

RAJYA SABHA

***SUPPLEMENT**

TO

SYNOPSIS OF DEBATE

(Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

Thursday, August 01, 2024/ Sravana 10, 1946 (Saka)

**DISCUSSION ON WORKING OF MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND
FARMERS' WELFARE - *Contd.***

***SHRIMATI MAMATA THAKUR:** No one fought for farmers' rights better than our party Trinamool Congress which was founded 26 years ago on January 1, 1998. We fought against the forcible acquisition of agricultural land in Singur in 2006. In 2020, when the farmers were protesting against the 3 farm bills, at that time our party MPs went to meet the farmers at Singhu border. In West Bengal, the income of farmers not only doubled, but tripled. In the last 4 years the real income of an agricultural labourer has increased by only 3 rupees per annum. Retail food inflation rose by more than 9% a year during this period. 3000 crores have been transferred to 42 lakh fraudulent beneficiaries under Pradhan Mantri Kishan Samman Nidhi scheme. Kindly stop this political vendetta, release Rs.15,000 crore to Bengal under MGNREGA and Awas Yojana. Indian Agricultural Research Institute needs to be modernized. West Bengal is the second largest potato producer of the country where more than 5 lakh hectares of land is under potato cultivation and annual output is 148 lakh metric tonnes. Bengal produces high quality varieties of rice such as Govindobhog, Tulaipanji, Kaluniya, Kataribhog, Badshabhog etc. I humbly request the Government to talk to the farmers. Engage with them, don't just talk big. The sad reality is that 30 farmers commit suicide every day in India.

SHRI H. D. DEVEGOWDA: In Karnataka, tomato is a perishable item. Mango and grapes are among the most important horticultural products that are being exported from Karnataka to various countries. The farmers are getting much benefit. Even the rice is going to be exported. People are moving from villages to cities. Many programmes have been initiated by this Government in the last ten years. Despite this, educated youth are coming to the cities. The reason for this is that the little land they have is dependent on monsoon. The five departments of agriculture, horticulture, sericulture, animal husbandry and fisheries should work in coordination to help the farmer. The youth coming to the city get contractual jobs. The biggest challenge in agriculture today is the availability of labour. There is a need for skilled youth in various forms to maintain agricultural productivity. Therefore, we should focus on training the youth in various skill-based agricultural mechanized operations. The second point I would like to mention is jackfruit. The biggest

***This Synopsis is not an authoritative record of the proceedings of the Rajya Sabha.**

* Spoke in Bengali.

advantage of this wonderful tree is that once planted, it can be used by many generations due to its hard nature. It has become a good source of earning money for the countries growing jackfruit. The second important point is loans. The government has informed that it will bring a National Cooperative Policy for systematic and all-round development of the cooperative sector. I welcome it. State governments are ruining the cooperative societies. My objection is to adding new members. People from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes are already their members as government nominees. They want to add three more members. In my district itself, they earn thousands of crores through milk cooperatives. In the entire country, only Gujarat and Karnataka have milk unions. Our farmers are happy. Why do you want to trouble them? You make relevant amendment in it. We are not satisfied with the purchase of coconut in Karnataka. I want to appeal to the Agriculture Minister for the purchase of coconut. Less than sixty percent purchase has been done. In the interest of farmers, proper purchase of coconut should be done.

SHRI SUBHASISH KHUNTIA: I am disappointed to see that only three percent of the total budget has been allocated to a sector that plays a vital role in the country's economy. Despite the emphasis on productivity and self-reliance in agriculture, there is nothing new in the budget. Operation Green announced for vegetables in the 2018-19 budget has not been implemented. Odisha is facing a persistent potato crisis. The government should talk to the Chief Minister of West Bengal to maintain the supply of potatoes to the state. Also, the 1999 cyclone caused extensive damage to coconut trees in Odisha's coastal districts of Puri and Jagatsinghpur. Thousands of trees were destroyed and the size and quality of coconuts have declined since then. Despite this, the Coconut Board has not taken steps to restore the quality of coconuts and the Union Budget has failed to address this long-standing problem of farmers. Odisha has an important place in the production of millets. There is a need to establish a 'Centre of Excellence' and research institute for millets in Odisha. There is a need to increase the minimum support price of paddy. We need support for agricultural inputs and production costs. Along with this, the budget for agricultural research needs to be increased. We need to adopt a long-term agricultural approach to bring prosperity in the agricultural sector and in the lives of farmers. The Swaminathan Committee's recommendation to increase the MSP to 50 percent in terms of production cost has not yet been implemented. The Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana is grappling with many lacunae. There is no discussion in the budget on the real problems faced by farmers in marketing their produce and getting fair prices for their products.

