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Title: Need to provide cold storage facilities to farmers and to set up vocational training centres on agro-marketing, preservation and processing.

SHRIMATI ARCHANA NAYAK (KENDRAPARA): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to bring the following matter for the kind consideration of the hon. Minister of Agriculture.

Agriculture is the main source of income of more than 70 per cent of the population of our country. Our agricultural technology is centuries old and the latest technological innovations are neither affordable to our farmers nor majority of them are aware about it. Even though the farmers are the backbone of the nation, they live in abject poverty. Every fourth person of our country is living below the poverty line. That means 26 crore people of our country are very poor.

A lot of fresh vegetables, fruits and grains are perish due to lack of cold-storage facilities or improper storage space with our farmers. The vegetables and fruits can be processed and value-added. The multinational companies are earning huge profits by utilizing the availability of enough quantity of perishable fruits and vegetables in our country. At the same time, our poor farmers who work hard throughout their life ever remain in debt and poverty. Even after sixty years of Independence our farmers are forced to commit suicide.

Our agriculture can be improved by making the farmers technologically competent at the same time by setting up modern cold-storage facilities, proper procurement arrangements and extending credit facilities at low interest. We need more skilled personnel in agricultural sector so that our production, processing and marketing can be modernized.

I would, therefore, urge upon the hon. Minister of Agriculture to take urgent necessary steps for setting up of more vocational training centres on agro-marketing, preservation and processing of agricultural products. It will go a long way in increasing the economic growth of our country.