

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2673
ANSWERED ON:28.08.2012
PROBLEMS OF AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS
Pakkirappa Shri S.

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether farmers are taking up farming of Eucalyptus and Poplar due to non-availability of agricultural labourers;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the reaction of the Government thereto; and
- (d) the steps taken by the Government to mitigate the problems of the agricultural labourers?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI HARISH RAWAT)

(a) & (b): Cultivation of Eucalyptus and poplar are taken up by farmers due to variety of reasons. Some of the reasons are better remuneration, encouragement given by private companies with buy back arrangements with assured returns, less risk in terms of crop failure etc.

(c)&(d): Government does not generally interfere with the freedom of farmers to choose the crops for cultivation. However to encourage farmers to produce enough food grains including pulses, oilseeds, fruits and vegetables incentives are provided in terms subsidised inputs, credit, crop insurance etc. In addition, every year Government announces Minimum Support Price (MSP) for 25 major crops.

Government has taken several initiatives for the welfare of agricultural laborers and other workers in the unorganized sector. Following are the important Acts dealing with Agricultural Labour welfare:

- 1.The Minimum Wages Act, 1948
- 2.The Beedi Workers Welfare Cess Act, 1976
- 3.The Beedi Workers Welfare Fund Act, 1976
- 4.The Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979.
5. The Plantation Labour Act, 1951
6. The Unorganized Workers' Social Security Act, 2008
7. The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986.

National Social Security Fund for Unorganised Sector Workers with initial allocation of Rs. 1000 crores has been set up to meet the cost of various welfare programmes for unorganised workers including agricultural workers. Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) for BPL families in unorganised Sector was formally launched on 1st October, 2007 and became operational w.e.f. 01.04.2008. The scheme provides smart card based cashless health insurance to the below poverty line workers and their families.