

>

Title : Regarding the issue of sugarcane growers in the country.

KUMARI RAMYA DIVYASPANDANA (MANDYA): Respected Deputy-Speaker, I thank you for giving an opportunity to make my maiden speech today.

I would like to speak about how sugarcane cultivation can curb global warming. I come from a constituency called Mandya in Karnataka where most of the population is farmers. They mostly do farming. If we look at the world today, we may find that America is the first country in ethanol production and that is produced from a by-product of corn. Then there is Brazil which is the second largest producer of ethanol and 44 per cent of their public transport is run using ethanol. I feel that India, being the second largest producer of sugarcane in the world, is still not able to tap this market. The way forward is the Green Revolution and we have to find ways and means of how we can preserve what we have been given so that our future generation can have a better future.

I feel that this is only possible if we insulate the farmers. What is happening in my constituency is that there is lack of awareness among the farmers who grow sugarcane. They do not do crop rotation and hence soil is being eroded. Now it has marshy land. They do not realize the potential in sugarcane which is actually a cash crop and a super crop. The only way by which, I feel, we can insulate the farmers is as follows. When there is a lean season and when we are not doing well, the Government is supposed to fix a minimum support price every year. There seems to be a time gap within which the farmers seem to be suffering. It is because they have not been able to fix the price on time. To solve this problem, we can set aside five per cent of the profits as a corpus fund when the sugar factories are making money during their good period. When the time is not so good, they can release those funds which will help the farmers.

The other point is, they can give subsidies so that they can do drip irrigation resulting in more yield. Though the time factor may be a problem for farmers, if we give them subsidies, that will also be able to protect them. We do not have to depend on weather because drip irrigation and hybrid version of sugarcane will also help farmers.

I am a bit nervous today because there are a lot of Members speaking at the same time. But I would appeal to the Government to protect the farmers, specially the sugarcane growers.

The other point is, even though production of ethanol has increased from five per cent to ten per cent, I have been told that the petroleum companies are complaining because of the erratic supply of sugarcane. I think this can be curbed if we insulate the farmers in such a way that there will be constant supply of sugarcane and they will be able to blend accordingly, that is, from five per cent to ten percent. Like I said, 44 per cent of Brazil's public transport runs on ethanol. We will be able to bring our import bills down if we produce ethanol ourselves and use it.

I thank you all for your patience and time. I thank you, Deputy-Speaker Sir for the opportunity which you have given me. I thank all the Members of Parliament across all parties. I came during the by-elections. All of you have been so warm, friendly and helpful to me. I thank you all very much. ...(*Interruptions*)

-

-