PROF. RAM GOPAL YADAV: I also had the privilege of being the Chairman of the Agriculture Committee from 2004 to 2008. The misfortune of the farmer is that he has to depend on nature. Bad weather affects the productivity of crops. Compared to last year, the potato production was less this year due to excessive heat. However, due to less production, its availability in the market was also less and to some extent, better prices were obtained. Although this time, there has been a lot of maize production, no one is buying it. The farmers do not have the facility to protect it from rain and store it. On the other hand, the cultivable land is only 55 percent. The remaining 45 percent land is either barren or does not have irrigation facility. I request the Government to make such land cultivable and improve the irrigation system. Also, the food processing sector should be encouraged, and proper arrangements should be made for safe storage of perishable fruits, vegetables and other crops. The use of chemical fertilizers in farming should be limited to a great extent and organic fertilizers should be promoted in their place. Apart from this, the decreasing level of groundwater is also a matter of concern. Now the traditional ponds of

the villages have become victims of encroachment. Rainwater is not being stored. At the Government level, a program should be made to revive ponds and recharge the water table. To improve the condition of farmers, the affordable and quality seeds should also be made available to them. Such seeds should be developed in the country which are capable of tolerating adverse conditions and do not require much water for crop production.

DR. FAUZIA KHAN: According to NCRB data, 37 percent of the total suicides committed by farmers in 2022 in this country have taken place in Maharashtra. Not getting the right price for the farmer's produce, not being able to repay the loan taken for the crop, not getting crop insurance when a natural calamity occurs, being dependent on rain, sometimes suffering from drought, sometimes from storm, getting troubled by the problem of electricity or getting troubled by the problem of wild animals - the government does not see this pain of the farmers. When I go to any village in Maharashtra, the farmers say that they are not getting their crop insurance. If the government ignores and turns a deaf ear to these complaints, then there will always be a possibility of an increase in the number of suicides of farmer brothers. 43 percent of the country's onion is produced in Maharashtra. Due to excess supply and low prices in the national market, the farmer is so helpless today that he is not even able to recover his production cost. Orange farmers of Nagpur and cotton and soybean farmers of Marathwada also have similar problems. The "National Mission on Natural Farming" aims to promote sustainable practices by reducing the use of chemicals and its provision has been reduced ranging from Rs. 459 crores to Rs. 465 crores. In the last few years, the purchase of nutritious and coarse grains, oilseeds, pulses and copra has decreased. The government has to wake up and make the agriculture sector its priority.

SHRI BIKASH RANJAN BHATTACHARYYA: Minimum Support Price must have to be ensured by a statutory protection for which the kisans of the country have been fighting. They had fought a huge battle. Even today, the MSP in accordance with the formula of Bharat Ratna Dr. Swaminathan has not been followed. The kisans are again trying to organize their movement to demand MSP. Farmers are not getting back the remuneration of their investment and labour and if it continues it will erase the agricultural economy. India is suffering from unemployment, which can be taken care of by agriculture as it is a labour-intensive field. Organic mechanism and organic fertilizers are essential to have a healthy production of food grains. The organic cultivation is a labour intensive programme and it employs huge number of people and takes care of unemployment. Then the minimum support price is needed to retain farmers in this field. There is danger that farmers will gradually leave agricultural economy and try to be a part of service economy. We talk of Atmanirbhar Bharat but even in the field of fertilizers, we depend on import. That is why, there is lower growth rate in the crop sector. To control the lower growth rate, we have to not only invest more money in agricultural field but also have to utilize it properly. Then there are food processing industries, which need to be encouraged. As far as international trade is concerned, again, we are depending on import, not on export. If we have a better production, we could have export-oriented food products and earn huge foreign exchange.

