

Title: Need to evolve a co-ordinated plan to provide free electricity to agricultural sector.

*** SHRI D. VENUGOPAL (TIRUPPATTUR):** Sir, our national agricultural policy must help to meet the essential needs of the farmers like irrigation facilities, improved seeds, modern agricultural techniques and technology. Farmers must have easy access to water resources, water management techniques, soil testing facilities and land development methods improving its fertility. Globalisation has led to decrease in subsidies to agricultural sector. The world cannot survive without water and so is agriculture without basic irrigation facilities. At a time when dry lands are in abundance, the Government must take upon itself to provide free electricity to irrigation pumps as a fundamental duty.

Hence, I urge upon the Union Government to implement a uniform policy of providing free electricity to irrigation pumps throughout the country without seeking umbrage under the fact that agriculture and power distribution are in the State List.

I urge upon the Union Government's Ministries like Finance, Power, Agriculture and Rural Development to evolve a co-ordinated plan with the Prime Minister to provide free electricity for agriculture to greatly benefit Tamil Nadu and all the States of the country.

*** Translation of the speech originally delivered in Tamil.**