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Title : Need to provide special economic package for the drought and flood affected farmers of Alappuzha district in Kerala.

DR. K.S. MANOJ (ALLEPPEY): Kuttanad of Alappuzha district of Kerala is well known as the 'Rice Bowl of Kerala'. Requirement of rice, which is the staple food of Kerala, is partly met by the Paddy cultivators in Kuttanad. There are two crops of paddy cultivation in Kuttanad. During the last 2 – 3 years, majority of the paddy fields were affected by drought, floods and also by saline water intrusion into the paddy fields and the farmers suffered a loss and were in debt trap. Also during the last season, procurement of paddy by State Civil Supplies Corporation was not adequate. Since the procurement prices given by FCI is very low when compared to the actual expenses incurred by the cultivators. This also added to the misery of the poor farmers. Many are withdrawing from agriculture since farming is a losing job. If this continues, it will affect our food security. Farmers are not committing suicide only because of their mental strength. Also it is not fair, that we would provide help only if they commit suicide.

So, I urge upon the Government to declare Vidharbha like package to Kuttanad and save farmers from debt trap and suicide.