DR. JOHN BRITTAS: Madam, there has been so much of discussion about increasing the income of the farmers. In 2016, the Prime Minister declared that the farm income will be doubled in 2022. In 2018, the Inter-Ministerial Committee submitted a report to the Government of India on the ways to double the income. But nothing was done on that report. Now, through Economic Survey it is being said that we have to undertake comprehensive reforms to revive the agriculture sector. The Finance Minister is talking about natural farming. Kerala has been doing it for so many years. Last year they had

allocated Rs. 459 crores for natural farming but spent only Rs. 100 crores. I have only two demands. One is legalized the MSP, the second is widen the base of the MSP. Earlier Centre asked farmers to go for cash crops. Farmers of Kerala went for rubber farming. Now the prices of the cash crops are crashing in Kerala because of imports. They are not getting MSP because MSP is limited to certain crops. Our demand to increase the import duty of rubber has not been met. Then there is a massive decline in the allocation of the fertilizer subsidy to the tune of 25 per cent. Now, people are shifting away from agriculture because it is not remunerative. They are not getting the wages. Twelve per cent of the women working in the agriculture sector do not get any wage.

SHRI MADAN RATHORE: Madam, the Congress which talks about MSP today, rejected the Swaminathan Commission in 2007 saying that it could distort the market. It is our government which implemented the Swaminathan Commission's MSP policy recommendation in 2018. Talking about prices, Madam, you see that the price of millet was Rs 1,250 per quintal in 2013, but we increased it to Rs 2,625 per quintal in 2024-25, the price of barley was Rs 1,100 per quintal, but we increased it to Rs 1,850 per quintal. The price of paddy was Rs 1,345 per quintal, now it is Rs 2,320 per quintal. The price of wheat was Rs 1,400 per quintal in 2013-14, but now it is Rs 2,275 per quintal. From 2004 to 2014, the purchase of pulses was only 6.29 lakh metric tonnes. We bought 1.70 crore metric tons. You bought 45.90 crore metric tons of paddy, we bought 69.18 crore metric tons. Not only this, if I talk about wheat, you bought 21.40 crore metric tons of wheat, but we bought 33.39 crore metric tons, you bought 50.64 lakh metric tons of oilseeds till 2014, but we bought 87 lakh metric tons. If you talk about crop insurance, then we have worked to insure the crop of every farmer. Every stage from sowing the crop to its arrival in the market, it is insured. Not only this, we have also developed the infrastructure around the fields. We sanctioned Rs 35,262 crore for the various projects. Not only this, 11,165 godowns were built. We have provided such a system that farmers can sell their goods anywhere they get a market after getting registered in the Mandi. In 2013-14, the Ministry of Agriculture had a provision of only Rs 30,232 crore for cooperatives, animal husbandry, dairy, fisheries and agriculture, whereas now only the Ministry of Agriculture has a provision of Rs 1,25,035 crore. Apart from Kisan Samman Nidhi, we also started the Namu Drone Didi Yojana. We gave neem coated urea, which is useful only for farmers.

SHRI KUNWAR RATANJEET PRATAP NARAYAN SINGH: Deputy Chairman Sir, I thank you that today you gave a farmer from Purvanchal of Uttar Pradesh an opportunity to speak on agriculture. Even today I myself do the farming. After losing for the third time, the opposition parties are remembering the farmers, backward classes and MSP, because these farmers, backward classes, dalits, tribals have put them in the opposition for the third time. I just want to give a figure. In 2013 and 2014, the budget allocation for farming was Rs 21,934 crores and today it is more than Rs 1.5 lakh crores. Today sugarcane farmers are not only getting right price but also they get their payment within 15 days. Farmers are getting benefit of many agricultural schemes of the Government, but the opposition does not discuss them because they have nothing to do with the farmers, they only have to give speeches and criticize the Government. Earlier there were many sugar mills in my area Purvanchal, sugarcane was produced in abundance there. But now it is not so. I request the Government to come up with a scheme in this regard.

