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**COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
(2014-2015)**

SIXTEENTH LOK SABHA

**MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE
(DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AND CO-OPERATION**

**DEMANDS FOR GRANTS
(2014-15)**

*[Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations
contained in the Third Report (Sixteenth Lok Sabha) of the Committee
on Agriculture (2014-2015)]*

THIRTEENTH REPORT



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

August, 2015/Shravana, 1937 (Saka)

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(2014-2015)

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(DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND
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*[Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations
contained in the Third Report (Sixteenth Lok Sabha) of the Committee
on Agriculture (2014-2015)]*

*Presented to Lok Sabha on 11.08.2015
Laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha on 11.08.2015*



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

August, 2015/Shravana, 1937(Saka)

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE.....	(iii)
INTRODUCTION.....	(v)
CHAPTER I Report.....	1
CHAPTER II Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government.....	15
CHAPTER III Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies.....	43
CHAPTER IV Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee.....	44
CHAPTER V Observations/Recommendations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited.....	53

ANNEXURE

Minutes of the Thirty-First sitting of the Committee held on 06th August, 2015.....	58
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APPENDIX

Analysis of Action Taken by the Government on the Recommendations contained in the Third Report (Sixteenth Lok Sabha) of the Committee on Agriculture (2014-2015).....	60
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COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
(2014-2015)

Shri Hukm Deo Narayan Yadav—*Chairperson*

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Sanganna Amarappa
3. Prof. Ravindra Vishwanath Gaikwad
4. Shri Nalin Kumar Kateel
5. Md. Badaruddoza Khan
6. Shri C. Mahendran
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17. Shri Virendra Singh
- *18. Vacant
19. Shri Jai Prakash Narayan Yadav
20. Shri Dharmendra Yadav
21. Shri B.S. Yeddyurappa

**Vice* Shri Kadiyam Srihari who ceased to be the Member of the Committee on his resignation from Lok Sabha w.e.f. 11 June 2015 vide notification No. 21/1/2015/T(B) dated 15.06.2015.

Rajya Sabha

22. Shri A.W. Rabi Bernard
23. Shrimati Renuka Chowdhury
24. Sardar Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa
25. Shri Janardan Dwivedi
26. Shri Vinay Katiyar
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30. Shri Shankarbhai N. Vegad
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SECRETARIAT

- | | | |
|------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| 1. Shri Abhijit Kumar | — | <i>Joint Secretary</i> |
| 2. Shri N.K. Pandey | — | <i>Director</i> |
| 3. Shri C. Vanlalruata | — | <i>Deputy Secretary</i> |

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson, Committee on Agriculture (2014-15), having been authorized by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present this Thirteenth Report on action taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Third Report (Sixteenth Lok Sabha) of the Committee on Agriculture (2014-15) on 'Demands For Grants (2014-15)' pertaining to the Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture and Co-operation).

2. The Third Report (Sixteenth Lok Sabha) of the Committee on Agriculture (2014-15) on 'Demands For Grants (2014-15)' of the Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture and Co-operation) was presented to Lok Sabha and laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha on 18 December, 2014. The Action Taken Notes on the Report were received on 23 April, 2015.

3. The Report was considered and adopted by the Committee at their sitting held on 06th August, 2015.

4. An analysis of the action taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Third Report (Sixteenth Lok Sabha) of the Committee is given in **Appendix**.

NEW DELHI;
6 August, 2015

15 Shravana, 1937 (Saka)

HUKM DEO NARAYAN YADAV,
Chairperson,
Committee on Agriculture.

CHAPTER I

REPORT

This Report of the Committee on Agriculture deals with the action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Third Report of the Committee on Agriculture (2014-15) on 'Demands for Grants (2014-15)' of the Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture and Cooperation) which was presented to Lok Sabha and laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha on 18 December, 2014.

1.2 The Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture and Cooperation) have furnished Action Taken Replies in respect of all the 29 Observations/Recommendations contained in the Report. These have been categorized as under:—

- (i) Observations/Recommendations that have been accepted by the Government:

Recommendation Para Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29

(Chapter II - Total 17)

- (ii) Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's reply:

-NIL-

(Chapter III - 0)

- (iii) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which action taken replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee:

Recommendation Para Nos. 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 16, 22 and 24

(Chapter IV - Total 08)

- (iv) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited:

Recommendation Para Nos. 13, 14, 15 and 23

(Chapter V - Total 04)

1.3 The Committee trust that utmost importance would be given to implementation of the Observations/Recommendations accepted by the Government. In cases, where it is not possible for the Department to implement the Recommendations in letter and spirit for any reason, the matter should be reported to the Committee with reasons for non-implementation. The Committee desire that further Action Taken Note on the Observations/Recommendations contained in Chapter-I and Final Action Taken Replies to the Recommendations contained in Chapter-V of this Report be furnished to them within at an early date.

1.4 The Committee will now deal with the action taken by the Government on some of the Recommendations in the succeeding paragraphs.

MISMATCH BETWEEN PROPOSED AND ACTUAL ALLOCATION

Recommendation (Para No. 6)

1.5 The Committee are concerned to note the quantum variation in the funds sought by the Department and the actual allocation done by the Planning Commission/Ministry of Finance which seems to make a mockery of the extant planning process. The Department candidly admitted that the actual budgetary outlays for each year are decided by the Planning Commission in consultation with Ministry of Finance which decide the Gross Budgetary Support (GBS) for any particular year. The limits laid down by GBS results in the actual outlays for any Annual Plan falling short of the overall Plan Outlays as decided at the time of finalization of Five Year Plans, reflects the planning process in a poor light. The Committee view this exercise as a futile one, due to the mismatch between proposed/approved outlay and the actual allocation. Further, they opine that reduction in approved allocation sends wrong signals to the farming community. Having witnessed this process during the course of the Eleventh Five Year Plan wherein

Department of Agriculture and Cooperation's actual allocation did not match the approved outlay for the entire Plan, the Committee desire that allocation should be done as per planning and not planning as per allocation as is currently in vogue. They, therefore, impress upon all agencies involved in the planning process to arrive at a model wherein the figures of approved outlay and actual allocation are brought on an even keel to make the planning process rational, realistic and meaningful.

1.6 The Department in their Action Taken Note have stated that they are in full agreement with the suggestion of the Committee.

1.7 The Committee are not satisfied with the reply of the Government, as the issue of mismatch between proposed demand and actual allocation has not been addressed to. The mere agreement of the Department with the suggestion of the Committee will not bear any fruit in this regard as other agencies are involved in the planning process apart from Department of Agriculture and Cooperation. The Committee would also like to know as to what extent planning has suffered due to lesser allocation, whether any reasons have been assigned for reduction in the allocation and has the Government chalked out some alternative methods to ensure that planning process does not suffer from lesser allocation of funds. They, therefore, reiterate their earlier recommendation that all agencies involved in the planning process arrive at a model which helps in bringing parity between the proposed/approved outlay and actual allocation and thereby helps in making the planning process rational, realistic and meaningful.

SLOW PACED UTILIZATION OF FUNDS

Recommendation (Para No. 7)

1.8 Notwithstanding, the confidence exhibited by the Department that they would be able to absorb 53% of the balance approved outlay in the remaining two fiscals as these were finalized on the basis of realistic assessment of fund requirements, the Committee cannot but view this with cynicism. This is based on the past performance of the Department. They

fail to understand as to how a Department that has been unable to fully utilize the RE funds (which itself is only 88%) during the years 2012-13 and 2013-14 be confident of absorbing 53% of the balance approved outlay in the remaining two fiscals. However, being optimists, they exhort upon the Department to impress upon all the implementing agencies to increase the pace of utilization of funds and submit Utilization Certificates (UCs) of earlier allocations promptly, so as to ensure an even pace of utilization of funds across all quarters in the remaining period of the Twelfth Plan and form the basis of upward revision of funds in future.

1.9 In their Action Taken Note the Department have stated that it may be pointed out that this Department had utilized 88% of the Budget Estimates (BE) during the year 2012-13 and almost 99.24% of the Revised Estimates (RE) during that year. Therefore, the performance of the Department during the year 2012-13 had been very good. Similarly, the Department continued to perform well during the year 2013-14 in respect of RE. It is therefore felt that this Department would be able to absorb the balance approved outlay in the remaining two fiscals of the 12th Five Year Plan. Further, the agencies implementing the schemes of DAC have been requested to expedite utilization of funds in the remaining part of the current year so as to ensure full utilization of available funds and thereafter spread the pace of expenditure in all the four quarters on even basis in order to avoid underutilization/undue rush in the last quarter. This would form the basis of upward revision of future funds.

1.10 The optimism of the Department that they would be able to absorb the balanced approved outlay in the remaining two fiscals of the 12th Five Year Plan is not at all shared by the Committee. This is based on the actual performance of the Department during the first three fiscals of the Twelfth Five Year Plan. The Committee, therefore, request Department of Agriculture and Cooperation to forward uptodate figures of actual utilization of funds during the fiscals gone by of the Twelfth Plan as well as the balance approved outlay. They await the Government's response in this regard. They also reiterate that DAC exhort upon all implementing agencies to increase the pace of

utilization of funds and submit timely, the utilization certificate of past releases.

INVESTMENT IN AGRICULTURE SECTOR

Recommendation (Para No. 9)

1.11 In spite of the increase in investment in Agriculture Sector being in the range of 8% to 14.2% per annum during 2004-05 to 2007-08 and public sector investment being in the range of 17.6% to 22.5%, the Committee are of the firm opinion that this amount is meagre considering the fact that agriculture is the principal source of livelihood for 54.6% of the populace. They further note that overall gross-capital formation in agriculture as a percentage of overall Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is 21.2% in 2012-13 and the share of private sector in this is 85%. Concerned to note that majority of the population *i.e.* 54.6% is living on 20% of the GDP, they exhort upon the Government to go for a quantum enhancement of public investment in agriculture sector at the earliest. This step, in their considered opinion would go a long way in making agriculture a sustainable and viable vocation for our agriculturists.

1.12 The Department in their Action Taken Notes stated that the Government has enhanced the Plan outlay of the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation (DAC) to Rs.1,34,746 crore for 12th Five Year Plan as against Rs. 66,577 crore during 11th Five Year Plan.

1.13 Notwithstanding the reply of the Department that the Government has enhanced the Plan Outlay of DAC to Rs.1,34,746 crore for the 12th Five Year Plan as against Rs. 66,577 crore for the 11th Five Year Plan, the Committee are of the opinion that public investment in agriculture is way below the required level. Despite the increase in the plan outlay of 12th plan as compared to 11th plan, it does seem to be less than sufficient as the yearly outlay for the sector comes to about 27,000 crore per annum. Keeping in view the role of agriculture for sustenance and livelihood of 54.6% populace of the country, even the enhanced allocation is woefully insufficient. Guided by their zeal for making agriculture a sustainable and viable option

as it is the bedrock of our economy, they reiterate that the Government go for a quantum enhancement of public investment in agriculture sector at the earliest.

OUTSTANDING UTILIZATION CERTIFICATES

Recommendation (Para No. 11)

1.14 The issue of liquidation of Outstanding Utilization Certificates has been raised time and again by the Committee in their earlier Reports during the Fifteenth Lok Sabha. The Committee have been apprised that inspite of the efforts of Department of Agriculture and Cooperation (DAC), as on 01 April, 2014, 303 Utilization Certificates are still pending, amounting to Rs. 634.01 crore. While noting the efforts put in by Department of Agriculture and Cooperation in regard to liquidation of Outstanding Utilization Certificates, they feel that the time has finally come to look at this vexed issue, afresh, so as to initiate corrective measures that would comprehensively dealt with the issue at hand. They, therefore, desire Department of Agriculture and Cooperation to pursue the matter proactively with all implementing agencies so as to be able to seek a lasting solution to this perennial problem. They should clearly indicate to the implementing agencies about availability of funds based on the utilization certificates in future to make the defaulting States/UTs fall in line.

