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Title: Need to set up more Agricultural Universities with a view to meet the requirement of qualified Agricultural Professionals in the country.

SHRI S.S. RAMASUBBU (TIRUNELVELI): Mr. Chairman, I will be brief. Agriculture sector accounts for 30 per cent of our country's GDP and employs around fifty per cent of the work force throughout the country. Now-a-days, through the MNREGA, our Government has given employment opportunities for the rural people in many ways. Due to this the purchasing power of the people has increased. There is a shortage of field workers in agriculture and their availability has reduced enormously. So, we have to improve the scientific innovations and new technologies which have become highly research oriented. We have to change our agriculture pattern to improve the productivity and also the production in our country. We need more agricultural graduates. In order to do that, we need more agriculture graduates and diploma holders to do this research work. There is a general misconception that there are not enough job opportunities for agriculture graduates amongst our educated youngsters. Now, most of the youngsters from the rural areas, even those who belong to agricultural families, are not ready to study agriculture. They are now shifting to other engineering studies, like mechanical engineering and computer engineering and they are going out to get employment opportunities. Due to this reduction in the availability of agriculture graduates and technicians, we have to introduce new modern methods of buffer stock innovations. We need more agriculture graduates. Every year we are producing only 10,000 to 15,000 graduates. So, we need more agriculture graduates and diploma holders. In order to attain self-sufficiency and improve the output in agriculture, there is a need for qualified labour in this sector. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please tell the Minister as to what do you want. It is not a debate. You just have to tell as to what do you want.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI S.S. RAMASUBBU (TIRUNELVELI): To reach this goal, the Union Government, in coordination with the State Governments, should set up more agriculture universities in various parts of the country and more and more students should be encouraged to take up agriculture as a career option as the employment prospects are much better in these days. Thank you.