***MS. DOLA SEN:** We have to spare a thought for the poorest of the poor farmers. In the last 8 years, the wages of farm labourers have increased by Rs. 3.00 only per annum

* Spoke in Bengali.

whereas the food inflation is touching 9 percent now. The funds of MGNREGA due to Bengal is not being paid for since last 3 years. I would like to talk about Krishak Bandhu Scheme of West Bengal in which not only the assistance is provided twice a year to the farmers, but the loans of all farmers including sharecroppers have been waived off and farmers aged 60 or above get monthly pension, also in case of death of a farmer aged 18-60, a compensation of Rs. 2 lakhs is paid to the family. The central Government should also follow this scheme for the benefit of the farmers of the entire country. Supply of the fertilizers from Union Government has come down, so there is immense pressure on the potato growers of Bengal. Therefore, the state is not able to share potato produce with our neighbour, Odisha. Union Government should look into this matter. While taking back the farm laws, it was assured to enhance Minimum Support Price by 50 percent. Government should fulfil this assurance.

DR. M. THAMBIDURAI: Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu produces maximum rice, but the farmers here suffer for want of sufficient water for agricultural activities. They depend on water from the Cauvery river. Since the Karnataka Government refused to release water, the dispute went to the Tribunal, which gave an award. But the Karnataka Government continues to refuse to release water into Cauvery, as mandated by the Tribunal on the dates mentioned by the Tribunal. Also, there is a proposal by the Karnataka Government to construct Mekedatu dam over Cauvery river but drinking water can be obtained from Krishna Rajasagara Dam. It is not necessary to construct a new dam. If a new dam is constructed, it will affect Tamil Nadu farmers. We have been urging the Central Government to implement the Inter-linking of Rivers of Godavari-Krishna-Cauvery-Palar, which would solve the total water problem of Tamil Nadu I would request the hon. Minister to consider this. I also urge the Government to build a new dam on South Pennaru River which comes from Karnataka to Tamil Nadu, which can help to irrigate most of the Krishnagiri and Vellore districts. Therefore, this inter-linking of rivers is important. The Central Government should come forward to implement this plan by constructing a new dam. We are producing a lot of rice in Tamil Nadu, but procurement is very less. However, in Punjab, Haryana, etc., you are procuring and giving it to ration shops. What about our area? To save the farmers, we have to procure uniformly. In Tamil Nadu, they are procuring from just one region. Therefore, I request the hon'ble Minister to issue instructions to the effect that all the rice that they are producing must be procured and given to the other regions.

SHRIMATI MAYA NAROLIYA: First of all, I congratulate our Prime Minister and Hon'ble Finance Minister for presenting a developmental, welfare and inclusive Budget who have presented a public welfare Budget that live up to the motto of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' in this Amrit Kaal. Farmers remain the focal point of the nation's development - proof of this commitment is the Government's promise to increase the MSP for all major crops to give farmers 1.5 times return on input cost. The Budget has made provision for funding for agricultural research. It also emphasizes on institutional support through certification programs from scientific institutions for about 1 crore farmers in natural farming. Carrying forward the spirit of self-reliance, the "*Atmanirbhar Tilhan Abhiyan*" has been launched to strengthen the production, storage and marketing of oilseeds and achieve self-sufficiency in oilseed production. Staying true to its commitment to enhance the competitive spirit of the agriculture sector, the Budget outlines initiatives to promote vegetable supply chains and shrimp exports through production, support and credit incentives. Under the "Digital India" initiative, the Budget has announced the implementation of digital, public infrastructure for conducting digital crop surveys and integration of land. A National Cooperative Policy has also been announced to ensure

systematic and regular growth of the cooperative sector. Agricultural production has increased due to increased irrigation facilities. Our Government is continuously working towards doubling the income of farmers, reducing the cost of production, getting farmers fair prices, reducing agriculture-based risks and compensating losses. For the betterment of farmers, our Government has launched several farmer welfare schemes like *Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi*, *Pradhan Mantri Kisan Mandhan Yojana*, *Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana* etc. The Government of Madhya Pradesh is contributing equally to the Kisan Samman Nidhi. In my Parliamentary constituency Narmadapuram, Narsinghpur, Raisen, farmers produce wheat, paddy, moong and sugarcane in abundance. The Central Government and the Madhya Pradesh Government have also made an incredible contribution in getting them a fair price for their produce. I would like to request the hon'ble Agriculture Minister that you are promoting natural and organic farming, but it should be promoted more. The Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana has been extended for a period of 5 years. Our government will undertake a comprehensive review of the agricultural research system to focus on increasing productivity and developing climate-resilient varieties. In the next two years, one crore farmers across the country will be given assistance for natural farming.

