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Title: Need to increase Minimum Support Price of coconut copra for the benefit of poor coconut growers.

SHRI K. SUGUMAR (POLLACHI): Sir, my Parliamentary Constituency, Pollachi in Tamil Nadu is a place where most of the people are engaged in agricultural activities. Most of the agriculturists are involved in coconut cultivation. The agriculturists have to spend more money for the production of coconut whereas the prices of coconut and coconut copra are very low compared to the cultivation expenses. So, the agriculturists are facing huge losses and severe financial crisis. The price of coconut copra was Rs.75 last year in the open market but now the price came down to Rs.40 per kilo, *i.e.*, Rs.35 less than last year. But the prices of fertilizers and wages for agricultural labour have doubled compared to last year. The prices of cultivable land have also increased in comparison to previous year. Due to the fall in the prices of coconut copra, the cultivable lands are being converted into residential plots. If the situation continues the total agricultural activities will be heavily spoiled.

On the advice of our hon. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Dr. Puratchitalavi Amma, the same issue has been raised by me in this House earlier also and in the meetings of the Consultative Committee attached to the Ministry of Agriculture. The Government at the Centre announced Rs.51 as the Minimum Support Price for coconut copra. But the Minimum Support Price announced by the Government of India is not sufficient to meet the expenses incurred by the farmers.

Therefore, I, on behalf of the poor coconut growers of my Constituency, once again appeal to the Government to announce a Minimum Support Price of Rs.70 for coconut copra and to prevent the agricultural land being converted into the residential flats.