1.15 In their Action Taken Note the Department furnished the details of Outstanding Utilization Certificates as on date:—

Details of Grant-1	No.	Amount
UCs outstanding in DAC for the Grants released upto 31.03.2012	1231	Rs. 4954.94 crore
UC outstanding in DAC for the Grants released in Financial year 2012-13	1228	Rs. 5790.72 crore
Total UCs Outstanding in DAC as on 06.01.2015 for the grants released upto 31.03.2013	2459	Rs. 10745.66 crore

Details of Grant-3	No.	Amount
UCs outstanding in DAC for the Grants released upto 31.03.2012	303	Rs. 634.01 crore
UC outstanding in AHD&F for the Grants released in Financial year 2012-13	327	Rs.1000.53 crore
Total UCs Outstanding in AHD&F as on 06.01.2015 for the grants released upto 31.03.2013	630	Rs.1634.64 crore

1.16 The issue of submission of outstanding utilization certificate has been a cause of continuous and serious concern to the Committee. The Committee find that a large number of utilization certificates are yet to be received from the implementing agencies. The Committee are also at pains to see that as many as 2459 certificates for Rs. 10745.66 crores up to 31st March, 2013 have not been received. The Committee also note that there is inconsistency with regard to figures of Utilization Certificates, as in Col. 1 of Details of Grants-3, as on 31.03.2012, 303 certificates amounting to Rs. 634 crore pertaining to DAC are yet to be received. Whereas, in Col. 1, for the same date, *i.e.* 31.03.2012 the number of pending certificates has been shown as 1231 for the amount of Rs. 4954.94 crore. Now, we are halfway past the year 2015 and still the figures being made available to the Committee are more than two years old. This speaks not only about the inaction on the part of the implementing agencies but also the lack of initiative in monitoring the utilization of funds and receipt of utilization certificates on the part of the Government also. This is a very serious lapse, as this has the potential to derail the entire planning process for the sector. The Committee, therefore, reiterate their recommendation with the request to develop some inherent institutional mechanism for submission of utilization certificates within the definite time-frame, failing which the appropriate remedial measures may follow, making the implementing agency liable for action.

STREAMLINING PROCESS OF GRANTS APPROVALS TO SCHEMES

Recommendation (Para No. 12)

1.17 The Committee have been time and again impressing upon the Government the need to revisit the process of granting multi-agency clearances to a scheme before it finally receives the sanction/approval for implementation. However, the results are yet to be shown in this critical area. Not wanting to be disillusioned by the systemic inadequacies, and keeping in perspective the overall development of Indian Agriculture, they hope that the three new schemes that have been announced in Budget 2014-15, namely: (i) Soil Health Card, with an outlay of Rs.100.00 crores, (ii) Price Stabilization Fund for Cereals and Vegetables, with an outlay of Rs.500 crore, (iii) National Agri-Tech Infrastructure, with a outlay of Rs.100.00 crore are implemented in the current fiscal year itself, otherwise their viability would be severely restricted in the remaining years of Twelfth Plan period. The Committee also recommend that the Department should take up the matter with the concerned agencies at the highest level for single window clearance system so that the schemes see the light of the day at the earliest.

1.18 The Department in their Action Taken Note stated that the Scheme “Soil Health Card” has been approved for implementation during the remaining period of 12th Plan with an outlay of Rs. 568.54 crore (Rs. 133.30 crore in 2014-15, Rs. 219.47 crore in 2015-16 and Rs. 215.77 crore in 2016-17). Under the scheme Soil Health Card will be provided to all farmers in the country at an interval of 3 years so as to enable the farmers to apply appropriate recommended dosages of nutrients for crop production and improving soil health and its fertility.

1.19 The Committee had desired that the Schemes of Soil Health Card; Price Stabilization Fund of Cereals and Vegetables and National Agri-Tech infrastructure be implemented in the current fiscal itself. The Department in their reply informed that the Scheme of Soil Health Card has been approved for implementation during the remaining period of the Twelfth Plan. The Committee have also been informed that the allocation for the above scheme has been increased from Rs. 100 crore to Rs. 568 crore spreading it over to remaining years

of the 12th Plan. However, nothing has been said about the remaining two schemes which were launched in the Budget. By implication it appears that these schemes *i.e.* Price Supplementation Fund for Cereals and Vegetables and National Agri-Tech infrastructure have no relevance/importance for the agri sector, as they are not being implemented despite the sufficient allocation of funds. The National Agri Tech infrastructure seems to be an innovative concept, and, hence, it being a non-starter may well raise concerns about our commitment to the new experience in the sector. Deprecating the incomplete reply of the Department, the Committee desire that the information on the status of the remaining two schemes be furnished to them at the earliest.

WIDENING THE SCOPE OF AGRICULTURE CENSUS

Recommendation (Para No. 16)

1.20 The Committee also impress upon the Government to widen the scope of the agri-census so as to enable it to include all the parameters concerning Indian Agriculture, and make it comprehensive in all respects. They were apprised by the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation that no data is being collected on number of farmers leaving agriculture under agri-census. However, in their document titled 'Agriculture Statistics at a Glance, 2013' it has been illustrated the percentage of cultivators has declined from 71.9% in 1951 to 45.19% in 2011, *i.e.* a decline of 26.71% while the percentage of agricultural labourers has increased from 28.1% in 1951 to 54.9% in 2011, *i.e.* an increase of 26.8%. The Committee advise Department of Agriculture & Cooperation to furnish factually accurate information to them. Deprecating this vital component being ignored, the Committee exhort upon the Government to include this vital parameter specifically in the next Agri Census *i.e.* 2015-16 as in their considered opinion this would help the Government in further fine tuning their schemes to ensure that very few farmers give up on agriculture in the future.

1.21 The Government in their Action Taken Notes stated that in this regard, it may be clarified that the information provided in "Agriculture Statistics at Glance 2013" in Table 2.3 (a) on Population and Agriculture Workers is from the latest available Census results conducted by the Registrar

General of India, which *inter-alia*, shows that the number of cultivators have increased from 69.9 million in 1951 to 118.7 million in 2011 whereas, number of Agricultural Labourers have increased from 27.3 million to 144.3 million during the same period. This indicates that the number of agricultural workers have increased in absolute terms in both cases, *i.e.* cultivators and agricultural labourers. However, the relative increase in case of agricultural labourers have been much higher which resulted in the higher percentage share of the latter in total agriculture workers.

1.22 The Committee view the response of the Government in their Action Taken Note on the issue of agri census as contradictory and dichotomous. Quoting Registrar General of India on Population and agricultural workers, wherein it has been stated that the number of cultivators have increased from 69.9 million in 1951 to 118.7 million in 2011. Similarly, the number of agricultural labourers have increased from 27.3 million to 144.3 million during the same period. It has also been informed that the number of agricultural workers have increased in absolute terms in both cases *i.e.* cultivators and agricultural labourers. In Agri-Statistics at a Glance, 2013, the figures display decline from 79.1 in 1951 to 45.19 in 2011 in the number of cultivators. There is an increase in the number of agricultural labourers from 28% in 2051 to 54.9% in 2011. Agriculture is an important sector affecting the entire segments of economic activities and any inconsistency with regard to the persons engaged here may lead to infirm formulation of policies thereby impact to the entire sector. The Committee reiterate that there should be a firm, uniform and reliable basis of agri census so that it results in a definite policy formulation for the benefit of the sector and the country.

REDUCTION IN UNIT AREA OF INSURANCE TO FIELD LEVEL

Recommendation (Para No. 22)

1.23 Guided by Department of Agriculture & Cooperation's candid admittance of the shortcomings of the NAIS, MNAIS, WBCIS and CPIS, the Committee desire that Department of Agriculture & Cooperation work upon these shortcomings so as to further increase the viability of these agri-

insurance schemes, as well as achieve the target coverage during the Twelfth Plan period. In particular, the poor density of automatic weather stations which hamper settlement of claims. They further desire that the unit area of insurance be reduced to a field from present village/village Panchayat Level and the crop coverage under NCIP be widened.

1.24 In their Action Taken Note the Department submitted that the reduction in the unit of insurance to field level will definitely be the ideal situation and lead to more realistic assessment of crop losses and payment of compensation to individual farmer. But it will require to conduct greater number of Crop Cutting Experiments (CCEs)/weather data for assessing the yield of the insured crop at each field level. Implementing States are not in a position to undertake additional Crop Cutting Experiments (CCEs) because of limited infrastructure facilities with them. Though, Government has reduced the insurance unit area to village/village panchayat level and provides incentives to the State Governments, as the States implementing MNAIS at village/village panchayat level are entitled to 50% reimbursement of incremental expenses on Crop Cutting Experiments from Government of India. States, which are unable to reduce insurance unit at village/village panchayat, could be allowed by Government of India to implement at higher unit area level — upto a cluster of maximum 15 villages for first 3-5 years under NCIP. Further, under MNAIS, there is already a provision of payment of claims on the basis of individual field/farm due to localized calamities like hailstorm and landslide and add on/Index cover under WBCIS. Keeping in view the large number of fragmented holdings and lack of yield data/weather data of individual farms and the lack of infrastructure and preparedness at State level, it may not be administratively possible at present, to implement crop insurance scheme at individual level on cost effective basis.

1.25 The Committee are befuddled by the Department's reply to their instant recommendation for reducing the unit area of insurance from the present village/village panchayat level to a field. While the Department have admitted that reduction in the unit of insurance to a field is an ideal one that would lead to more realistic assessment of crop losses and payment of compensation to the farmers, they have also submitted that as this exercise would involve more Crop Cutting

Experiments (CCEs), States are not in a position to undertake the same due to limited infrastructure facilities available with them. They have further stated that due to the above mentioned factor and the large number of fragmented holdings, it may not be administratively possible at present to implement crop insurance scheme at individual level on cost-effective basis. The Committee observe that there is lack of intent and concern for the farmers on the part of the Centre and States in the implementation of the scheme at field level. Presently, under Modified National Agriculture Insurance Scheme (MNAIS) there is already a provision of payment of claims on the basis of individual fields/farms due to calamities like hailstorm, land slide and add on index cover under Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme (WBCIS). The Committee are of the opinion that insurance scheme is a welfare scheme and hence, its implementation should be done with care and in perfect measures, so as to minimize its misuse and also to ensure its fruits to the deserving and entitled persons. Now-a-days a data base is being prepared throughout the country for land holdings to update the revenue records. This data base can be accessed for arriving at a decision on the details of the land holdings and also the yield from such land holdings. If the scheme has to be implemented, States have no option but to equip themselves for the full implementation of the scheme. The incapacity or inadequacy of the States should not affect the implementation of the scheme. They reiterate that the Governments at the Centre and State work towards augmenting their infrastructure for CCEs at the earliest. In this regard, the use of satellite imagery can also be taken. Lack of will on the part of the executive should not place the farmers at peril for no fault of theirs. The Committee desire to be apprised of the developments in this regard.

BACKLOG IN SETTLEMENT OF APPROVED CLAIMS

Recommendation (Para No. 24)

1.26 Having lauded the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation for the increased utilization of funds for various agri-insurance schemes in the

first two years of the Twelfth Plan period, the Committee are discerned to note the huge backlog of settlement of claims. Much to their chagrin they note that while insurance companies are over zealous while collecting insurance premium from farmers, their zeal gets diluted when the issue of settlement of insurance claims arise. The data furnished to the Committee relates to pendency of claims, that have been approved, but for reasons best known to insurance companies alone, have not been paid to the poor farmer. This delay further compounds the misery of farmers who had been victims of the vagaries of nature. Although Department of Agriculture & Cooperation is not the agency responsible for settlement of claims, yet, the Committee are of the considered opinion that being the nodal agency for agri-insurance scheme, it is duty bound to ensure timely settlement of claims by the insurance companies. Accordingly, they exhort the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation to devise a mechanism for timely settlement of approved claims in order to give relief to the already harassed farmer on account of unforeseen accident/calamity.

1.27 In their Action Taken Note, the Government stated that for settlement of claims under the crop Insurance schemes (NAIS, MNAIS & WBCIS), there is requirement of payment of required premium subsidy and claim share by the State Governments. Most of the outstanding claims are due to non-receipt of either or both of the above shares from the State Governments. To clear the outstanding claims, insurance companies remain in constant touch with the concerned State Governments for the release of required funds. In few cases of non-loanee farmers, claims remain outstanding for want of few documents from the insured, for which the company constantly remains in touch with the insured for providing the required documents. As nodal Ministry, it has been the endeavour of this Ministry to release its share in claims &/or subsidy in time and persuade the State Governments from time to time to release their share in time so that the claims of farmers could be settled in time-bound manner.

1.28 The Committee are aware that most of the outstanding claims are due to non-receipt of premium subsidy or claim share of States both from the State Governments. Also, in few cases of non-loanee farmers claims remain outstanding for want of few documents

from the insured. The failure on the part of the State Governments to come up with their matching share leads to inordinate delay in settlement of claim and payment to the farmers when they need it the most. The Committee are aware that Ministry is not directly responsible for settlement of insurance claims. Yet, it does not absolve them of their responsibilities towards the farmers of the country. Being the nodal Ministry, it should be their endeavour to prod the State Governments to fulfil their responsibility in this regard in a time bound manner. The Government may also seek the information on the action taken by the States and also from the insurance companies regarding the work done, remaining areas for action and steps to be taken to rectify these inadequacies in a time bound manner so that the insurance schemes are implemented properly. Needless to emphasize that delay in the completion of formalities only benefit the insurance companies at the cost of the farmers. A proper monitoring mechanism at the States may be set up to oversee the functioning in this regard so that the intended benefits accrue to the desired segment. They would further like to be apprised of the up-to-date details of reduction in pendency of settlement of insurance claims across the country.

CHAPTER II

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

RECOMMENDATIONS AND OBSERVATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

Recommendation (Para No. 1)

The Committee take note that the Rule 331G of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha relating to examination of Demands for Grants by the Departmentally Related Standing Committees (DRSCs) was suspended by Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha to enable the House to pass the Demands for Grants for the year 2014-15 during the Second Session of Sixteenth Lok Sabha without the same being referred to the concerned DRSCs. The Demands were, however, referred to the Standing Committees for examining the same after their constitution and for presenting the Report to the House therein. The Committee, after their constitution on 1st September, 2014 took up examination of the Demands for Grants pertaining to the Ministry of Agriculture for the year 2014-15. Since the Budget for the year 2014-15 has already been passed by the Parliament, the Committee endorse the same. The Committee would however, like the Ministry to take note of their recommendation while implementing various programmes/schemes, etc. within the approved budget.

Reply of the Government

Recommendations of the Committee have been noted.

[Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture and Cooperation),
F.No.6-5/2014-B & A, dated 23 April, 2015]

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation (Para No. 2)

The Committee note that the Action Taken Replies regarding the action taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Forty-sixth Report of the Committee were furnished by the

Government within the stipulated three months. The Committee further note that in pursuance of Direction 73-A of Directions by the Speaker, Lok Sabha, the Minister concerned is required to make a Statement on the status of implementation of Observations/Recommendations contained in the Original Reports of the Committee within six months of their presentation to the Parliament. However, the Committee are perturbed to note that the Minister concerned did not make the Statement under Direction 73-A in the context of Forty-sixth Report of the Committee within the stipulated time. Though the Statement was later (05.08.2014) laid on the Table of the House, the Committee take strong exception to the failure of the Ministry time and again to adhere to stipulations laid down in Direction 73-A in respect of Statements to be made by the Minister concerned. They expect that there will not be a repeat of such lapses in future. The analysis of the action taken by the Government reveals that 69% Recommendations have been implemented. 23% Recommendations have not been implemented and 8% of Recommendations are in various stages of implementation.

Reply of the Government

The recommendation is noted. It would be ensured that Statement is laid within the stipulated time in future.

[Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture and Cooperation),
F.No.6-5/2014-B & A, dated 23 April, 2015]

SHARE OF DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN CENTRAL PLAN

Recommendation (Para No. 3)

Agriculture remains the principal source of livelihood for more than 54.6% of the Country's population. Being a predominantly agrarian economy and one which is experiencing constant economic growth, agriculture sector has to perform well if this growth is to be sustained. The need of the hour is to increase agricultural produce with limited natural resources in a sustainable manner for ensuring food and nutritional security while increasing the income of farmers. However, the Committee note with concern that when the issue of distribution of financial resources crops up, the agriculture sector gets neglected. This is evident from the fact that the percentage share of the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation with

respect to Total Central Plan stands at just 1.21% in 2014-15 *vis-a-vis* 1.61% in 2009-10 and 1.71% in 2013-14 and in monetary terms has decreased from Rs. 11655.00 crore in 2013-14 to Rs. 5846.00 crore in 2014-15. Notwithstanding, the argument put forth by the Department that the actual annual budgetary allocations of the Department have been increasing over the years, the Committee are of the firm opinion that this is too little for this vital sector of our economy. In fact, during 2014-15 not only the percentage share of Department of Agriculture and Cooperation in total Central Plan has declined but also the allocation has declined in real terms. Keeping in view the significance of the Agriculture Sector and its contribution towards Gross Domestic Product, the Committee desire that the Government should increase the share of the Department in the Central Plan at the earliest if it is serious about effectively tackling the issues plaguing Indian Agriculture.

Reply of the Government

The Government has enhanced the Plan outlay of the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation (DAC) to Rs. 1,34,746 crore for 12th Five Year Plan as against Rs. 66,577 crore during 11th Five Plan in order to achieve the targeted growth rate of 4% Further, BE for the year 2014-15 has been increased to Rs. 22,309 crore as against Rs. 21,609 crore for the year 2013-14.

A comparative statement of outlay of this Department *vis-a-vis* the total Central Plan is given below:—

(Rs. in crore)				
Year	Total Central Plan Outlay	DAC Outlay	Percentage of DAC Outlay <i>vis-a-vis</i> Central Plan Outlay	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5
2009-10	447921	7200	1.61	The Outlay for this Department includes funds

1	2	3	4	5
2013-14	680123	11655	1.71	allocated to the Centrally Sponsored Schemes also and does not include funds allotted to State Plan Scheme viz. RKVY.
2014-15	484532	5846	1.2	The Outlay for this Department only includes funds allocated to the Central Sector Schemes and not the Centrally Sponsored Schemes and State Plan Scheme viz. RKVY.

It may be pointed out that in monetary terms there has not been a decrease in the Outlay in 2014-15 as compared to 2013-14. During 2013-14, the amount of Rs. 11,655 crore includes funds allocated both for the Central Sector and the Centrally Sponsored Schemes of this Department. On the other hand, the amount of Rs. 5,846 crore which has been approved as Budget Estimates for the year 2014-15 includes only the Central Sector Schemes of this Department. It does not include the funds that have been allocated for this Department under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes. The amount allocated for this Department for the Centrally Sponsored Schemes for the year 2014-15 is Rs. 6,509 crore. Hence, the total amount allocated for 2014-15 is Rs. 12,355 crore as compared to Rs. 11,655 crore allocated for 2013-14.

From the year 2014-15, the Government have also introduced four new schemes namely Soil Health Card (SHC), Price Stabilization Fund for Cereals & Vegetables (PSFC&V), National Agri-Tech Infrastructure (NAI) and Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (PMKSY) with outlays of Rs. 100 crore, Rs. 500 crore, Rs. 100 crore and Rs. 1,000 crore (to be funded during the fiscal year 2015-16) respectively. These steps are expected to address the concerns of the Committee.

[Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture and Cooperation),
F.No.6-5/2014-B & A, dated 23 April, 2015]

INCREASE VIABILITY OF AGRICULTURE

Recommendation (Para No. 4)

The Committee are enlightened to the fact that the Country is still way off in achieving food and nutritional security. Further, agriculture today is at the mercy of the vagaries of climate change coupled with a myriad of other problems like increasing land fragmentation, depleting soil health, lowering of water table, increased input costs and stagnant output costs. All these factors have resulted in agriculture no longer being a profitable vocation. Keeping this factor in mind, they implore upon the Government to increase the allocation of funds so that a turnaround can be finally brought about in our agriculture.

Reply of the Government

The Government has enhanced the Plan outlay of the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation (DAC) to Rs.1,34,746 crore for 12th Five Year Plan as against Rs.66,577 crore during 11th Five Year Plan in order to achieve the targeted growth rate of 4%. From the year 2014-15, the Government have also introduced four new schemes namely Soil Health Card (SHC), Price Stabilization Fund for Cereals & Vegetables (PSFC&V), National Agri-Tech Infrastructure (NAI) and Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (PMKSY) that are expected to go a long way in improving the viability of the sector.

National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) as one of the eight Missions outlined under National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) has been operationalised with the objective of promoting sustainable agriculture focusing on ten key dimensions of Indian agriculture. During XII Five Year Plan, strategies have been embedded and mainstreamed onto ongoing/proposed Missions/Programmes/Schemes of Dept. of Agriculture & Cooperation (DAC) through a process of restructuring and convergence. Activities to using on these dimensions have been taken up in the areas of Natural Resource Management (Water harvesting, development of degraded land etc.); Water Use Efficiency (Micro Irrigation & other on Farm application techniques); Horticulture Area Expansion; System of Rice

Cultivation (SRI); Crop Diversification; Direct Seeded Rice; Distribution of Improved Seeds; Adaptation of Integrated Pest Management; Soil Health Management through Integrated Nutrient Management, oil Health Card and promoting organic/biofertilizer; Resource Conservation technologies; Post Harvest Management and value addition; Identification/Release of Climate resilient varieties, production of quality seeds etc.

Government has approved/brought out the National Agro forestry Policy, 2014 to bring about coordination, convergence and synergy among various elements of agro forestry scattered in various missions, programmes, Schemes and agencies. Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) has been constituted to take forward the policy recommendations. Plantation of trees on farm land is being encouraged in all major programmes of DAC on farming system approach.

During 2014-15, DAC has introduced Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization with the following objectives.

The Mission objectives are as follows:—

- Increasing the reach of farm mechanization to small and marginal farmers and to the regions where availability of farm power is low;
- Promoting ‘Custom Hiring Centers’ to offset the adverse economies of scale arising due to small landholding and high cost of individual ownership;
- creating hubs for hi-tech and high value farm equipments;
- creating awareness among stakeholders through demonstration and capacity building activities;
- Ensuring performance testing and certification at designated testing centres located all over the country.

Under Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization, Division is promoting the Resource conservation technologies equipments like Raise bed planter, Zero-till seed drill, Zero-till multi crop planter, Ridge Furrow planter, Happy

seeder. Rotavator, Strip – till –Drill , Mulcher etc. and crop residue Management equipments like Baler, Hay Rake, Sugar cane thrush cutter etc. by providing the financial assistance upto 40 % of the cost limited to maximum upto Rs. 0.50 lakh.

In the situation of steep rise of prices of fruits and vegetables this department issued advisories to States and UTs to exempt fruits and vegetables from the purview of the State APMC Acts. This was done with the view to promote multiple channels for selling of fruits and vegetables so that rising prices could be tackled effectively. This had been followed up with the States who were further advised to deregulate fruits and vegetables outside the APMC Yards while continuing the regulation within the yard so that trade in fruits and vegetables could continue in the APMC yards alongside in other marketing channels that were expected to come up as a result.

