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Title: Need to provide more jobs to the workers of Andhra Pradesh and other parts of the country under MNREGA.

SHRI SURESH KUMAR SHETKAR (ZAHEERABAD): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to draw the kind attention of the august House to the dire need to include agriculture related works and its workers in the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme.

The Planning Commission in its recent report has stated that the performance of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme remains patchy despite making a significant overall impact in providing rural job schemes. It is also estimated that only 14 per cent worker households could gain 100 days of work. It was estimated that in 2009-10, some five crore families were provided around 300 crore person-days of work under the prestigious scheme. This was more than three times the employment generated in 2006-07.

In the four years that the job guarantee programme had been in force, it had managed to provide some 600 crore person-days of work at a total expenditure of around Rs. 70,000 crore. What was even more remarkable was the coverage of SCs, STs and women under the scheme. Nowadays agriculture related jobs are vanishing and the workers are migrating and depending on other jobs. We have already set a goal to achieve 4 per cent growth rate in agriculture, but we are hovering around two to three per cent only. This situation needs to be addressed on a war footing to improve the overall growth of our economy for double digit. Agriculture related works need to be included in Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme not only in Andhra Pradesh, but all over the country in the current year itself with sufficient allocations.

The share of SC/ST families in the work provided under MGNREGA in the past four years ranged between 51 and 56 per cent while that of women was 41 and 50 per cent during the corresponding period. If the Government includes agricultural works, it will definitely increase the GDP growth rate and poor people will take up these works enthusiastically and as a profession and improve the production of various food items to meet the growing needs of the people of our country. We can also avoid the imports of various food items with such inclusions and can also save the economy.

Jobs will be increased in all the States automatically with the inclusion of Agriculture related jobs in Mahatma Gandhi NREGA by taking it as a pilot scheme and we can bring a second Green Revolution by increasing the minimum days of work to more than 150.

I, therefore, request the hon. Minister of Rural Development, through the Chair, to include agriculture and related jobs under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme in the current Five-Year Plan.

SHRIMATI BOTCHA JHANSI LAKSHMI (VIZIANAGARAM): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to associate myself with the issue raised by hon. Member Shri Suresh Kumar Shetkar, of need to include agriculture related and other works in the shelf of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme.