

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:1

ANSWERED ON:13.03.2012

AGRICULTURAL PROFESSION

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Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether agriculture as a profession has become unremunerative and several farmers in the country have shown disinclination towards farming;
- (b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto;
- (c) whether the Government has taken note of the reported crop holiday by several farmers especially in Godavari districts of Andhra Pradesh since farming has become unremunerative;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the remedial steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to make agriculture a viable profession?

Answer

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE(SHRI SHARAD PAWAR)

(a) to (e): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (e) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 1 DUE FOR REPLY ON 13TH MARCH, 2012.

(a) & (b): No, Madam. Total number of cultivators and agricultural labourers has been increasing every decade since 1951. Similarly, total cropped area has also been increasing over the years. Government has been implementing various programmes / schemes to reinvigorate agriculture sector and has initiated measures including reorientation of agriculture policy with objective of, improving productivity, profitability and economic viability of farming and also creating employment opportunities in rural non-farm sector.

(c) to (e): Government of Andhra Pradesh informed that farmers in Central Delta Region of Amalapuram Division of East Godavari district decided not to go for Kharif crop during 2011 and declared crop holiday, preferring to go for early Rabi. Farmers of this region have been demanding increased subsidies on agriculture inputs, enhanced Minimum Support Price (MSP) for premier varieties, and streamlining of procurement and marketing mechanism. The State Government also informed that based on recommendations of a high level committee constituted to look into grievances of these farmers, following remedial actions have been initiated:

(i) For crop loans in Kharif 2010, interest waiver of 7% involving a sum of Rs.39.54 crore was sanctioned, released and adjusted to the accounts of farmers.

(ii) East Godavari district was included in Modified National Agricultural Insurance Scheme from 2011 onwards and an amount of Rs.46.00 crore released for crop insurance.

(iii) Supply of 32,328 quintals of Paddy Seed on 75% subsidy valued at Rs.436.42 lakhs.

(iv) Supply of fertilizers @ 50% subsidy involving a sum of Rs.977.59 lakhs during Kharif 2011 and Rabi 2011-12.

(v) Sanction of Rs. 501.71 lakhs to East Godavari district for supply of Farm implements on subsidy.

(vi) Besides, steps for procurement of Paddy through newly opened procurement centers, repair and maintenance of irrigation/ drainage channels, preparation of calendar of works under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and creation of awareness on disadvantages of crop holiday through model farmers have been initiated.

Government of India has also taken several comprehensive measures aimed at revitalizing agriculture sector, which, inter-alia, include: -

Increased investment in Agriculture sector during 11th Five Year Plan through launching of Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) and National Food Security Mission (NFSM) with outlay of Rs.25000 crore and Rs.4882.48 crore, respectively.

Promotion of Horticulture in mission mode through National Horticulture Mission (NHM) and Horticulture Mission for North East and Himalayan States (HMNEH) for improving farm income, livelihood security and employment generation.

Approval of National Policy for Farmers, 2007 aiming to improve economic viability of farming.

Strengthening of existing schemes such as National Horticulture Mission, Support to State Extension Programmes for Extension Reforms, National Agricultural Insurance Scheme and Micro Irrigation scheme during current Plan period.

Implementation of Agricultural Debt Waiver and Debt Relief Scheme, 2008 benefitting about 369 lakh farmers involving relief/waiver of Rs. 65318.33 crore.

Implementation of Rehabilitation Package of Rs. 16978.69 crore for 31 suicide prone districts in 4 States of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kerala.

Substantial increase of Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) of various crops in recent years to make farming more remunerative.

Improving credit flow to agriculture sector from Rs. 86,981 crores in 2003-04 to Rs. 4,68,291 crores in 2010-11.

Reducing the rate of interest on crop loan up to Rs. 3 lakh to 4% per annum for farmers who repay on time.

Announcement of new initiatives like Bringing Green Revolution to Eastern Region, Integrated Development of 60,000 pulses villages in rainfed areas, Promotion of Oil Palm, Initiative on Vegetable Clusters, Initiative for Nutritional Security through Intensive Millets Promotion, National Mission for Protein Supplements, and Accelerated Fodder Development Programme, etc. in Union Budgets 2010-11 and 2011-12.