SHRI PRADIP KUMAR VARMA: Agriculture cannot be done without water, agriculture in India is dependent on monsoon and climate. If Congress had been able to develop means of irrigation in the last 50-60 years, many of the problems of the farmers would have been solved long ago. The main problems of farmers in our country are - low production compared to the area of land, lack of nutrients in the soil, no system to test which nutrients are lacking in the soil, marketing of agricultural products, storage, transportation, lack of use of modern technology in agricultural work and we have inherited these problems, the solution of which has been tried to be done by the Bharatiya Janata Party and the NDA Government under the leadership of the hon'ble Prime Minister for the last 10 years. These problems have also been resolved in the budget presented for the year 2024-25. In the MSP of Kharif crop announced in June, MSP has been declared at a price 80 to 100 percent higher than the production cost of many crops. Among the 9 priorities that the Government has talked about in the budget, productivity and adaptability in agriculture have been given the first place. Provisions have been made in this budget for research on such new high yielding varieties. Many provisions have also been made in the budget so that the country can become self-reliant. The goal of becoming self-reliant in the production of mustard, groundnut, sesame, soybean, sunflower etc. has also been taken in this budget. A major problem of vegetable production is that due to improper storage, marketing and transportation, the farmer often has to bear losses. Our government has also done a lot of work in this direction in the last ten years. Today, through the e-NAM portal, the farmer has direct access to agricultural markets. He can send his goods directly to the place where there is demand and this has freed him from middlemen.

SHRI BEEDHA MASTHAN RAO YADAV: It shall be important to mention that over 60 per cent of India's workforce is still engaged in agriculture and, therefore, for India to become a developed nation, agriculture should be made a profitable profession. The YSR Congress Party's vision of agriculture is that it should be modernized and be made profitable for the farmers and fulfilling for the people engaged in it. The allocation for Pradhan Mantri-Kisan Samman Nidhi remains consistent at Rs.60,000 crores ensuring continued financial support to farmers. The amount that is being credited is still Rs.6,000. This amount needs to be revised to, at least, Rs.9,000 keeping in mind the inflation. The National Mission on Natural Farming receives 365.64 crore of rupees promoting sustainable and climate-resilient agriculture practices. The problem is that the farmers have

two issues - whether their crop will grow or not and whether they will be able to sell their crop or not. With allocations towards agriculture schemes, the Budget aims to develop agriculture and allied sectors comprehensively. This allocation will help in increasing the income of farmers by enhancing production and productivity. Consistent and adequate funding is crucial to ensure that the scheme can operate effectively. The allocation for the Coconut Development Board remains constant at only 35 crores of rupees, which may not be sufficient for the integrated development of coconut cultivation and industry.

SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA: The economic growth of the country is dependent upon three sectors, namely, agriculture sector, manufacturing sector and services sector. India is able to maintain economic growth at 7 percent, and, within the Indian economy, agriculture factor has given fantastic contribution. In this Budget, the Government has proposed 100 new varieties of crops, which can face any climate change. It will boost self-sufficiency in the crucial crops, including the dal production of our country. Giving sufficient money for the development and welfare of the farmers will definitely boost our economy because the farmer is the backbone of our economy. The farmers are doing their job. They feed us. So, it is the responsibility of the Government to look after the farmers. Due to recent flood in Assam, out of 35 districts, 34 have been badly damaged. More than 7,279 villages have been badly damaged and more than 20,814 hectares of crops have been totally damaged, including paddy. Four veterinary hospitals in Cachar and Hozhai Districts in Assam have been very badly affected. I request the Government to look into this and give adequate help to the flood affected districts. Assam is a tea-producing State. Now, due to certain reasons, Assam's tea industry is facing serious problems. I would like to request the Government to look after the tea industry and help it grow. It will boost our economy.

