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Title: Need to fix a higher Minimum Support Price for paddy.

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI): Sir, paddy is one of the most important crop produced in the Southern States in the country particularly in Tamil Nadu and the majority of farmers are engaged in the production of the same. But the farmers are not getting necessary assistance and adequate support price for their produce. Due to this, the farmers in these States are driven to poverty and some of them even committed suicides.

Recently, the Union Government had fixed Minimum Support Price (MSP) for wheat, paddy, etc. The MSP for wheat has been substantially increased from Rs. 750/- to Rs. 1,000/- a quintal. However, the MSP is fixed at Rs. 645/- and Rs. 695/- a quintal for two varieties of paddy. The incentive given to wheat farmers has not extended to the paddy farmers. The MSP for paddy in the last four years was just 17% as compared to 35% in the case of wheat. Recently Government announced additionally 50 Rs. Per quintal even though that is not sufficient.

Over the years, the cost of cultivation of paddy had increased substantially. The substantial fall in the availability of agriculture labour in rural areas ultimately leading to increase in the labour cost. The wide variation between the market price of paddy and the MSP fixed by the Centre should be removed.

I shall, therefore, urge upon the Union Government either the MSP for paddy be fixed at a higher level or a special incentive price for paddy should be announced at the earliest.