

medical graduate category. And the names of the Universities are A.P. Singh University, University of Rajasthan, Utkal University, Ranchi University, Mahatma Gandhi University, Calicut University, Magadh University, University of Kashmir, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj University, Lucknow, and then some University of Kanpur. The names of States are Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh and Uttarakhand.

Declining growth rate of agriculture

*327. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the growth rate of agriculture is declining;
- (b) if so, the comparative details thereof during the last three years along with the reasons therefor; and
- (c) the steps being taken to improve the situation of agriculture in future?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) Agriculture growth rate is subject to fluctuations due to influence of a number of factors like monsoon, weather, water and quality of land, among others. As per data compiled by the Central Statistical Organization (CSO), the growth rate of agriculture and allied sectors during the last three years in the country as measured in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at constant 1999-2000 prices has been zero per cent in 2004-05, six per cent in 2005-06 and 2.7 per cent in 2006-07. However, the average growth rate of the sector during the last two years has been 4.35 per cent.

(c) The National Development Council (NDC) in its 53rd meeting held on 29th May, 2007 reaffirmed its commitment to achieve 4 per cent annual growth in the agricultural sector during the Eleventh Plan (2007-12) and resolved that agricultural development strategies must be reoriented to meet the needs of farmers and urged the Central and State Governments to evolve strategy to rejuvenate agriculture. Towards improving the growth in the agriculture sector, recently, the Government has done the following:

- Launched the National Food Security Mission with an outlay of Rs. 4,882 crore for the Eleventh Plan period. It aims to produce additional 10 million tonnes of rice, 8 million tonnes of wheat and 2 million tonnes of pulses by the end of the Eleventh Plan.
- Launched the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY), with an outlay of Rs. 25,000 crore which aims at achieving 4% annual growth in the agriculture sector during the Eleventh Plan period, through incentivising the States to invest more in the sector.
- Established National Rainfed Area Authority (NRAA) to assist and support in planning for rainfed areas.
- National Policy for Farmers, 2007 was brought out.
- Provided additional financial resources for irrigation.
- Imparted strategic focus on the national agriculture research effort.

SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Sir, my supplementary pertains to growth

rate in agriculture. Cultivable land in the country is shrinking year after year due to several reasons like urbanisation, land use for some other purposes, infrastructure, housing and, presently, the Special Economic Zones that are coming up. And, there are 36 districts in the country identified as critical districts wherein suicides are taking place in large numbers. There is a suggestion from eminent persons like Dr. Swaminathan to declare these districts as Special Agriculture Districts, and the Report of Dr. Swaminathan has been submitted to the Government. With regard to growth rate and other aspects related to increase in productivity, suicide cases, etc. are contained in the Report. I would like to know by what time the Government is going to implement the Report in toto.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Sir, recently, the Government of India took a decision to accept the recommendations of the Report, and a new policy for agriculture has been announced. In fact, last week only, I laid a copy of the Policy on the Table of the House. There are a number of recommendations which have been accepted, and it is a long-term policy. There are certain areas where one has to take decisions. In fact, that process also has been started.

SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: In fact, there was a request in the BAC to have a debate on agrarian crisis. But, unfortunately, due to paucity of time, we were unable to take up this subject for discussion. However, I am glad that the hon. Minister has given the answer with regard to Dr. Swaminathan's Report. My second supplementary is this. The reply states that the Government intends to produce additional 10 million tonnes of rice, 8 million tonnes of wheat and 2 million tonnes of pulses by the end of the Eleventh Plan. Sir, the farmers are not getting their remunerative prices; particularly, the paddy growing farmers are agitating all over the country. The MSP suggested for pulses is also very low. It is not remunerative. Agriculture has now become unviable in those areas where paddy and pulses are grown. There is a demand for, at least, Rs. 1000 per quintal for paddy. That demand is pending with the Government. What is the action plan or programme with the Government to encourage farmers, particularly farmers growing paddy and pulses, more specifically, by increasing the subsidy on fertilisers as increasing the MSP. The power tariff is also very high in certain areas of our country. They must be encouraged, otherwise, they would divert to some other crop. The situation is not favourable at the lowest level; the situation is alarming. All over the country there are agitations by farmers. Though they have come to the streets, the State Governments and the Central Government are not taking serious note of the happenings in the country. I would request the hon. Minister to address this problem at the earliest.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Sir, as already mentioned in the reply, in the Eleventh Plan under the National Food Security Mission, certain additional crops have been planned. As rightly mentioned here, we have ten million tonnes of rice, eight million tonnes of wheat and two million tonnes of pulses. A specific programme has been undertaken and a budgetary provision of about Rs. 5000 crores has also been made. A number of provisions have been made, as suggested, to the farmers associated with this campaign in those particular districts. The question of prices has been raised here. In fact, this particular subject has been raised in the House earlier. The recommendations of the CACP have been accepted. In addition, a bonus of Rs. 100 has also been agreed upon and announced. In fact, an additional Rs. 50 was announced last week only after a discussion in the House.

SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Sir, what is the programme of the Government in respect of those 36 districts where suicide rates are high? Are you going to declare those 36 districts as special agricultural zones, as suggested by Dr. Swaminathan?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Sir, for those 36 districts, the hon. Prime Minister has already announced a package. A package of Rs. 17,000 crores has already been announced. The real problem in these areas is non-availability of water and that is why, one major decision has been taken, to complete each and every project, be it major, medium or minor irrigation. Substantial amount of money has been provided to the State Governments to complete these projects in time. If the percentage of irrigation in these districts is improved, the situation would definitely change. That work has been started practically in all the States.

DR. M.S. SWAMINATHAN: Sir, the whole question of declining or static growth rate in agriculture is a matter of serious concern and several new initiatives that the hon. Minister has mentioned in his reply can make a contribution. But, there are two significant interventions which are needed if we want to stop the decline in the growth rate. First is the soil health care. Soil health is deteriorating in almost all parts of the country because lack of balanced fertilisation and no macro nutrients; most of the soil-testing laboratories are not functioning. I am aware that Agriculture is a State subject. These laboratories are under the control of State Governments. But nevertheless, it is a rather serious matter. Second is water harvesting and water management.

Sir, what I would like to ask the hon. Minister is this. There have been many suggestions by the National Commission, farmers and others regarding soil health care. But, are there steps being taken seriously to ensure that balanced fertilisation is promoted? There has been a demand from organic farmers that the kind of incentives which are given to chemical fertilisation must also be extended to organic farming, such as biofertilisers and so on. I think, that is very important if you want to stop the decline. The Eleventh Plan document talks about technology fatigue, extension fatigue. We cannot allow these fatigues. I want to compliment the hon. Minister for his recent programme. But I want to particularly ask him whether it is possible to ensure that we accelerate the progress on the issue of soil health cards to farmers.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Sir, that is one of the most important issues. It is true that we have gone into details about the overall performance of the State Governments in the area of soil testing. There are some districts where soil testing laboratories have been set up by the State Governments, but that is not sufficient. That is why another 230 or 240 soil testing laboratories will be set up in the remaining districts. A major programme will be undertaken through the State Governments to prepare a soil health card.

Secondly, we have set up, practically, in each and every district, except 4 or 5 or 7 or 8, in the entire country, Krishi Vigyan Kendras. Now, these KVKs will be equipped with soil testing labs also. The KVKs have also been authorised to take up the programme of soil testing. The cards will be prepared and that will be provided to farmers where it will guide them as to what type of balanced fertiliser use should be there. There is another decision which is in the process, that is, regarding providing the balanced fertiliser. You see, what happened is this. Our observation is, in some of the States like Punjab, Haryana and a number of other States, the farmers are using too much urea and some other fertiliser which is, in fact, affecting the soil. That is why there is a need for the balanced fertiliser. Now, whatever facilities and whatever subsidies which we are providing have to be changed. There is a Committee under my chairmanship, consisting of the Finance Minister, the Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission and the hon. Fertilisers Minister, and we are going to take a final view about what type of incentives should be provided for the balanced fertiliser. I think, we will be able to complete our work within one month's time.

प्रो० राम देव भंडारी: महोदय, मैं आभार व्यक्त करता हूँ कि सत्र के अंतिम दिन मुझे प्रश्न पूछने का आपने अवसर दिया है। मान्यवर, कृषि क्षेत्र में वृद्धि में सुधार हेतु सरकार ने कुछ उपाय बताए हैं, जिनमें क्षेत्र में अधिक निवेश, राष्ट्रीय वर्षा सिंचित क्षेत्र प्राधिकरण की स्थापना, राष्ट्रीय नीति, 2007 और सिंचाई हेतु अतिरिक्त वित्तीय साधन प्रदान किए जाएंगे। महोदय, कृषि की जो स्थिति है, वर्ष दर वर्ष सकल घरेलू उत्पादन में इसका योगदान कम होता चला जा रहा है। एक सर्वेक्षण के अनुसार अगर कोई दूसरा काम उनको मिल जाए तो 40 प्रतिशत किसान खेती छोड़ना चाहते हैं। महोदय, कृषि अब लाभकर नहीं रह गई है, ऐसी स्थिति में किसान आत्महत्याएं कर रहे हैं। यह बहुत गंभीर स्थिति है। अभी स्वामीनाथन जी soil conservation के बारे में बात कर रहे थे। मैं उत्तर बिहार से आता हूँ और उत्तर बिहार के लगभग बीस जिले ऐसे हैं, जो प्रति वर्ष बाढ़ से आक्रान्त होते हैं। वे बाढ़ से आक्रान्त ही नहीं होते हैं, बल्कि नेपाल से जो नदियाँ आती हैं, वे भारी मात्रा में बालू लाती हैं। जिस खेत को आप शाम को देखेंगे कि हरा-भरा है, दूसरे दिन सुबह आप अपने खेत को पहचानने से भी इंकार कर देंगे। यह स्थिति है यहां soil conservation का जहाँ तक सवाल उठता है, उत्तरी बिहार के जो बाढ़-पीड़ित क्षेत्र हैं, जहाँ रातों-रात खेत का नेचर बदल जाता है, उसके बारे में सरकार क्या सोचती है?