SHRI SUBHASH BARALA: It has been mentioned as if the BJP government has been in power for most of the time since independence and they have always been in the opposition. Perhaps they forgot that they ruled the country for most of the time since independence. It was your responsibility when you were in power. Haryana has been a land of struggle. There were continuous struggles of farmers in Haryana. Farmers of Haryana also came to Delhi and struggled. It is the misfortune of crores of farmers of the country that the party which has ruled this country for the longest time today points fingers at the BJP and Narendra Modi Ji. They blame that the farmers do not get remunerative prices for their crops. The report of Dr. Swaminathan Commission was not implemented. Where were you when Tohana, Mandhiyali and Faridabad incident happened in Haryana? The only fault of the farmers was that they were demanding a fair sale of their paddy crop. Today they are shedding crocodile tears in the name of the farmer. When Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee's government came into power, the farmers were taken care of. Vajpayee's government tried to provide remunerative prices to the farmers, reduce the cost of the agriculture inputs, provide loan at cheap interest through Kisan Credit Card, provide DAP and Urea at low rates. This government has fulfilled the dream of providing 50 percent profit over the cost of produce to the farmers. Since 2014 till now, our government has increased the prices of different crops by 1.5 times to 2.5 times. Congress Party government said that if 50 percent profit over the cost of the produce is given to the farmers, it will destabilise the market. These people were worried about the market and not the farmers. Narendra Modi's government has provided Rs. 6,000 Samman Nidhi to the farmers.

SHRIMATI S. PHANGNON KONYAK: Key priorities of the Ministry have been the focus on facing challenges to the agricultural sector, challenges of climate change, increasing income for farmers and sustainability. The Ministry of Agriculture

and Farmers' Welfare plays a crucial role in India's agriculture sector, impacting economic stability, food security, research and rural development. Its efforts are essential for fostering a productive, sustainable and equitable agriculture system. Given that 51 per cent of our country's cultivated area relies on rainfall, agriculture is highly vulnerable to climatic variations. Frequent extreme weather events have led to significant losses in crop yield and farmer income. The Ministry has identified and addressed these challenges. The initiative of the Ministry to create pest-resistant water efficient crops significantly benefits all the States including Nagaland. The Ministry has also been promoting organic farming by implementing two dedicated schemes: *Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana* and Mission Organic Value Chain for North Eastern Region since 2015. Nagaland has abundant organic resources. Organic certification has already been taken up by the Department. The plan to set up 10,000 need-based bio-resource input centers will ensure that the technological and scientific intervention will be available for the farmers within a short span of time. This also implies an increase of research associates being employed in the agriculture research sector. The Ministry also provides farmers with insurance to safeguard their yields through schemes like the *Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana* and the restructured weather-based crop insurance scheme. Cultivation requires several inputs, including seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, and reliable irrigation. To enhance irrigation coverage, the *Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana* was launched in 2015. The Ministry also provides financial assistance for micro irrigation systems. Agriculture is vital to the development of our country. Its significance is clearly evident from the emphasis given to productivity and resilience to agriculture in the Union Budget of 2024-25.

SHRI RAMJI: 65 percent of the people in the country are directly or indirectly dependent on agriculture. These include farmers and agricultural labourers. Agriculture should not be just a profit-making company for us. Agriculture is the only thing that feeds the people in this country. There are many reasons behind the suicides committed by people associated with agriculture, about which I would like to talk here. The first is that, though we provide loans to farmers, but if they are unable to repay it, then the bank puts pressure on them and they ultimately have to commit suicide. They do not even get insurance money etc. Along with this, I want to say that the price of seeds is sky high. To regulate this, monopoly of the private sector will have to be ended and the public sector will also have to be brought in. Also, all the GST related to agriculture products should be abolished. A regulatory body will have to be formed to stop the skyrocketing prices of pesticides and to end the dependence on pesticides, we will have to promote biological predators and crop rotation. Apart from this, the use of pesticides, herbicides and fungicides for ripening fruits will have to be completely banned, because, ultimately, it is going to harm us. To prevent the water level from going down in summer, cultivation of other crops in place of one crop will also have to be promoted. I also request the government to ensure that sugarcane money is paid to sugarcane farmers at least within a week.

SHRI S. SELVAGANABATHY: In a strong and growing economy like India, the role of agriculture sector is equally important along with the transformation of industries and digital infrastructure. This Budget focuses on the welfare of farmers, protection of natural resources and increasing productivity. This includes creation of 109 high-yielding and climate-resilient crop varieties, which will lead our farming community towards resilience and productivity, thereby increasing farmers' income. This Budget aims at value addition in agriculture, boosting farmers' income, food processing and creating export opportunities. The Budget aims to achieve self-sufficiency focused on production, storage

and marketing of pulses and oilseeds. DPI will provide farmers easy access to government schemes and services like MSP-based procurement, crop insurance and crop loan. I would also urge the Hon'ble Minister to start a 'Central Agricultural University' in Puducherry as the entire adequate infrastructure is available at the 'Puducherry Agricultural College' to develop a 'Central Agricultural University'.

