

Farmers' Welfare has taken a number of measures. The Government aims 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.

All these steps are implemented to reduce agrarian distress and increase the farmers' income including Andhra Pradesh.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Procurement of crops under MSP

2561. SHRI PRABHAKAR REDDY VEMIREDDY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has conducted any study or has any statistics about the quantity of his produce a farmer is selling on MSP and how much through middlemen and through distress sale;

(b) the manner in which Government is planning to avoid middlemen and implement schemes/programmes to buy produce from farmers directly;

(c) whether it is a fact that NITI Aayog has recommended to procure farm produce directly from farmers;

(d) if so, the action Government has taken on the above recommendation; and

(e) whether any consultations have been held with States in this regard, and if so, the outcome of the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT): (a) Agriculture Marketing is a State subject and concerned States/Union Territories regulate and

facilitate marketing of agriculture produce under their respective State regulations. No specific study has been conducted by Government providing statistics about the quantity of his produce a farmer is selling on MSP and how much through middlemen and through distress sale. However, National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) conducts 'Situation Assessment of Agricultural Households' from time to time to provide a comprehensive assessment of situation of agricultural households in rural parts of the country. The last such Survey was conducted by NSSO during January, 2013 to December, 2013 to collect information on consumer expenditure, income and productive assets, indebtedness, farming practices and preferences, resource availability, awareness of technological developments and access to modern technology in the field of agriculture, information on crop loss, crop insurance and awareness about Minimum Support Price (MSP).

(b) In order to provide better marketing facilities to the farmers, the Government has released a new model "The Agricultural Produce and Livestock Marketing (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2017" in April, 2017 for its adoption by States/ Union Territories (UTs). The provisions therein provides for alternative marketing channels to facilitate farmers in marketing their produce directly at competitive and remunerative prices.

Further, in order to optimise the use of scarce resources and mitigate the uncertainty in price and marketing, the Government has formulated and released a progressive and facilitative Model Act "The State/UT Agricultural Produce and Livestock Contract Farming and Services (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2018" in May, 2018 for its adoption by the States/Union Territories (UTs). The aforesaid Model Contract Farming Act covers the entire value and supply chain from pre-production to post harvest marketing including services contract for the agricultural produce and livestock.

In addition to above, the Government has implemented National Agriculture Market (e-NAM) scheme for transparent price discovery for remunerative prices for the farmers for their produce through competitive online bidding system. So far, 585 wholesale regulated markets of 16 States and 02 UTs have been integrated with e-NAM platform. Farmers can choose to sell their produce on e-NAM platform to buyers without going through commission agents.

As per Union Budget Announcement, 2018-19, Government has decided to develop and upgrade existing 22,000 rural haats into Gramin Agricultural Markets (GrAMs) to work as centers of aggregation and to provide farmers facility to make direct sale to consumers and bulk purchasers.

In order to ensure remunerative prices to farmers for their produce, the Government of India has launched an umbrella scheme 'Pradhan Mantri Annadata

Aay SanraksHan Abhiyan' (PM-AASHA). Under PM-AASHA, the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare (DAC&FW), Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare implements the Price Support Scheme (PSS) for procurement of pulses, oilseeds and copra. For oilseeds, DAC&FW also implements the Price Deficiency Payment Scheme (PDPS).

There exists a transparent and uniform policy for procurement by Government Agencies. Under this policy, wheat and paddy offered by farmers, within the stipulated period and conforming to the specifications (Fair Average Quality norms) prescribed in advance by Government of India, are purchased at Minimum Support Price (MSP) by the State Government agencies and Food Corporation of India (FCI) for Central Pool. Coarse grains are procured by State Governments as per the procurement plan prepared in consultation with FCI and approved by the Central Government.

(c) to (e) Finance Minister in Budget Speech for 2018-19 made announcement that NITI Aayog, in consultation with Central and State Governments, will put in place a fool-proof mechanism so that farmers will get adequate price for their produce. A meeting of States/Union Territories (UTs) and Central Ministries to discuss about the mechanism of implementation of MSP to agricultural commodities was held on 9.03.2018 under the chairmanship of Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog. As an outcome of consultation with stakeholders, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare rolled out new schemes *i.e.* Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay SanraksHan Abhiyan (PM-AASHA) for procurement of produce for crops notified for MSP from farmers.

Merger of CMFRI, Mumbai Research Centre with CIFE

2562. SHRI HUSAIN DALWAI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Mumbai Research Centre of Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) is likely to be merged with Central Institute of Fisheries Education (CIFE), Mumbai, if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether there is a plan to merge CMFRI, Mumbai Research Centre with any other institute;

(c) whether this merger may hamper its current function of providing research support to fishermen and coastal communities of the State, if so, the details thereof, and the reasons for the proposed merger;

(d) whether fishermen of Maharashtra have opposed the merger; and

(e) if so, how the Ministry would address their concerns?