

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

**RAJYA SABHA**  
**STARRED QUESTION NO. 206**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 06/08/2021

**SAFEGUARD MEASURES FOR PEASANTS/AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS**

**\*206. SHRI BIKASH RANJAN BHATTACHARYYA:**

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) the measures taken by Government to safeguard the agricultural labourers and peasant workers who lost their livelihood during COVID-19 pandemic: and
- (b) whether any schemes are implemented to protect the employment and livelihood of these peasant workers?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

(SHRI NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR)

- (a) & (b): A statement is laid on the Table of the house.

**Statement referred to in reply to Parts (a) & (b) of Rajya Sabha Starred Question NO. 206 regarding Safeguard measures for peasants/agricultural labourers due for reply on 06.08.2021.**

(a) & (b): During COVID-19 pandemic, the agriculture sector has functioned smoothly, Government of India has taken all necessary measures to ensure smooth operation of agriculture related activities. Farming and allied activities were exempted from the lockdown during COVID-19 period. As per the first Advance Estimate of National Income, agriculture and allied sectors registered a growth of 3.6% during 2020-21. Further, many measures have been taken by the Government such as:-

- (i) From 24.03.2020 to 02.02.2021, funds amounting to Rs. 62,301.22 crore have been transferred to the Bank Accounts of PM-KISAN beneficiaries.
- (ii) During the year 2020, under Pradhan Mantra GaribKalyan Anna Yojna (PMGKAY) -I & II, about 322 LMT of foodgrain for the period April-November 2020 and under Atma Nirbhar Bharat Scheme (ANBS), about 8 LMT foodgrains have been allocated free of cost for the period May & June, 2020. In addition to foodgrains, about 14.47 LMT pulses/whole chana have also been allocated under PMGKAY-I&II for the period April-November, 2020 and about 0.27 LMT whole chana has been allocated under ANBS for the period May - June, 2020. Allocation of free of cost foodgrains under was done to cater to migrants/stranded migrants without ration card.  
  
During the year 2021, under PMGKAY-III & IV, about 278 LMT foodgrains have been allocated free of cost for the period May-November, 2021.
- (iii) Kisan Rails were operated for the first time from July, 2020 to facilitate movement of perishable Agri-Horticulture commodities.
- (iv) The Central Sector Scheme of financing facility under Agri Infrastructure Fund was launched. The aim is creation of infrastructure at the farm gate.
- (v) The National Bee and Honey Mission (NBHM) - Rs.500 crore from 2020-2021 to 2022-2023 is allocated for the sector, under Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan.

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- (vi) Concessional credit boost granted to 2.5 crore farmers through Kisan Credit Card. So far 228.28 lakh Kisan Credit Cards have been issued as part of the KCC saturation drive since February 2020.

Further, during the first wave of COVID-19 pandemic, Government realised the difficulties faces by farmers and extended the date of renewal of the short term agri loan upto 31.08.2020 for Standard Short-Term agri loans upto Rs.3 lakh advanced for agriculture and allied activities by banks, which had become due between 1st March, 2020 and 31<sup>st</sup>August, 2020 with continued benefit of 2% Interest Subvention (IS) to Banks and 3% Prompt Repayment Incentive (PRI) to farmers.

And during the second wave of Covid-19 pandemic, Government of India has extended the benefit of ISS upto 30.06.2021 for Standard Short-Term agri loans upto Rs.3 lakh advanced for agriculture and allied activities by banks, which have become due between 1<sup>st</sup>March, 2021 and 30<sup>th</sup>June, 2021 with continued benefit of 2% Interest Subvention (IS) to Banks and 3% Prompt Repayment Incentive (PRI) to farmers.

- (vii) Steps were also taken to ensure adequate availability of fertilizer. There has been close monitoring of movement and availability of all the fertilizers through real time coordination with State Governments, fertilizer companies and various Ministries including Railways etc. Also, availability of fertilizers in States was ensured through on-line web based monitoring system called Integrated Fertilizer Monitoring System (IFMS). From April'20 to January'21 nearly 2214 additional Railway rakes were deployed (as compared to the corresponding period of last year) to timely transport the fertilizers to various corners of the country. Timely import of urea was also ensured so as to ensure sufficient availability across the country.
- (viii) Measures were also taken to ensure adequate availability of seeds during lockdown. More than 25 thousand quintals of breeder seed was allocated during Kharif-2020 to ensure smooth seed production operations. Movement of more than 1 crore packets of cotton seed and 20,000 quintals of seed was done. The validity of Seed Dealers license and import permission was extended till September, 2020.

