

Title: Need to waive interest on loans taken by farmers from various financial institutions in Karnataka.

SHRI G. PUTTA SWAMY GOWDA (HASSAN): There is a steep rise in the cases of farmers committing suicide in the country, particularly in Karnataka. It is alarming. Last month itself, that is, during January, 2003 six farmers committed suicide in Chikmagalur District of Karnataka. During the last six months, several farmers have committed suicide. These include coffee, tobacco and *toor dal* growers. Due to failure of monsoon in Karnataka, the farmers are in distress.

The farmers have taken loans from different banks and cooperative societies. At present, they are not in a position to repay the agricultural loans and its interest.

It is high time for the Government of India to extend its helping hand to Karnataka Government by giving financial help for the benefit of farmers.

I urge upon the hon. Finance Minister of India to direct all banks and other financial institutions to waive off interest on agricultural loan, to allow sufficient time for the farmers to repay the loans in instalments, and a part of the loan should also be exempted.