SHRI BANSHILAL GURJAR: I thank the Hon'ble Prime Minister and the Hon'ble Agriculture Minister for providing better facilities and better arrangements to the farmers. I am happy that Hon'ble Narendra Modi tried to consider agriculture as an industry and worked on that basis. Keeping in mind the priority of water in agriculture, the government has increased the irrigated land in the country by 90 lakh hectares in micro irrigation under the '*Pradhan Mantri Sinchai Yojana*'. Along with this, Hon'ble Narendra Modi has opened the doors of banks for farmers by making continuous budget provisions with the aim of accelerating the flow of capital in agriculture, due to which farmers have now understood that the bank is also for them. Apart from this, he has also developed the National Agriculture Market Portal, so that farmers get the prices of the whole world. Arrangements have been made so that farmers get the prices of all the mandis of the country, and more than one thousand mandis have been linked to it. Besides, to free the farmers from exploitation, the e-NAM portal is guiding the farmers, telling them about the system of the world markets and is also ensuring that they get fair prices and fair trade.

DR. KALPANA SAINI: This budget has been prepared to strengthen the Government's mantra of '*Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas*'. The objective of this budget is to promote economic development. India is an agricultural country, and agriculture plays an important role in the Indian economy. Agriculture and related activities account for about 15-17 percent of GDP. The Government has announced the introduction of natural farming in agriculture by certifying 1 crore farmers across the country in the next two years. Need-based bio-input resource centers will be set up. The Government will facilitate the implementation of digital public infrastructure to cover farmers and their land in partnership with the states. Farmers will be empowered by issuing Kisan Credit Cards in five states. To achieve self-sufficiency in pulses and oilseeds, it has been mentioned in the budget to strengthen their production, storage and marketing. Rs 1.52 lakh crore has been allocated for agriculture in the budget. By bringing scientists from different fields on one platform, excellent research can be done for the agriculture sector, which will give impetus to the mechanization, marketing, digitalization and industrialization of agriculture and the youth will feel connected to agriculture. Many schemes are being implemented today with the aim of making agriculture advanced, capable and prosperous.

SHRIMATI SADHNA SINGH: The budget of the Government formed for the third time under the leadership of the Hon'ble Prime Minister reflects the resolution of '*Sarvajan Hitaya, Sarvajan Sukhaya*'. This budget is for the Amrit Kaal of the country and for the welfare of the poor, which is dedicated to the vision of the Prime Minister and the resolution of a developed India. In true sense, this budget paves the way for the development of farmers, youth, women, poor and deprived. To bring a change in the lives of sisters, a target has been set to create three crore Lakhpati Didis, which will bring revolutionary change in their lives and rural women will also become self-reliant. The Indian economy is moving in the right direction and towards a golden future. The Government is bringing 109 types of advanced and environment-friendly crop varieties to increase the income of farmers. I appreciate the Prime Minister and the Union Finance Minister for creating clusters and providing storage, supply, transportation and easy market

opportunities. The result was that the yield was 1,400 quintals in 2020-21 and 2800 quintals in 2021-22. This black rice was exported to many countries including Qatar, Australia and England. It was given the Excellence Award by the Hon'ble Prime Minister. When this rice was tested in the lab, it was found that this rice is rich in excellent nutrients.

SHRI K. R. SURESH REDDY: The growth of agriculture in Telangana and Madhya Pradesh is praiseworthy and a shining example for the entire country. The production of paddy has seen significant jump in Telangana in the last ten years. The record shows that in the last two-three years, the allocation made for the Agriculture Ministry has not been spent at all. I suggest that MNREGA should be linked to agriculture. For agriculture, the mechanical products that the farmer buys like a tractor or anything else, are still subject to GST. I request you to kindly consider giving a 10-year GST holiday for the farmers. I also suggest that if you want to increase agricultural output, then the thrust should be on irrigation and link-up. In addition, there needs to be more coordination among different arms of the Agriculture Ministry.

Discussion not concluded.

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Secretary-General.

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