A case in point is of the Delhi Government which issued notification soon after to restrict market area in respect of three important markets of fruits and vegetables to the concerned market yards only and to deregulate fruits and vegetables outside of these market yards. As an outcome of this measure soon after SFAC announced setting up of the Kisan Mandi in Delhi as a wholesale/retail option for farmer produce.

The indiscriminate and unilateral use of pesticides was the only plant protection tool during sixties and seventies for sustaining of agricultural production potential of the high yielding varieties under the intensive cropping systems. This led to several ill-effects like human and animal health hazards, ecological imbalance, development of resistance in the pests to pesticides, pests resurgence and environmental pollution, as well as, destruction of natural enemies (bio-control agents) of pests and increased level of pesticides residues in soil, water, food with the increased use of pesticides.

In order to minimize the use of hazardous chemical pesticides up to an extent as possible and to prevent, manage the insect pests/diseases attack as well as to increase the crop productivity, Government of India, Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Agriculture & Co-Operation (DAC) is promoting Integrated Pest Management (IPM) through a scheme

“Strengthening and Modernization of Pest Management Approach in India”. It has established 31 Central Integrated Pest Management Centres (CIPMCs) for pest/disease monitoring, production and release of bio-control agents/ bio-pesticides, conservation of bio-control agents etc. and human resource development in IPM by organizing Farmers’ Field Schools (FFSs). Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has also set up National Centre for Integrated Pest Management (NCIPM) in New Delhi for research and development of IPM technologies which minimize the use of chemical pesticides.

The Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is an ecological approach which aims at keeping pest below economic thresholds level by employing all available alternate pest control methods and techniques such as cultural, mechanical and biological control with greater emphasis on use of bio-pesticides and pesticides of plant-origin like Neem formulation. The use of chemical pesticides is advised as a last resort.

Objectives of the scheme

- Maximize crop production with minimum input costs;
- Minimize environmental pollution in soil, water and air due to pesticides;
- Minimize occupational health hazards due to chemical pesticides;
- Conserve ecosystem and maintain ecological equilibrium;
- Judicious use of chemical pesticides for reducing pesticide residues.

The 31 Central Integrated Pest Management Centers (CIPMCs) located in 28 States and one Union Territory undertakes the programme with following activities:—

- Surveillance and Monitoring of insect-pest and diseases.
- Augmentation and Conservation of Natural enemies.
- Production and releases of bio-control agents.

- Human Resource Development (HRD) through Farmers' Field Schools (FFSs) Season-long training programmes, orientation training programme and refresher courses.

So far the up-to 2014-2015 (up to 1st week of Dec., 2014) the Directorate of PPQ&S, under DAC has organized 15,589 nos. of Farmers Field Schools (FFSs) wherein 58,620 Agriculture/Horticulture Extension Officers and 468,668 farmers on different crops have been trained on latest IPM technology in various crops. Over an area of 254.12 lakh ha. has been covered under pest monitoring and 48,795.81 million bio-control agents has been released in the States for control of different pests and diseases. So far total 2231 master trainers were trained through 61 nos. of SLTP in different crop like Rice, Cotton, Vegetable, Fruit Crops, Ground nut, Mustard, Soybean, Gram/tur, Chillies & sugarcane . Total of 746 Two days HRD programme and 74 Five days HRD programme were organized since 2005-06 onwards through which total 26,030 farmers in two days programmes and 2720 AEOs/Pesticides Dealers/NGOs/Progressive Farmers were trained and sensitized to reduce the use of chemical pesticides by encouraging the use of good agricultural practices in Five days HRD programmes. Also IPM package of practices for pests/diseases management in 77 major crops have been developed in collaboration with State Department of Agriculture/Horticulture/ICAR Institutions/State Agriculture Universities out of which 57 have been revised in 2014-15 with special emphasis on AESA based pest management which provides P&D ratio. Ecological engineering and cultural practices have been given in IPM Packages to address the issue of Crop Cycle approach. Revised packages have been uploaded on DAC's website "agricoop.nic.in".

[Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture and Cooperation),
F.No.6-5/2014-B & A, dated 23 April, 2015]

ATTRACTING RURAL YOUTH TOWARDS AGRICULTURE

Recommendation (Para No. 5)

Apart from increasing the financial allocation to the Agriculture Sector, the Committee are also of the firm conviction that the vocation

of Agriculture needs to be a remunerative one like any other vocation. A sense of pride needs to be infused if this sector is to attract the youth towards it, especially, the rural educated youth. For this, the Government needs to ensure remuneration commensurate with production cost, easy access to institutional credit, impart training to educated unemployed rural youth, develop entrepreneurship skills by conducting various programmes, formulating schemes for individuals/groups and also provide institutional finance at easy terms to kick start their ventures. The Committee are pretty sanguine that if the Government act upon their suggestion, it would not only succeed in attracting the youth, but would bestow social, economic and political respect to those involved in agriculture and thus increase the sustainability and viability of the core sector of our economy.

Reply of the Government

Agri-Clinics and Agri-Business Centres have been established by the Government since 2002 for creating gainful self employment opportunities to unemployed agricultural graduates, Agri diploma holders etc. supporting agriculture development and supplementing the efforts of public extension as well. The scope of the scheme has been expanded so as to harness the potential of rural unemployed youth to start agri enterprises in rural areas for serving farming community.

National Institute of Agricultural Marketing (NIAM), Jaipur under the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation offers two-year Post Graduate Diploma Programme in Agri-Business Management (PGDABM), which equip the youth with unique skills required for a career in Agri-business.

Besides, through various Central Sector/Centrally Sponsored Schemes and State Plan Scheme of the Ministry, the efforts of State Government are supplemented to make agri sector an attractive vocation so that youth are not tempted to leave agriculture.

[Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture and Cooperation),
F.No.6-5/2014-B & A, dated 23 April, 2015]

DEMANDS FOR GRANTS OF MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE BE DISCUSSED EVERY YEAR

Recommendation (Para No. 8)

The Committee note that Agriculture Sector is the principal source of livelihood for more than 54.6% of the Country's population and contributes 13.9% of India's GDP. Concerned to note that the Agriculture sector has not been getting its due which it richly deserves from the Government, year after year, as is evident from the mismatch between approved allocation and actual allocation, they are of the firm opinion that the time has finally come to break free from the shackles of the past. If the Agriculture Sector, which is the very basis of sustainable economic development, food security and fair deal to the toiling farmer, is to finally get its due, the time has finally dawned for this Sector to be allocated funds commensurate with the percentage of the farmers to the Country's population. The Committee, therefore, recommend to the Government that as far as possible reduction of allocated funds should be avoided. They also recommend the Demands for Grants of the three Departments of Ministry of Agriculture; *i.e.* Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, Department of Agricultural Research and Education and Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries should invariably be discussed in the House every year before the General Budget is passed by the Parliament.

Reply of the Government

No Comments to offer.

[Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture and Cooperation),
F.No.6-5/2014-B & A, dated 23 April, 2015]

INVESTMENT IN AGRICULTURE SECTOR

Recommendation (Para No. 10)

Welcoming the increased private sector investment in Agriculture Sector, the Committee desire that this investment be done *via* the Public Private Partnership (PPP) Mode and that too in core agriculture areas. They would also like to caution the Government to safeguard the interests

of our vulnerable farmers while allowing increased private investment in this sector.

Reply of the Government

Agriculture is a state subject and it is for the State Governments to take steps to encourage private sector investment in agriculture. Nonetheless, the Central Government has been announcing various policy measures to boost private investment to ensure adequate capital formation in the agriculture and allied sector. Therefore, “Public Private Partnership (PPP) for Integrated Agriculture Development (IAD)” has been launched as a pilot scheme under RKVY during 2012-13 with the objective of augmenting governmental effort in leveraging the capability of private sectors in agriculture development. The scheme is being implemented through Small Farmers Agri-Business Consortium (SFABC), State Governments and private sector partners, and many successful projects have come up with private sector participation in, for instance, Maharashtra.

Besides the above, all major centrally sponsored schemes of the Ministry of Agriculture have incorporated special provisions for promotion and development of FPOs, which are identified as one of the key strategies for achieving inclusive agricultural growth during the Twelfth Plan. Member-based FPOs would act as aggregators and provide greater bargaining power to producers, especially smallholders, and enable their integration in the value chain, generating higher incomes and employment. The Equity Grant and Credit Guarantee Fund Scheme for FPOs was launched on 1st January, 2014 to facilitate formation of FPOs which would be critical for value chain integration of PPP interventions.

[Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture and Cooperation),
F.No.6-5/2014-B & A, dated 23 April, 2015]

AGRICULTURE CENSUS

Recommendation (Para No. 17)

As revealed by data published in ‘Agriculture Statistics at a Glance 2013’, the percentage of rural population has declined from 82.7% in 1951

to 68.8% in 2011 along with the percentage decline of cultivators from 71.9% in 1951 to 45.19% in 2011, while the percentage of agricultural labourers has increased from 28.1% in 1951 to 54.9% in 2011. The Committee view this migration from rural to urban areas in a positive manner as it would in some way reduce the pressure on agriculture due to the ever burgeoning population. The percentage decline in rural population/cultivators would reduce the effects of land fragmentation which would ultimately lead to increasing the viability of our agriculture. However, the Committee would like to caution the Government to ensure that those rural people who have left agriculture should be absorbed in agribased cottage/small-scale industries after having been imparted that requisite training, so that they continue their linkage with agriculture and thus be saved from being exploited as construction labourers in the urban areas. They further desire the Government to raise the level of rural amenities so as to bring them at par with sub-urban areas, in time bound manner.

Reply of the Government

The concern of the Committee has been noted. To create gainful self-employment opportunities, adequate capacity building/training components have been included in all major schemes where the farmers are given training to ensure that they continue to have knowledge of latest Agricultural operational methods. Apart from this, various Departments of the Government are implementing Schemes for further upgrading the skills of such migrant farmers in any vocation of their choice.

[Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture and Cooperation),
F.No.6-5/2014-B & A, dated: 23 April, 2015]

NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY MISSION (NFSM)

Recommendation (Para No. 18)

The Flagship Scheme of National Food Security Mission (NFSM) since its launch in Rabi 2007-08 has increased the average annual production of foodgrains from 2010.5 million tonnes during the Eleventh Plan and to 257.13 million tonnes in 2012-13. Thus, NFSM has played a pivotal role in the march towards food security. It was due to its sterling

performance in the Tenth and Eleventh Plan period that its scope was enhanced both in terms of area as well as the crops *i.e.* cash crops that were brought under its purview in the Twelfth Plan period. However, the Committee are concerned to note that the financial performance of the scheme during the first two years of the Twelfth Plan has not been upto the mark. The reasons for these have been attributed to unspent balance lying with the States/implementing agencies. Depreciating this, they recommended that all the implementing agencies put their act together and ensure optimum utilization of allocated funds so that the smooth flow of funds is not hampered and the sterling performances witnessed under NFSM carry on for food crops as well as cash crops during the Twelfth Plan period.

Reply of the Government

In view of the recommendations of National Development Council (NDC) in its 53rd meeting held on 29th May, 2007, Government of India launched centrally Sponsored Scheme of National Food Security Mission comprising rice, wheat and pulses to increase the production of rice by 10 million tonnes, wheat by 8 million tonnes and pulses to increase by 2 million tonnes by the end of the 11th Plan (2011-12) *w.e.f.* 2007-08 the area under food grain coverage fluctuate year to year due to climate condition prevailing in the states in a given season. The production has increased from 234.45 million tonnes in 2008-09 to a record production of 265.57 million tonnes in 2013-14(final estimate). Similarly, the production of pulses has also increase from 14.56 million tonnes to 19.78 million tonnes during the same period.

