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Title: Need to give remunerative price to rice growers and to provide loan facility to tenant farmers.

SHRI G.V. HARSHA KUMAR (AMALAPURAM): I would like to raise an issue concerning farmers of the East Godavari District of Andhra Pradesh. My Parliamentary constituency, Amalapuram is a part of East Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh. East Godavari and West Godavari Districts of Andhra Pradesh are known as the State's rice bowl for more than 100 years. Previously, this area was not fertile enough but after Sir Arthur Cotton's Annicut on river Godavari, these two districts have become very fertile. But due to continuous natural disasters like last year's five cyclones in the area and due to modernization of the river and canals, farmers have been suffering for long.

Despite a bumper yield of paddy in the rabi season this year, about 80,000 acres of land in the district has been kept away from paddy cultivation by the farmers. The reasons are lack of good remunerative policy, lack of storage facilities and inadequate supply of quality seeds. The farmers were forced to resort to distress sales of their products because paddy trucks were waiting outside godowns for storage but the authorities were not bothered. They have space for liquor but not for food grains. This is the situation in our State. All these problems forced farmers to announce for themselves 'crop holiday' for upcoming season instead of loosing heavily on cultivation. This is perhaps the first time in the country that paddy farmers have resorted to such a drastic step, that too in a Green Revolution belt. It is very unfortunate.

The tenant farmers, we call them as *Kavulu Rythu*, are the worst affected in this situation. Although the State Government announced a scheme, '*Sagu Rythu Rakshana Hastam*', making tenant farmers eligible for loans and other benefits, the banks are not giving loans to tenant farmers as the owners have already taken loans. The tenant farmers are taking loans from private people and are becoming debt-ridden. It is unfortunate that in the last two to three weeks four farmers have committed suicide. I would request that the banks should be instructed to offer soft loans to the groups of tenant farmers. It is appreciable that UPA Government has permitted export of 10,000 MT rice but it is not good enough as the farmers did not benefit directly by this step.

Hence, I would request the Government to depute a high level Central Team to study the situation and to find a permanent solution to the problems faced by the farmers in this area.