- (ix) Government facilitated the farmer for timely harvest of the entire crop, resulting in record procurement of Rabi crop production. Due to various steps taken by Government, sowing Area coverage for Kharif Crops 2020 increased by 5.68% compared to the corresponding period during the last year.
- (x) Several steps were taken to decongest wholesale market and to boost the supply chain like integration of e-NAM with e-NWR, insurance of passes/e-passes to FPOs, launching of Uberisation Module of logistics aggregators for making transport available to the farmers for faster movement of farm produce, creation of separate cell in Department for monitoring supply and prices of essential goods and fruits and vegetables. Further, 415 new mandis were integrated into e-NAM platform during COVID-19 lockdown period taking the total number of 1000 e-NAM mandis in the country.
- (xi) Launching of Kisan Rath Mobile App and Farm Machinery Mobile App.
- (xii) Opening of shops of agriculture machinery, seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, spare parts and repairs was allowed during the lockdown period.
- (xiii) One-time ex-gratia payment of Rs. 500 per month for 3 months (April, May and June 2020) to Women Jan Dhan Account holders. Rs. 30956.97 crore released to 20.65 crore beneficiaries.
- (xiv) Ex-gratia of Rs. 1000 in two instalments (Rs. 500/- each) to the existing old age, widow and divyangjan beneficiaries. Rs. 2814.50 crore was released towards 282 lakh beneficiaries.
- (xv) During the initial phase of COVID-19 pandemic and Agri Transport Call Centre (ATCC) (Toll free No. 1800-180-4244) was operated to easily movement of agriculture inputs.
- (xvi) In rural areas, wages under MGNREGA was enhanced from Rs.182 to Rs.202 per day for the benefit of rural workers including returning migrant workers. During the financial year 2020-21, a total of 1.89 crore new job cards were issued and in the current FY 2021-22 (as on 03.08.2021), a total of 54.8 lakh job cards have been issued. During the financial year 2020-21, a total of 389 crore person-days have

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been generated and 142.79 crore person-days have been generated in the current FY 2021-22 (as on 03.08.2021). During the financial year 2020-21, a total of 7.55 crore households have been provided employment and in the current Financial Year 2021-22, 4.89 crore households have been provided employment. There is an enhance financial allocation from Rs. 61,500 crore at Budget Estimate to Rs. 1,11,500 crore at Revised Estimate in the current financial year 2020-21 under Mahatma Gandhi NREGS.

- (xvii) Further, in order to boost employment and livelihood opportunities for migrant workers, returning to villages, in the wake of COVID-19 outbreak, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India launched Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan on 20th June 2020. The Abhiyaan focussed on durable rural infrastructure and providing modern facilities like internet in the villages. Skill Mapping of the rural migrant labour was also done to enhance their employ ability on the basis of the skills, they possess, to enable them to work closer to their homes. The Abhiyan generated more than 50,78,68,671 man-days.
- (xviii) For the benefit of 50 lakh street vendors Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs, Government of India has launched a scheme 'PM Street Vendor's Atma Nirbhar Nidhi (PM SVA Nidhi)' to provide them collateral free working capital loan upto Rs.10,000/- to resume their lost livelihood due to Covid and lock-down.
- (xix) Financial package of Rupees Twenty Seven lakh crore (aprox) under "Atma Nirbhar Bharat" has been launched specifically to inter-alia create employment opportunities, for migrant workers, workers of unorganized sector, strengthening of MSME Sector and promoting rural economy.
- (xx) Ministry of Labour & Employment had taken the decision to extend the scheme of 'Atal Beemit Vyakti Kalyan Yojana (ABVKY)' for another one year i.e. from 1st July, 2020 to 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2021. It has also been decided to enhance the rate of unemployment relief under the scheme to 50% of wages from earlier rate of 25% along with relaxation of eligibility conditions for insured workers who had lost their employment due to COVID-19 pandemic and related lockdown.

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(xxi) In order to resolve the grievances of migrant workers during lockdown, Ministry of Labour and Employment setup 20 Control Rooms all over the country. During lockdown, more than 15000 complaints of the workers were resolved through these Control Room sand due to the intervention of Ministry more than two lakh workers were paid their due wages amounting to about Rs.295 crore.

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