महोदय, सिंचाई के बारे में भी इन्होंने चर्चा की है, एक प्राधिकरण की स्थापना की चर्चा की गई है। अभी भी अपने देश में जो खेत हैं, उसमें जहाँ तक मेरी जानकारी है, उसमें सिर्फ चालीस प्रतिशत.... (व्यवधान)

श्री सभापति: आप सवाल पूछिए।

प्रो० राम देव भंडारी: सर, मैं पूछ रहा हूँ। सिर्फ चालीस प्रतिशत खेत ऐसे हैं, जहाँ सिंचाई की व्यवस्था है। महोदय, मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि दिन-ब-दिन, वर्ष-दर-वर्ष किसान की जो हालत खराब होती जा रही है, अभी भी साठ से सत्तर प्रतिशत लोग खेती में लगे हुए हैं, तो क्या सरकार के पास ऐसी योजना है, जिस किसान के बारे में स्वर्गीय लाल बहादुर शास्त्री ने का था "जय जवान, जय किसान", वही किसान आत्महत्या कर रहा है? क्या सरकार कोई ऐसी व्यवस्था, कोई ऐसा प्रोग्राम, कोई ऐसी नीति लागू करने जा रही है कि किसान फिर से खेती की ओर वापस जाएँ और फिर से "जय जवान, जय किसान" का नारा इस देश में लगे?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Sir, there are a number of questions asked in one supplementary. Firstly, this Government has given a lot of weightage for irrigation. The Budgetary provision for irrigation, for instance, in the year 2004-05 was near Rs. 5,000 crores. Last year, it was Rs. 7,000 crores and this year it is Rs. 11,000 crores. This money will be provided to the State Governments and the money will not be provided to the State Governments as a general fund. But, those projects which are nearing completion have to be expedited and they have to be completed; just to complete these projects this additional financial support is being provided by the Government of India.

Sir, another question was asked here about production. In fact, in the last three years, if you carefully see the total production situation, in the foodgrains, in the year 2004-05, the total production was 198.36 MT. Last year, it was 208 MT and this year, it is 216 MT. So, every year, there is an improvement. There is a similar situation in oilseeds. In this particular year, there is a record production of cotton, there is a record production of soybean, there is a record production of sugarcane, So, there is improvement.

The real problem is the pressure on land. 56 per cent of the population, practically, depends on agriculture and 80-82 per cent farmers are having the land below one hectare. It is our expectation that the farmer who has got just 2.5 acres of land has to look after a family of five persons. As the hon. Member has said, 60 per cent of the agriculture is rainfed and it is not an assured water. With unassured water, rainfed agriculture, and just 2.5 acres of land, it is not easy at all to shoulder the responsibility of looking after a family of five persons. That is why, there is too much pressure on the agricultural land. Unless and until a certain percentage of this pressure is shifted elsewhere and that unit becomes viable, it will be really difficult for any farming family. These are the real issues which we are facing today.

DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA: Sir, it is an irony, Mr. Chairman, Sir, that we have an Agriculture Minister who is no less a messiah of kisans, still, the average growth rate mentioned is misleading. It is not the average growth rate which will count for the farmer, Mr. Chairman, Sir. For him, the growth rate will count for each rabi and kharif and each crop. If an average depth is taken of a river, people have drowned because of taking into account only the average depth and not the depth at many points. So, let us not talk of average growth rate, let us talk of growth rate of that year when it was zero. It is surprising to know why they did not commit harakiri, suicide, in total, in that year when the growth rate was zero. If there is zero growth rate in any industry, can it survive? My question is: Sir, particularly, do kisans, the *annadata*, commit suicide out of pleasure? 16,000 suicides take place every year! Every day, 200 suicides are there! I have a poignant cutting which, I think, will touch the heart of the Agriculture Minister. My question is: Is it a fact that on 1st November, in that dreadful night, one Mansukhani Dakani, 45, his wife, father and mother, four people, quietly left their house in the night, went to the Somnath temple, entered the sea and ended their life because, in Saurashtra, they consider death better than debt? That scenario is everywhere. You see, an industrialist in spite of being insolvent would not commit suicide.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question please.

DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA: My question is, how the hon. Agriculture Minister will ensure the honour of a person who is under debt and who is committing suicide? It is a daily affair. Can we say from today there will be no suicide?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, please.

DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA: Can the Government stand and say that? Will I get that assurance, Sir?

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Sir, as I have already replied, this is a very serious issue. Day by day agriculture is becoming unviable, uneconomic. If we study the situation of the last number of years, there has not been sufficient investment in agriculture sector. That process has really been started and a number of schemes have been taken up. As I mentioned in the reply, whether it is the National Food Security Mission, whether it is Krishi Vikas Yojana in which Rs. 25000 crores have been provide, whether it is allied sector, whether it is dairy or fishery a number of other decisions have been taken. For instance, we have set up a National Fishery Development Board like the NDGB to give special attention. The Rain-fed Authority has also been set up. So a series of decisions have been taken in the last two or three years. We are trying to improve the overall situation. There are a number of other issues also. For instance, the question of prices is one of the important issues, which practically every member of the farming community is facing. Suppose the price of a particular item goes to a little higher side, immediately there is a discussion and demand even in this House and the other House also and also in the media also and because of that pressure, certain decisions have been taken by the Government... We are not allowing the farming community to take advantage of the overall situation. We have to take certain decisions, we have to, in fact, deregularise this particular sector, and we have to see the farmers get proper prices.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 328

श्री उदय प्रताप सिंह: सर समाजवादी पार्टी किसानों की पार्टी है, इसको तो कम से कम एक सवाल पूछ लेने दीजिए।(व्यवधान).... सर, हमें तो कम से कम एक सवाल पूछने का मौका दे दीजिए।(व्यवधान)....

श्री सभापति: तीन सवाल पूछे गये हैं। ... (व्यवधान)...

श्री उदय प्रताप सिंह: सर, मुझे एक सवाल पूछ लेने दीजिए। ... (व्यवधान)...

श्री सभापति: देखिए, अगर बीस सवाल हैं, तो ... (व्यवधान)...

श्री उदय प्रताप सिंह: सर, मुझे एक सवाल पूछना है। ... (व्यवधान)...

श्री तरलोचन सिंह: सर, मैं एक निवेदन करना चाहता हूँ। ... (व्यवधान) ... सर, पंजाब, हरियाणा ही दो स्टेट हैं जो इंडिया की फुड बास्केट हैं और इनका नाम कोई नहीं लेता है। ... (व्यवधान) ... पंजाब और हरियाणा ही हैं, जो इंडिया को फुड दे रहे हैं। ... (व्यवधान)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please allow the Question Hour to proceed.

श्री तरलोचन सिंह: सर, यह बड़ी सीरियस बात है, जिसको मैं हाउस के सामने रखना चाहता हूँ। ... (व्यवधान)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please allow the Question Hour to proceed.

श्री उदय प्रताप सिंह: सर, मुझे एक क्वेश्चन पूछ लेने दीजिए, चाहे मंत्री जी उसका जवाब दें या न दें ... (व्यवधान)...

श्री तरलोचन सिंह: सर, मैं आपसे रिक्वेस्ट करता हूँ कि पंजाब, हरियाणा ही दो ऐसी स्टेट हैं। ... (व्यवधान)...

श्री सभापति: श्राप इस पर पूरा डिसकशन कर लीजिए, मगर इस वक्त क्वेश्चन ऑवर को चलने दीजिए। ... (व्यवधान) ... क्वेश्चन 328.

Special programme to check the declining sex ratio

*328. KUMARI NIRMALADESHPANDE: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) is there a steep decline in sex ratio in India;
- (b) if so, what are the special programme taken up by his Ministry to change this trend;
- (c) what are the main reasons for this crises; and
- (d) what is the role assigned to NGOs to set things right?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMADOSS): (a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (d) The Sex Ratio (SR) (number of females per thousand males) has increased from 927 to 933 from 1991 to 2001. However, the Child Sex Ratio (CSR) has declined from 945 to 927 during the same period. State-wise Sex Ratio and Child Sex Ratio is given in the Statement (See below).

Some of the reasons for low levels of sex ratio are son preference prevalent in the society, neglect of the girl child resulting in higher mortality, female infanticide and female foeticide.

Sex determination techniques have been in use in India since 1975 primarily for the determination of genetic abnormalities. However, these techniques are widely misused to determine the sex of the foetus and subsequent abortions if the foetus is found to be female.

In order to check female foeticide, the Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994, was brought into operation from 1st January, 1996. The Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994, has since been amended to make it more comprehensive. The amended Act and Rules came into