The mission is being continued during 12th five year plan with new targets of additional production of food grains of 25 million tonnes of food grains comprising of 10 million tonnes rice, 8 million tonnes of wheat, 4 million tonnes of pulses and 3 million tonnes of coarse cereal by the end of 12th five year plan. Thus the GOI has taken steps for focussed and target oriented implementation of the mission initiatives to ensure food security of country by optimum utilisation of allocated fund by the states/implementing agencies.

The financial performance during the first two years of 12th Plan, the BE/RE and actual release position of NFSM is given below:—

(Rs. in crore)

Sl. No.	Year	Allocation		Actual release	% with reference to BE	% with reference to RE
		RE	BE			
1.	2012-13	1850.00	1763.57	1725.65	93.28	97.85
2.	2013-14	2250.00	2044.85	2027.08	90.09	99.13
(Final Grant)						

It may be seen from above that the actual release is 97.85% against RE during 2012-13 and 99.13% during 2013-14. During 2013-14, the RE was reduced to Rs. 1962.60 crore at RE stage. But, the final Grant was Rs. 2044.85 crore. It means, the release was more than 100% w.r.t. RE of Rs. 1962.60 crore and 99.13% of the final Grant during 2013-14. It is pertinent to mention here that there was an overall reduction in the funds provided to the Department at RE stage during 2012-13 and 2013-14. Therefore, there was a proportionate decrease in funds under NFSM also.

The unspent balances available with the States/Implementing Agencies at the beginning of the financial year are adjusted from the releases made to them during the year with the approval of IFD. Till 2013-14, funds were released directly to the State Implementing Agencies for implementation of the Approved Action Plans. During 2014-15, funds are being released to the States through respective State Treasuries.

[Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agricultural and Cooperation),
F.No.6-5/2014-B & A, dated, 23 April, 2015]

NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY MISSION (NFSM)

Recommendation (Para No. 19)

Noting that the financial as well as physical performance of Flagship Schemes of the Central Government like NFSM, Rashtriya Krishi Vikas

Yojana (RKVY) can be further improved/fine tuned by establishing a dynamic monitoring mechanism as well as clear cut guidelines for implementation at the apex level, the Committee urge upon the Government of India to incorporate their instant suggestion at the earliest which would be in the interest of all parties involved and push Indian Agriculture to new heights. They further desire that the progress achieved herein be communicated to them at the earliest.

Reply of the Government

Monitoring and Evaluation under NFSM

1. The Mission has a strong mechanism of monitoring and evaluation with the involvement of all the implementing agencies and the line departments. A three-tier monitoring mechanism was inbuilt in NFSM at national, state and district levels.
2. Close monitoring of physical and financial targets of various programme interventions in prescribed formats are being done by the monitoring teams.
3. At the National level, General Council (GC) under the Chairmanship of Union Agriculture Minister oversees the implementation of NFSM and takes policy decisions for Mid-Term corrections. Besides, National Food Security Mission Executive Committee (NFSMEC) under the Chairmanship of Secretary (A&C) also periodically reviews the State action plan and the progress and status of implementation in each State.
4. At the State level, monitoring is undertaken by State Food Security Mission Executive Committee (SFSMEC) under the Chairmanship of Chief Secretary. The State Department of Economics and Statistics is involved in adopting the prescribed format for data collection pertaining to different parameters of the Mission for monitoring to suit local requirement.
5. Eight National Level Monitoring Teams (NLMTs) have been constituted for monitoring activities of the NFSM in States. Each

team is comprised of experts of rice, wheat, pulses and coarse cereals as per requirement with the respective Director of the Directorates of Crop Development of Ministry of Agriculture acting as Coordinator.

6. In order to enhance efficiency of the flagship schemes, focus has been given on resources conservation and promotion of new technologies. To reduce utilisation of water in paddy cultivation, government is promoting water conservation techniques like direct seeded rice (DSR) through seed drills and drum seeder, system rice intensification(SRI), alternate wetting and drying method, laser land levelling, adoption of varieties which requires less water, etc. Through various crop development programmes like National Food Security Mission (NFSM), bringing green revolution to Eastern India (BGREI), etc. Government is also implementing Crop Diversification Programme in original Green Revolution States of Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh since 2013-14 in order to diversify cropping pattern from water guzzling paddy to pulses, oilseeds, maize and agro-forestry with the objective of tackling the problem of depleting water tables in these States. Under BGREI, stress tolerant varieties and improved package of practices including variety, nutrient management, integrated pest management are being popularized for cluster demonstration of rice. Similarly, resource conservation technology, integrated nutrient management, bio fertilizers, etc. are also being popularized under cluster demonstration of wheat.

Assistance is also being provided to the farmers on distribution of farm implements/machines , irrigation devices, plant protection chemicals and soil ameliorants.

To control the damage to cotton crop by pest/disease, NFSM-Cotton supports web based online management of pest through National Centre for Integrated Pest Management (NCIPM).

[Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agricultural and Cooperation),
F.No.6-5/2014-B & A, dated, 23 April, 2015]

DELAY IN SUBMISSION AND IMPACT EVALUATION STUDY REPORT

Recommendation (Para No. 20)

The Committee are discerned to note that the Impact Evaluation Study of NFSM for Eleventh Plan is still in progress, though the Twelfth Plan has reached its midterm. Deprecating this rather tardy State of Affairs, the Committee desire that Department of Agriculture and Cooperation impress upon the agency entrusted with the impact study *i.e.* Agricultural Finance Corporation Limited to expedite the process of drafting their report, so that Department of Agriculture and Cooperation is able to initiate action upon the recommendations contained in the Report during the current plan period, otherwise the efficacy of this evaluation study would be greatly reduced.

Reply of the Government

Impact Evaluation: Impact Evaluation of NFSM for XI Plan has been done by an independent agency, Agricultural Finance Corporation Limited, and the final report has been received in DAC. The outcome of the report indicated that the Mission has helped in widening the food basket of the country with sizeable contributions coming from the NFSM Districts. The focused and target oriented implementation of mission initiatives has resulted in bumper production of rice, wheat and pulses. The production of wheat increased from 75.81 million tonnes in pre NFSM year of 2006-07 to 94.88 million tonnes during 2011-12 *i.e.* an increase of 19 million tonnes against the envisaged target of 8 million tonnes at the end of XI Plan. Similarly, the total production of rice has increased from 93.36 million tonnes in pre NFSM year of 2006-07 to 105.31 million tonnes in 2011-12 with an increase of 12 million tonnes against the target of 10 million tonnes. The total production of pulses has also increased from 14.20 million tonnes during 2006-07 to 17.09 million tonnes during 2011-12 with an increase of about 3 million tonnes against the envisaged target of 2 million tonnes. Thus, 34 million tonnes of additional production of total foodgrains against the target of 20 million tonnes, were achieved at the end of 11th five year plan against the normal production at the beginning of the 11th five year plan. The various

interventions of the mission have been instrumental in bringing about significant yield gain to the farmers resulting into increase in their income level.

[Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture and Cooperation),
F.No.6-5/2014-B & A, dated 23 April, 2015]

NATIONAL CROP INSURANCE PROGRAMME (NCIP) – ALLOCATION AND UTILIZATION OF FUNDS

Recommendation (Para No. 21)

Being well aware that the vocation of agriculture is fraught with risks, the Ministry of Agriculture introduced a crop insurance scheme in 1985 and thereafter have been bringing out improvements in erstwhile scheme (s) from time to time based on the experience gained and the views of the stakeholders, States/UTs, farming community etc., in order to insure the farming community against various risks. Prior to the formulation of National Crop Insurance Programme (NCIP) from Rabi 2013-14, the Ministry of Agriculture were implementing 3 agri-insurance schemes *i.e.* Modified National Agricultural Insurance Schemes; Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme and Coconut Palm Insurance Scheme. The Committee are happy to note that during the Twelfth Plan period the allocation at RE stage has been higher than the BE allocation and the actual utilization has matched the RE figures, they further hope that States/UTs will actively come forward to avail the insurance programme in the remaining year of the Twelfth Plan and thus provide a certain level of insulation to the farmers against vagaries of nature.

Reply of the Government

While noting the observations of the Committee, it is to further state that NCIP also provides for capacity building of officials/farmers' groups through specialized trainings, workshops, publicity/awareness, etc. The Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI), Hyderabad, Agricultural Insurance Company of India Ltd. (AIC), etc. conduct periodical workshops/sensitization programmes on crop insurance. State Governments and insurance companies also publicise crop insurance through advertisements,

conferences, kisan gosthis, fairs, etc. It is estimated that by end of 12th Plan period at least 50% of the farmers households would be covered under crop insurance.

[Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture and Cooperation),
F.No.6-5/2014-B & A, dated 23 April, 2015]

DECLINING SOIL HEALTH

Recommendation (Para No. 25)

The Committee are aware that the declining soil health is a cause of serious concern for our agriculture. This has primarily been attributed to the reckless usage of chemical fertilizers that while increasing production, negatively impacted the soil health especially in cases of multi – crops and intensive cultivation. This resulted in declining soil fertility as the loss of micro and macro nutrients were not being replenished year after year. Also, lack of inter cropping was also compounding soil fertility issues. The lack of sensitivity towards our soil health has in some cases also resulted in instances of soil poisoning. The committee expresses their anguish over this state of affairs and strongly feels that the Government have not dealt with this issue with the alacrity it demands. Being well aware of the consequences of declining soil health on our agricultural productivity and sustainability, the committee strongly feel that the need of hour is to firstly undertake a comprehensive soil analysis across the Country at the earliest so as to be apprised of the nature of soil health, take remedial action accordingly and at the same time strictly implement adherence to a judicious mix of organic and chemical fertilizers.

Reply of the Government

Government is aware that soil fertility across the country is declining and efforts are being made to maintain soil fertility for sustainable agriculture through following steps:—

- (i) A new scheme “Soil Health Card” has been approved for implementation during the remaining period of 12th Plan to provide Soil Health Card to all farmers in the country. Soil Health

Card will provide information to farmers on soil nutrient status of their soil and recommendation on appropriate dosage of nutrient to be applied for improving soil health and its fertility.

- (ii) To increase soil testing facility across the country, there is provision of financial assistance under National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) for setting up of new Mobile/Static soil testing labs (STL) @ 75% of total cost of project subject to maximum of Rs. 56 Lakh per STL and for strengthening of existing MSTL/SSTL, @ Rs. 30 Lakh per STL.
- (iii) For promotion of balanced use of fertilizers, financial assistance @ 50 % of cost subject to limit of Rs. 500/-per ha. and/or Rs. 1000 per beneficiary is provided for micronutrients to State Governments against proposal as per NMSA guidelines.
- (iv) Besides micronutrients, for balanced use of fertilizers there is provision of financial assistance @ 50 % of cost subject to a limit of Rs. 5000/-per ha. and Rs. 10,000/-per beneficiary for promotion of organic inputs on farmers field such as Manure, Vermi-compost, Bio-fertilizer, Waste compost etc.

In so far as activates under **National Mission on OilSeeds and Oil Palm are concerned**, Out of total area of 28.52 million ha. (2013-14) under oilseeds, >60% area (17.73 million ha.) is occupied by leguminous oilseeds crops like groundnut and soybean, which helps in restoration of soil health by nitrogen fixation. Cultivation of these oilseeds is being encourage under NMOOP.

Broad-bed-furrow/ridge-furrow technologies have been found more effective in drainage of excess water and moisture conservation in groundnut and soybean. Supply of Broad-bed-furrow/ridge-furrow makers is being encouraged under NMOOP. Inter- cropping which helps in mitigating adverse weather conditions, is being encouraged under NMOOP.

