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Title: Problem faced by farmers due to fall in onion prices.

SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI (DHARWAD): Sir, thank you very much for giving me this opportunity. In the State of Karnataka, especially in Northern part of Karnataka, in districts like Hubli, Dharward, Belgaum etc, the farmers are on the streets because the onion prices have come down to the extent of just Rs. 100 to Rs. 200 per quintal. It is surprising that while we are discussing the issue of price rise here, including that of onion prices, because the prices of other commodities have reached the sky, but unfortunately in the entire State of Karnataka, especially in Northern Karnataka the farmers are on the streets because of the low prices of onions.

Sir, we are witnessing a strange situation that while the prices of commodities are rising in the local markets despite a good harvest, yet the farmers are not getting remunerative prices for their produce and this is a usual phenomenon almost every season. In every season we are witnessing this. We also are witnessing a situation that at one end of the country onion prices are sky-rocketing while at the other end the onion growing farmers are protesting by dumping their produce on the roads for not getting remunerative prices and this is time that the Government should intervene in the matter.

It is really time for all of us to sit and think about this important issue which concerns both consumers and onion growing farmers. Basically, the Government should adopt a long-term export policy as a first step because the frequent changes in imposing ban on onion export and reduction of import duties have, most of the time, caused hardships to both onion growers and the consumers which has allowed the middlemen to reap the fortunes. There is also a complaint of the onion growing farmers of Karnataka and other Southern States about sudden ban being imposed on exports at a time when there is a huge supply in the markets after the harvest in the month of September in these regions. Usually in Karnataka onion

harvesting takes place in the months of August and September, since the crop is a Kharif based crop, resulting in collapse of prices in the local markets. Sometimes, the supply is so high that most of it get rotten for lack of trading opportunities and the farmers suffer heavily. Sometimes even when there is no ban, the MEP is so high that it becomes impossible for the farmers to export. The abrupt and unscientific way of export and import policy of onion has neither helped farmers nor the consumers in our country.

India is one of the large onion growing countries and it is expedient for the Government to have a market and farmer oriented export policy and help stabilize onion markets locally. Moreover, when the farmers are suffering so much, there is no supply chain and there is no cold storage and the people are on the streets. The Government of India should intervene in the matter.