reduced cost of cultivation and remunerative price on the produce, with a view to earn higher profits from farming.

The Government is aiming to reorient the agriculture sector by focusing on an income-centeredness in addition to pure production centeredness approach. The Department is, therefore, implementing various schemes to meet this objective, *viz.* Soil Health Card (SHC) scheme, Neem Coated Urea, Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY), Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY), National Agriculture Market scheme (e-NAM) and Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan (PM-AASHA), Interest subvention schemes and Kisan Credit Card Schemes. The Government is also implementing several centrally sponsored Schemes *viz.* National Food Security Mission (NFSM); Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH); National Mission on Oilseeds and Oilpalm (NMOOP); National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA); National Mission on Agricultural Extension and Technology (NMAET) and Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) for enhancing production and productivity and development of the sector as a whole. In addition, allied activities for welfare of farmers and other rural households are as follows:—

- “Har Medh Par Ped” to encourage tree plantation on farm land, along with crops/cropping system.
- “National Bamboo Mission” for value chain based holistic development of this section as a supplement to farm income.
- Bee keeping to increase the productivities of crops through pollination and increase the honey production as an additional source of income of farmers.
- “Rashtriya Gokul Mission” to enhance milk production and productivities of bovines and to make milk production more remunerative to the farmers.
- “National Livestock Mission” to increase productivity and genetic improvement of livestock.
- Foreseeing high potential in fisheries sector, a Blue Revolution with multi-dimensional activities mainly focusing on fisheries production, both inland and marine is being implemented.

Joint Liability Group is an informal group comprising 4 to 10 individuals coming together for the purpose of availing bank loan on individual basis or through group mechanism against mutual guarantee. The JLG mode of financing serves as collateral

substitute for loans to be provided to the target group *i.e.* small, marginal, tenant farmers, oral lessees, share croppers, etc. It builds mutual trust and confidence between the bank and the target group and minimizes the risks in the loan portfolio for the banks through group dynamics, cluster approach, peer education and credit discipline. The objective of the JLG mode of financing is to provide food security to vulnerable section by enhanced agriculture production, productivity and livelihood promotion.

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), 2005 is an Indian labour law and social security measure that aims to guarantee the 'right to work'. It aims to enhance livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. The Schedule 1 of the MGNREGA, envisages at least 60% of the works to be taken up in a district in terms of cost, for creation of productive assets directly linked to agriculture and allied activities through development of land, water and trees.

Suicide by farmers in Andhra Pradesh

*255. SHRI V. VIJAYASAI REDDY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that as per a recently released report by NABARD, farmers are in deep distress in Andhra Pradesh due to loans, not getting MSP, etc., which resulted in their committing suicides;

(b) if so, the findings of report thereof; and

(c) the Ministry's view on the pathetic condition of farmers in Andhra Pradesh and how it is going to extend a helping hand to them?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI RADHA MOHAN SINGH): (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has reported that there is no information to furnish in this regard.

(c) Agriculture is a State subject and State Governments are primarily responsible for development of the agriculture sector. However, Government of India, supplements the efforts of the States through appropriate policy measures and budgetary support.

The Government of India is targeting to double the income of the farmers by the year 2022. To achieve this, the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and