Use of micro irrigation including sprinkler under oilseeds and drip under Oil Palm and supply of water carrying pipes are being supported under NMOOP. Construction of water shed is also being encouraged in oil palm plantations under NMOOP.

NMOOP also provide support for encouraging mechanization, supply of micro-nutrients/gypsum/lime/SSP/bio-fertilizers and adoption of IPM technologies with the concept of farmer's field schools for productivity improvement of oilseeds.

The Ministry has established 22 Precision Farming Development Centres (PFDCs) to promote precision farming practices and plasticulture technologies to harness natural resources such as soil, water, light etc. For enhancing quality and productivity of focussed agri/horticultural crops to meet food & nutrition security of the country.

Over the years, these centres have standardized field protocols on micro irrigation, protected cultivation, creation of water resources etc., demonstrates proven technologies and conducts various extension activities for the increased adoption of precision farming practices and plasticulture technologies for achieving enhanced yield, quality and remunerative returns to the end users'.

Precision farming practices help to save water, energy & reduce costs of fertilizer, other critical agricultural inputs, labour in per unit area. These technologies also mitigate environmental issues such as water logging, soil salinity etc. & provide opportunity for sustainable agriculture in cold arid, desert & drought prone areas of the country.

Under Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) and On Farm Water Management (OFWM), focused intervention for increased adoption of Drip/Sprinkler Irrigation System, Lining of farm ponds, plastic, mulching, protected cultivation technologies like Poly house, Shade net House, Walk in tunnel, Plastic Tunnel, hail/bird protected nets & organic farming through vermin beds not only helps to conserve natural resources but also mitigates environmental challenges.

MIDH interventions are designed to address crops specific requirements for enhancing production and productivity of horticulture crops duly taking into account agro-climatic conditions, protected cultivation involving cultivation in green houses and use of plastic mulching enables off season cultivation of crops, which is being promoted on a large

scale under MIDH with 50 % subsidy assistance on cost. Creation of water resources through community tanks and individual tanks is also promoted with 100 % assistance in the case of community tanks and 50 % assistance for individuals for providing life savings irrigation through horticulture crops. Area expansion of horticulture crops is linked with option for adopting integrated approach along with micro irrigation to ensure better survival and increase productivity along with efficient water use. *In situ* development of organic inputs is ensured through establishment of vermin compost/organic input units, with 50% assistance on cost, which enable farmers to reduce the use of chemical inputs and thus improves soil health. Besides, use of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and Integrated Nutrient Management (INM) is promoted extensively under MIDH with 30% assistance for enabling productivity enhancement. Support is also extended for purchase of machinery with assistance upto 35 % on cost, to improve efficiency and remove drudgery in farm operations. Special emphasis is being laid for developing cold chain infrastructure to minimize post harvest losses of produce besides value addition. This is duly supported with creation of markets at different levels viz. Wholesales, rural markets including retail outlets for enabling farmers better price realization of produce.

[Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture and Cooperation),
F.No.6-5/2014-B & A, dated 23 April, 2015]

STRENGTHENING OF SOIL TESTING MECHANISM

Recommendation (Para No. 26)

Being of the strong conviction that the present paraphernalia of soil testing in our Country is woefully inadequate, the Committee recommend that the Government undertake the upgradation of soil health ,testing apparatus/systems on war footing in terms of static soil testing labs/mobile testing laboratories. It should be ensured that adequate funding is provided for the same. They also emphasize that young local youth should be roped in through capacity building measures for using soil testing equipment at Panchayat level.

Reply of the Government

To upgrade the soil testing facility across the country there is provision of financial assistance for setting up new Static and Mobile Soil Testing Laboratories @ of 75 % of total project cost subject to maximum limit of Rs. 56 Lakh per laboratory and for strengthening of existing Soil Testing Laboratories @ Rs. 30 Lakh per laboratory. For providing Portable Soil Testing Kit to field level officers of State Governments there is provision of Rs. 15000/Kit which is useful in remote areas.

Funds have been released to different State Govts. to establish 139 new Static Soil Testing Labs (STL) and 132 Mobile Soil Testing Labs (MSTL) under Soil Health Management component of National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) since 2008-09. At present there are 1206 soil testing laboratories in the Country with analysis capacity of 1.28 crore soil samples per annum. This capacity is sufficient for testing the samples envisaged under Soil Health Card Scheme (SHC) where 55 Lakh soil samples would be tested in 1st year, 97 lakh in 2nd year and 96 lakh in 3rd year. The samples will be taken on the basis of uniform sampling *i.e.* in a grid of 10 ha. in rainfed area and 2.5 ha. in irrigated area.

Apart from above there is a provision to set up 100 Mobile Soil Testing Laboratories during current financial year 2014-15 against which funds to the tune of Rs. 23.68 crore have been released to different States for setting up 47 Mobile Soil Testing Labs (MSTLs).

[Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture and Cooperation),
F.No.6-5/2014-B & A, dated 23 April, 2015]

BALANCED USE OF FERTILIZERS

Recommendation (Para No. 27)

The higher usage of urea in comparison to other chemical fertilizers like Muriate of Potash (MoP), Phosphate and Potash is a cause of concern for the Committee. They are also aware that ignorance on part of our farmers on the usage of Muriate of Potash (MoP), Potassium and Phosphate drives

them to overuse urea as they believe that this would increase the size of their crop as well as Nitrogen content in the soil. Being well aware of the fact that this ignorance can only be overcome by educating our farmers on the judicious and balanced use of fertilizers, the Committee desire that training programmes be conducted at Panchayat Level before every sowing season. The field demonstrations could be carried out by Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs), so that farmers would have practical firsthand knowledge on balanced fertilizer usage, which would help in increasing production, productivity as well as sustaining the soil health of their fields.

Reply of the Government

Soil Health Management (SHM) component of National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) provide financial assistance for following trainings and demonstrations on the judicious and balanced use of fertilizers:—

- (i) Two days farmers training to educate the farmers about the importance of balanced use of fertilizers, organic manures and bio-fertilizers. Farmers training are mainly organized by the States before sowing season at village/panchayat level.
- (ii) Field demonstrations are conducted at farmer's field to demonstrate soil test based balanced fertilization. As per guidelines issued by Government of India, the State Governments can implement this component through ICAR Institutes/SAUs/KVKs/fertiliser industries.

[Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture and Cooperation),
F.No.6-5/2014-B & A, dated 23 April, 2015]

INCENTIVISING USE OF ORGANIC FERTILIZERS

Recommendation (Para No. 28)

Being enlightened to the fact that balanced use of chemical and organic fertilizers will ultimately help in nurturing our soil health, and also the fact that organic fertilizers in spite of their inherent superiority are not being given

their due, the Committee strongly recommend that the Government work in right earnest towards developing the organic fertilizer sector by providing various incentives to investors in infrastructure, manufacturing, quality assurance and marketing of organic fertilizers. They also recommend that the Department should give wide publicity to organic farming, so as to increase awareness amongst the farming community, as well as to involve young educated farmers in propagating organic fertilizers. They further desire the Government to emulate the cooperative channel for manufacture and distribution of organic fertilizers. This would ultimately help the farmers to choose between organic and chemical fertilizers without being dependant on any particular group with vested interests or pressure groups.

Reply of the Government

For developing the organic fertilizer sector, Government is providing the following incentives to investors in infrastructure, manufacturing, quality assurance and farmers under National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA):—

Sl. No.	Component	Pattern of Assistance
1	2	3
1.	Setting up of mechanized Fruit/Vegetable market waste/Agro waste compost production unit.	100% Assistance to State Govt./ Govt. Agencies upto a maximum limit of Rs. 190.00 lakh/unit and 33% of cost limited to Rs. 63 lakh/unit for individuals/private agencies through NABARD as capital investment for 3000 TPA production capacity.
2.	Setting up of State of art liquid/carrier based Bio-fertilizer/Bio-pesticide units	100% Assistance to State Govt./ Govt. Agencies upto a maximum limit of Rs. 160.00 lakh/unit and 25% of cost limited to Rs. 40 lakh/unit for individuals/private agencies through NABARD as capital investment of 200 TPA production capacity

1	2	3
3.	Setting up of Bio-fertilizer and Organic fertilizer testing Quality Control Laboratory (BOQCL) or Strengthening of existing Laboratory under FCO.	Assistance upto maximum limit of Rs. 85 lakh for new laboratory and upto a maximum limit of Rs. 45 lakh for strengthening of existing infrastructure to State Government Laboratory under Agriculture or Horticulture Department.
4.	Promotion of Organic Inputs on farmer's field (Manure, Vermi-compost, Bio-Fertilizers Liquid/solid, Waste compost, Herbal extracts etc.)	50% of cost subject to a limit of Rs. 5000/- per ha. and Rs. 10,000 per beneficiary. Propose to cover 1 million ha. area.
5.	Adoption of organic farming through cluster approach under Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) certification.	Rs. 20,000/- per ha. subject to maximum of Rs. 40,000/- per beneficiary for 3 year term.
6.	Organic Village adoption for manure management and biological nitrogen harvesting.	Rs. 10 lakhs/village for adoption of integrated manure management, planting of fertilizer trees on bunds and promotion of legume inter-cropping through groups/ SHGs etc. (Maximum 10 village per annum/ State will be supported).

Apart from the above, National Centre of Organic Farming (NCOF), Ghaziabad (a subordinate Centre under Min. of Agriculture) and its six Regional Centres situated at Panchkula, Jabalpur, Nagpur, Bengaluru, Bhubaneshwar and Imphal are engaged in promotion of organic farming through various means viz. literature distribution, arranging exhibitions, radio talk, T.V. programmes, newspaper coverage and training to farmers and State Government's agriculture officers. For disseminating technical

knowhow on organic farming to the farming community, NCOF is publishing bi-annual Bio-fertilizer Newsletter and Quarterly Organic Farming Newsletter which are distributed free of cost to all the State Agriculture Departments, State Agriculture Universities and NGOs which are doing work on agriculture related projects. In addition, NCOF/RCOFs are publishing various books and training manuals in Hindi and regional languages for free distribution.

[Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture and Cooperation),
F.No.6-5/2014-B & A, dated 23 April, 2015]

EARLY IMPLEMENTATION OF MISSION SOIL HEALTH CARD

Recommendation (Para No. 29)

There has been growing concern about the imbalance in the usage of different types of chemical fertilizers, resulting in deterioration of soil health and declining productivity. Department of Agriculture and Cooperation have attributed this factor to limited access to soil testing facilities which force farmers into blanket fertilizer recommendation. In order to correct this, a new Scheme “Mission Soil Health Card” is to be implemented from the current financial year; *i.e.* 2014-15. The Committee exhorts upon all the concerned agencies involved to grant clearance to this Scheme at the earliest so as to enable the implementation from this year itself. Further, the implementation of the Scheme should be time bound in regard to the exercise of soil testing and issuing of Soil Health Card (SHC). All agencies involved should coordinate their efforts and be assigned area-specific responsibilities for the efficiency of this vital Scheme.

Reply of the Government

The Scheme “Soil Health Card” has been approved for implementation during the remaining period of 12th Plan with an outlay of Rs. 568.54 crore. Under the scheme Soil Health Card will be provided to all farmers in the country at an interval of 3 years so as to enable the farmers to apply appropriate recommended dosages of nutrients for crop production and improving soil health and its fertility.

[Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture and Cooperation),
F.No.6-5/2014-B & A, dated 23 April, 2015]

CHAPTER III

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH THE
COMMITTEE DO NOT DESIRE TO PURSUE IN
VIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT'S REPLIES

-NIL-

CHAPTER IV

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE

MISMATCH BETWEEN PROPOSED AND ACTUAL ALLOCATION

Recommendation (Para No. 6)

The Committee are concerned to note the quantum variation in the funds sought by the Department and the actual allocation done by the Planning Commission/Ministry of Finance which seems to make a mockery of the extant planning process. The Department candidly admitted that the actual budgetary outlays for each year are decided by the Planning Commission in consultation with Ministry of Finance which decide the Gross Budgetary Support (GBS) for any particular year. The limits laid down by GBS results in the actual outlays for any Annual Plan falling short of the overall Plan Outlays as decided at the time of finalization of Five Year Plans, reflects the planning process in a poor light. The Committee view this exercise as a futile one, due to the mismatch between proposed/ approved outlay and the actual allocation. Further, they opine that reduction in approved allocation sends wrong signals to the farming community. Having witnessed this process during the course of the Eleventh Five Year Plan wherein Department of Agriculture and Cooperation's actual allocation did not match the approved outlay for the entire Plan, the Committee desire that allocation should be done as per planning and not planning as per allocation as is currently in vogue. They, therefore, impress upon all agencies involved in the planning process to arrive at a model wherein the figures of approved outlay and actual allocation are brought on an even keel to make the planning process rationale, realistic and meaningful.

Reply of the Government

The Department is in full agreement with the suggestion of the Committee.

[Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture and Cooperation),
F.No.6-5/2014-B & A, dated 23 April, 2015]

Comments of the Committee

For comments of the Committee please refer to Para No. 1.7 of Chapter-I of this Report.

SLOW PACED UTILIZATION OF FUNDS

Recommendation (Para No. 7)

Notwithstanding, the confidence exhibited by the Department that they would be able to absorb 53% of the balance approved outlay in the remaining two fiscals as these were finalized on the basis of realistic assessment of fund requirements, the Committee cannot but view this with cynicism. This is based on the past performance of the Department. They fail to understand as to how a Department that has been unable to fully utilize the RE funds (which itself is only 88%) during the years 2012-13 and 2013-14 be confident of absorbing 53% of the balance approved outlay in the remaining two fiscals. However, being optimists, they exhort upon the Department to impress upon all the implementing agencies to increase the pace of utilization of funds and submit Utilization Certificates (UCs) of earlier allocations promptly, so as to ensure an even pace of utilization of funds across all quarters in the remaining period of the Twelfth Plan and form the basis of upward revision of funds in future.

Reply of the Government

It may be pointed out that this Department had utilized 88% of the Budget Estimates (BE) during the year 2012-13 and almost 99.24% of the Revised Estimates (RE) during that year. Therefore, the performance of the Department during the year 2012-13 had been very good. Similarly, the

Department continued to perform well during the year 2013-14 in respect of RE. It is therefore felt that this Department would be able to absorb the balance approved outlay in the remaining two fiscals of the 12th Five Year Plan.

Further, the agencies implementing the schemes of DAC have been requested to expedite utilization of funds in the remaining part of the current year so as to ensure full utilization of available funds and thereafter spread the pace of expenditure in all the four quarters on even basis in order to avoid-under-utilization/undue rush in the last quarter. This would form the basis of upward revision of future funds.

[Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture and Cooperation),
F. No.6-5/2014-B & A, dated 23 April, 2015]

Comments of the Committee

For comments of the Committee please refer to Para No. 1.10 of Chapter-I of this Report.

INVESTMENT IN AGRICULTURE SECTOR

Recommendation (Para No. 9)

In spite of the increase in investment in Agriculture Sector being in the range of 8% to 14.2% per annum during 2004-05 to 2007-08 and public sector investment being in the range of 17.6% to 22.5%, the Committee are of the firm opinion that this amount is meagre considering the fact that agriculture is the principal source of livelihood for 54.6% of the populace. They further note that overall gross-capital formation in agriculture as a percentage of overall Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is 21.2% in 2012-13 and the share of private sector in this is 85%. Concerned to note that majority of the population *i.e.* 54.6% is living on 20% of the GDP, they exhort upon the Government to go for a quantum enhancement of public investment in agriculture sector at the earliest. This step, in their considered opinion would go a long way in making agriculture a sustainable and viable vocation for our agriculturists.

Reply of the Government

The Government has enhanced the Plan outlay of the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation (DAC) to Rs.1,34,746 crore for 12th Five Year Plan as against Rs.66,577 crore during 11th Five Year Plan.

[Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture and Cooperation),
F.No.6-5/2014-B&A, dated 23 April, 2015]

Comments of the Committee

For comments of the Committee please refer to Para No. 1.13 of Chapter I of this Report.

OUTSTANDING UTILIZATION CERTIFICATES

Recommendation (Para No. 11)

The issue of liquidation of Outstanding Utilization Certificates has been raised time and again by the Committee in their earlier Reports during the Fifteenth Lok Sabha. The Committee have been apprised that inspite of the efforts of Department of Agriculture and Cooperation (DAC), as on 01 April, 2014, 303 Utilization Certificates are still pending, amounting to Rs.634.01 crore. While noting the efforts put in by Department of Agriculture and Cooperation in regard to liquidation of Outstanding Utilization Certificates, they feel that the time has finally come to look at this vexed issued, afresh, so as to initiate corrective measures that would comprehensively dealt with the issue at hand. They, therefore, desire Department of Agriculture and Cooperation to pursue the matter proactively with all implementing agencies so as to be able to seek a lasting solution to this perennial problem. They should clearly indicate to the implementing agencies about availability of funds based on the utilization certificates in future to make the defaulting States/UTs fall in line.

Reply of the Government

The details of Outstanding Utilization Certificates as on date is as under:—

Details of Grant-1	No.	Amount
1	2	3
UCs outstanding in DAC for the Grants released upto 31.03.2012	1231	Rs. 4954.94 crore

1	2	3
UCs outstanding in DAC for the Grants released in financial year 2012-13	1228	Rs. 5790.72 crore
Total UCs outstanding in DAC as on 06.01.2015 for the Grants released upto 31.03.2013	2459	Rs. 10745.66 crore
Details of Grant-3	No.	Amount
UCs outstanding in DAC for the Grants released upto 31.03.2012	303	Rs. 634.01 crore
UCs outstanding in AHD&F for the Grants released in financial year 2012-13	327	Rs.1000.53 crore
Total UCs outstanding in AHD&F as on 06.01.2015 for the Grants released upto 31.03.2013	630	Rs.1634.64 crore

[Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture and Cooperation),
F.No.6-5/2014-B&A, dated 23 April, 2015]

Comments of the Committee

For comments of the Committee please refer to Para No. 1.16 of Chapter I of this Report.

STREAMLINING PROCESS OF GRANTS APPROVALS TO SCHEMES

Recommendation (Para No. 12)

The Committee have been time and again impressing upon the Government the need to revisit the process of granting multi-agency clearances to a scheme before it finally receives the sanction/approval for implementation. However, the results are yet to be shown in this critical area. Not wanting to be disillusioned by the systemic inadequacies, and keeping in perspective the overall development of Indian Agriculture, they hope that the three new schemes that have been announced in Budget 2014-15,

namely; (i) Soil Health Card, with an outlay of Rs.100.00 crore (ii) Price Stabilization Fund for Cereals and Vegetables, with an outlay of Rs.500 crore (iii) National Agri-Tech Infrastructure, with a outlay of Rs.100.00 crore are implemented in the current fiscal year itself, otherwise their viability would be severely restricted in the remaining years of Twelfth Plan period. The Committee also recommend that the Department should take up the matter with the concerned agencies at the highest level for single window clearance system so that the schemes see the light of the day at the earliest.

Reply of the Government

The Scheme “Soil Health Card” has been approved for implementation during the remaining period of 12th Plan with an outlay of Rs. 568.54 crore (Rs. 133.30 crore in 2014-15, Rs. 219.47 crore in 2015-16 and Rs. 215.77 crore in 2016-17). Under the scheme Soil Health Card will be provided to all farmers in the country at an interval of 3 years so as to enable the farmers to apply appropriate recommended dosages of nutrients for crop production and improving soil health and its fertility.

[Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture and Cooperation),
F.No.6-5/2014-B&A, dated 23 April, 2015]

Comments of the Committee

For comments of the Committee please refer to Para No. 1.19 of Chapter I of this Report.

WIDENING THE SCOPE OF AGRICULTURE CENSUS

Recommendation (Para No. 16)

The Committee also impress upon the Government to widen the scope of the agri-census so as to enable it to include all the parameters concerning Indian Agriculture, and make it comprehensive in all respects. They were apprised by the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation that no data is being collected on number of farmers leaving agriculture under agri-census. However, in their document titled ‘Agriculture Statistics at a Glance 2013’ it has been illustrated the percentage of cultivators has declined from 71.9% in 1951, 45.19% in 2011, *i.e.* a decline of 26.71% while the percentage of agricultural labourers has increased from 28.1% in 1951 to 54.9% in 2011, *i.e.* an increase of 26.8%. The Committee advise Department of Agriculture

& Cooperation to furnish factually accurate information to them. Deprecating this vital component being ignored, the Committee exhort upon the Government to include this vital parameter specifically in the next Agri. Census *i.e.* 2015-16 as in their considered opinion this would help the Government in further fine tuning their schemes to ensure that very few farmers give up on agriculture in the future.

Reply of the Government

In this regard, it may be clarified that the information provided in “Agriculture Statistics at a Glance 2013” in Table 2.3 (a) on Population and Agriculture Workers is from the latest available Census results conducted by the Registrar General of India, which *inter-alia*, shows that the number of Cultivators have increased from 69.9 million in 1951 to 118.7 million in 2011 whereas, number of Agricultural Labourers have increased from 27.3 million to 144.3 million during the same period. This indicates that the number of agricultural workers have increased in absolute terms in both cases, *i.e.* cultivators and agricultural labourers. However, the relative increases in case of agricultural labourers have been much higher which resulted in the higher percentage share of the latter in total agriculture workers.

[Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture and Cooperation),
F.No.6-5/2014-B&A, dated 23 April, 2015]

Comments of the Committee

For comments of the Committee please refer to Para No. 1.22 of Chapter I of this Report.

REDUCTION IN UNIT AREA OF INSURANCE TO FIELD LEVEL

Recommendation (Para No. 22)

Guided by Department of Agriculture & Cooperation’s candid admittance of the shortcomings of the NAIS, MNAIS, WBCIS and CPIS, the Committee desire that Department of Agriculture & Cooperation work upon these shortcomings so as to further increase the viability of these agri-insurance schemes, as well as achieve the target coverage during the Twelfth Plan period. In particular, the poor density of automatic weather stations which hamper settlement of claims. They further desire that the unit area

of insurance be reduced to a field from present village/village Panchayat Level and the crop coverage under NCIP be widened.

Reply of the Government

The reduction in the unit of insurance to field level will definitely be the ideal situation and lead to more realistic assessment of crop losses and payment of compensation to individual farmer. But it will require to conduct greater number of Crop Cutting Experiments (CCEs)/weather data for assessing the yield of the insured crop at each field level. Implementing States are not in a position to undertake additional Crop Cutting Experiments (CCEs) because of limited infrastructure facilities with them. Though, Government has reduced the insurance unit area to village/village panchayat level and provides incentives to the State Governments, as the States implementing MNAIS at village/village panchayat level are entitled to 50% reimbursement of incremental expenses on Crop Cutting Experiments from Government of India. States, which are unable to reduce insurance unit at village/village panchayat, could be allowed by Government of India to implement at higher unit area level - upto a cluster of maximum 15 villages for first 3-5 years under NCIP. Further, under MNAIS, there is already a provision of payment of claims on the basis of individual field/farm due to localized calamities like hailstorm and landslide and add on/Index cover under WBCIS.

Keeping in view the large number of fragmented holdings and lack of yield data/weather data of individual farms and the lack of infrastructure and preparedness at State level, it may not be administratively possible at present, to implement crop insurance scheme at individual level on cost effective basis.

[Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture and Cooperation),
F.No.6-5/2014-B&A, dated 23 April, 2015]

Comments of the Committee

For comments of the Committee please refer to Para No. 1.25 of Chapter I of this Report.

BACKLOG IN SETTLEMENT OF APPROVED CLAIMS

Recommendation (Para No. 24)

Having lauded the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation for the increased utilization of funds for various agri-insurance schemes in the first

two years of the Twelfth Plan period, the Committee are discerned to note the huge backlog of settlement of claims. Much to their chagrin they note that while insurance companies are over zealous while collecting insurance premium from farmers, their zeal gets diluted when the issue of settlement of insurance claims arises. The data furnished to the Committee relates to pendency of claims, that have been approved, but for reasons best known to insurance companies alone, have not been paid to the poor farmer. This delay further compounds the misery of farmers who had been victims of the vagaries of nature. Although Department of Agriculture & Cooperation is not the agency responsible for settlement of claims, yet, the Committee are of the considered opinion that being the nodal agency for agri-insurance scheme, it is duly bound to ensure timely settlement of claims by the insurance companies. Accordingly, they exhort the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation to devise a mechanism for timely settlement of approved claims in order to give relief to the already harassed farmer on account of unforeseen accident/calamity.

Reply of the Government

For settlement of claims under the crop Insurance schemes (NAIS, MNAIS & WBCIS), there is requirement of payment of requires premium subsidy and claim share by the State Governments. Most of the outstanding claims are due to non-receipt of either or both of the above shares from the State Governments. To clear the outstanding claims, insurance companies remain in constant touch with the concerned State Governments for the release of required funds. In few cases of non-loanee farmers, claims remain outstanding for want of few documents from the insured, for which the company constantly remains in touch with the insured for providing the required documents.

As nodal Ministry, it has been the endeavour of this Ministry to release its share in claims &/or subsidy in time and persuade the State Governments from time to time to release their share in time so that the claims of farmers could be settled in time-bound manner.

[Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture and Cooperation),
F.No.6-5/2014-B&A, dated 23 April, 2015]

Comments of the Committee

For comments of the Committee please refer to Para No. 1.28 of Chapter I of this Report.

CHAPTER V

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH FINAL REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT ARE STILL AWAITED

NATIONAL POLICY FOR FARMERS (NPF), 2007

Recommendation (Para No. 13)

The National Policy for Farmers (NPF), 2007 aims at improving economic viability of farming and increasing net income of farmers and many of the schemes/programmes being implemented by Central and State Governments are as per its provision. An Inter-Ministerial Committee was set up under the Chairmanship of the Principal Adviser in the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation for preparation of a Plan of Action for operationalisation for NPF, 2007. This Committee identified 201 points where necessary action was to be taken. Out of these 201 points, 64 relate exclusively to Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, another 64 relate exclusively to other Central Departments/Ministries and 73 points are common to Department of Agriculture and Cooperation and other Departments. The Committee express their dissatisfaction over the fact that even after a lapse of almost seven years, 26 points still remain for further action. Notwithstanding, the argument put forth by Department of Agriculture and Cooperation that they are regularly implementing the pending action points the Committee desire that Department of Agriculture and Cooperation take up this matter at the highest level with the concerned Department so that pending action on the remaining 26 points is completed at the earliest by all concerned.

Reply of the Government

The Department is consistently pursuing the matter with concerned Ministries/Departments/Organizations for early implementation of pending

action points for Operationalization of National Policy for Farmers (NPF), 2007.

[Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture and Cooperation),
F.No.6-5/2014-B&A, dated 23 April, 2015]

AGRICULTURE CENSUS

Recommendation (Para No. 14)

The Committee are despaired to note that the final data for agri-census 2010-11 is yet to be finalized even in the year 2014. In today's world of information technology where emphasis is laid upon timely availability of data, this laxity for data pertaining to agri-census 2010-11 cannot be condoned. They, therefore, recommend that the Central Ministry impress upon all the implementing agencies to collect the relevant data and forward the same to them for final compilation and release.

Reply of the Government

Agriculture Census is conducted, in three phases, at an interval of five years, to collect data on operational holdings in the country. During Phase-I of the Census, data on number and area of operational holdings is collected. In Phase-II, detailed data on various characteristics such as land use, cropping pattern, dispersal of holdings etc. are collected. Phase-III of the Census referred to as 'Input Survey', relates to collection of data on input use pattern of operational holdings in the country and is conducted as a follow up survey to the Agriculture Census with reference year as year next to the reference year of the Agriculture Census.

The field work for Agriculture Census (Phase-I and Phase-II) starts after the close of Agriculture Year. For example, field work for Agriculture Census with reference year 2010-11 commenced in July 2011 and that for Input Survey 2011-12, in July 2012. It is worth mentioning that prior to the current Census *i.e.* Agriculture Census 2010-11, normally, it used to take 4-5 years to release results of the Census. However, for Agriculture Census 2010-11, several measures were taken for expediting the census work. As a result, the time-lag in releasing the results has been considerably reduced as compared to previous Censuses. The results of Phase-I of the Agriculture

Census 2010-11 were released within one year three months. The provisional results of Phase-II of the Census have also been released in July, 2014 in a record time of 3 years and detailed data is being examined for finalization.

Phase-III of the Agriculture Census data (Input Survey 2011-12) has been tabulated for 27 States/UTs. The remaining States/UTs are being pursued vigorously for expeditious completion of the remaining work.

[Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture and Cooperation),
F. No. 6-5/2014-B&A, dated 23 April, 2015]

AGRICULTURE CENSUS

Recommendation (Para No. 15)

Notwithstanding, the delay in publishing of data of agri-census 2010-11, the Committee express their satisfaction on being apprised that provision of collection of data on soil testing has been introduced in the ongoing agri-census. Declining soil health due to reckless overuse of chemical fertilizers has, in some instances, resulted in cases of soil poisoning, which poses a real threat to our agriculture. Only when the Government would have authentic data on our soil health can it go for comprehensive measures for nurturing our soil health. The Committee look forward to speedy data collection and its availability in the public domain.

Reply of the Government

All possible efforts are being made to bring out the results of Phase-III of Agriculture Census 2010-11 in shortest possible time.

The Government has taken serious note of the declining status of soil health in some areas of the country. The Soil Health Card scheme was launched in 2014 with an objective of assessing the soil health of our farms and identifying area-specific nutrient deficiencies. The schemes envisages issuing Soil Health Cards to all farmers in the country at an interval of 3 years so as to enable the farmers to apply appropriate recommended dosages of nutrients for crop production and improving soil health and its fertility.

[Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture and Cooperation),
F. No. 6-5/2014-B&A, dated 23 April, 2015]

CONTINUATION OF NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL INSURANCE SCHEME (NAIS) BY SOME STATES

Recommendation (Para No. 23)

The Committee have been informed that some States have requested for continuation of National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS) during the current plan period, for reasons best known to them. However, the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation's stand on the issue is that uniform implementation of National Crop Insurance Programme (NCIP) would have been better for smoother development of crop insurance in the country. The Committee in the instant case concur with the stand of Department of Agriculture & Cooperation based on the assumption the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation would have sought the views of all States/UTs before having come with NCIP. They, therefore, impress upon Department of Agriculture & Cooperation to convince the States that are skeptical about implementing NCIP, the benefits of this new scheme and insist upon implementation of NAIS. Further, taking note of the fact that MNAIS is an improvement upon NAIS and is one of the component of NCIP, the Committee further recommend that the Ministry of Agriculture work towards an closure within this financial year of the NAI Scheme so as to bring a semblance of uniformity that would help in the smooth implementation of NCIP throughout the Country in this Plan period.

Reply of the Government

The National Crop Insurance Programme (NCIP) has been introduced after due discussions and consultations with all the stakeholders including State Governments/UT Governments. The major objection on the part of States in implementation of NCIP is the increase in premium rates under MNAIS and WBCIS components. There is no denial that the rates of premium has increased under these components due to improvements/additional features like reduction of unit area to village/village panchayat level; indemnity for prevented sowing/planting risk & for post harvest losses due to cyclone in coastal areas; on account payment up to 25% of likely claims as immediate relief; more proficient basis for calculation of threshold yield; indemnity level of 80% and 90% etc.

However, the Government is considering introduce a comprehensive insurance instrument to protect the farmers against both yield loss and price fluctuations. Ministry is in the process of inviting views of various stakeholders to evolve an acceptable insurance instrument to ensure farmers against yield loss and price volatility. Hon'ble Union Agriculture Minister wrote to the Chief Ministers/Administrators of all the States/UTs soliciting their suggestions in this regard. Three meetings have been convened recently in the Ministry with the State Governments/empanelled insurance companies and other stakeholders to solicit their views. The suggestions received in this regard are being examined with a view to develop an insurance product which would find acceptability with farmers and insurance companies alike.

[Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture and Cooperation),
F. No. 6-5/2014-B&A, dated 23 April, 2015]

NEW DELHI;
06 August, 2015
15 Shravana, 1937 (Saka)

HUKM DEO NARAYAN YADAV,
Chairperson,
Committee on Agriculture.

ANNEXURE

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
(2014-15)

MINUTES OF THE THIRTY FIRST SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee met on Thursday, the 6th August, 2015 from 1000 hrs. to 1040 hrs. in Room No. 138 (Third Floor), Chamber of the Chairperson, Parliament House, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Shri Hukm Deo Narayan Yadav—*Chairperson*

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Sanganna Amarappa
3. Prof. Ravindra Vishwanath Gaikwad
4. Shri Nalin Kumar Kateel
5. Md. Badaruddoza Khan
6. Shri C. Mahendran
7. Dr. Tapas Mandal
8. Shri Dalpat Singh Paraste
9. Shri Mukesh Rajput
10. Shri Satyapal Singh

Rajya Sabha

11. Smt. Renuka Chowdhury
12. Mohd. Ali Khan
13. Shri Darshan Singh Yadav

SECRETARIAT

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------|---|-------------------------|
| 1. | Shri Abhijit Kumar | — | <i>Joint Secretary</i> |
| 2. | Shri N.K. Pandey | — | <i>Director</i> |
| 3. | Shri C. Vanlalruata | — | <i>Deputy Secretary</i> |
| 4. | Shri Sumesh Kumar | — | <i>Under Secretary</i> |

2. At the outset the Chairperson welcomed the members to the Sitting of the Committee. The Committee, then, took up the following draft Reports:—

- (i) Memorandum No. 7 pertaining to the Draft Action Taken Report on recommendations/observations contained in the 3rd Report of the Committee on Agriculture (2014-15) on 'Demands for Grants (2014-15)' of Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture & Cooperation).

*(ii) *** *** *** *** *** ***

*(iii) *** *** *** *** *** ***

*(iv) *** *** *** *** *** ***

3. After some deliberations, the Committee adopted the draft Reports without any amendments and authorized the Chairperson to finalise the Reports and present the same to Parliament.

The Committee then adjourned.

*Matters not related to this Report.

APPENDIX

(Vide Para 4 of Introduction of the Report)

ANALYSIS OF ACTION TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT ON THE THIRD REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE (2014-15) ON 'DEMANDS FOR GRANTS (2014-15)' OF THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION)

(i)	Total number of Recommendations	29
(ii)	Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government	
	Para Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29	
	Total	17
	Percentage	58.62%
(iii)	Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies	
	Para No. Nil	
	Total	NIL
	Percentage	0%
(iv)	Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee	
	Para Nos. 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 16, 22, 24	
	Total	08
	Percentage	27.59%
(v)	Observations/Recommendations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited	
	Para Nos. 13, 14, 15, 23	
	Total	04
	Percentage	13.79%

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