

Sixteenth Loksabha

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Title: Need to allocate adequate food-grains to Kerala.

SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN (KASARGOD): Madam Speaker, I would like to place a very important issue before the House and the Government. The first demand of an All-Party Delegation headed by the Chief Minister of Kerala was to retain the food allocation that the State had been receiving earlier. Before the Food Security Act came into existence, the State of Kerala had been getting 16 lakh MT of food grains. The States of Kerala and Tamil Nadu are the two States where the PDS has been implemented thoroughly and in a better way from the very beginning. The States have been providing food grains to the APL and BPL cardholders and also to the targeted groups, *Anganwadi* workers and to the families of the disabled.

When the Food Security Act was passed by the Parliament, there was a reduction of allocation of 2 lakh MT of food grains to the State. As you are well aware, the State of Kerala is a deficit State with regard to food grains. There is a gap between production and demand. The Government of Kerala is taking a number of steps to increase the food production by introduction of cultivation of wastelands in the Panchayats. But still it is not sufficient. We could not give food allocation to the APL families and many other sections which were so far provided with food grains. So, we, at the time of passing the Act, made a number of amendments suggesting to the Government that there should be either some exemption made for the State of Kerala or some special provisions should be made for the State. I remember that we moved about 25 amendments at the time of passing of the Bill. Unfortunately, none was accepted. The State of Tamil Nadu also made their suggestions but since there is sufficient food production in the State of Tamil Nadu, the provision of the Act did not become an issue for that State. But we have been implementing the provisions of this Act by computerizing the records of ration shops, eliminating the middlemen, but it is

impossible to manage with the present allocation since majority of the people consume rice as their staple food.

Now, the State Government of Kerala procure food grains from the open market giving fair prices and high prices and distribute them to the ration cardholders. This also put a new burden on the shoulders of the State. On many occasions, we have to give free ration to the people of Ockhi and recent flood affected areas, especially to the fishermen at the time of monsoon. The State Government of Kerala has already submitted a representation in this regard and discussed the matter with the hon. Prime Minister and requested him to consider this issue.

The State of Kerala though deficit in food production, yet the State produces spices, coconut, rubber, tea, cardamom and other items which naturally contribute to earning of foreign exchange for the Central Government by way of exports. So, I would like to urge upon the Government to consider this issue otherwise it is not possible for the State continue giving food grains to the needy people.

माननीय अध्यक्ष: डॉ. कुलमणि सामल, श्री मुल्लापल्ली रामचन्द्रन, श्री एन.के. प्रेमचन्द्रन, श्री एम.बी.राजेश और एडवोकेट जोएस जॉर्ज को श्री पी. करुणाकरण द्वारा उठाए गए विषय के साथ संबद्ध करने की अनुमति प्रदान की जाती है।