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Title: Regarding fixing the MSP of green leaf tea and providing subsidized fertilizer to vegetable farmers.

SHRI C. GOPALAKRISHNAN (NILGIRIS): Hon. Chairman, Sir, Vanakkam. Before raising the issue, I extend my sincere gratitude to my leader, Puratchi Thalaivi, Amma, who selected and sent me to this august House and again with the blessings of Puratchi Thalaivi, Amma, I raise the important and urgent public issue.

Respected Chairman, Sir, Nilgiri district in Tamil Nadu is a hilly area. The main occupation for livelihood of the people of Nilgiri is tea and vegetable farming. There are several small tea growers. Frequent rain, landslide and other natural calamities caused heavy damages to these agricultural crops in this area. At present, it is predicted by the Meteorological Department of the Government of India that there will be less than average and low rainfall in these areas. This will lead to a heavy loss to both – tea growers and vegetable farmers. The tea growers are also facing huge losses because of unsold tea even after a marginal decrease in the rates of tea.

Since the power of fixation of MSP is vested in the Government of India, it requires a scientific human approach while fixing the MSP. It should not be dictated by the artificial market forces. The endeavour of the Government of India must be to provide a realistic price in respect of green leaf produced by the small tea growers. It must be based upon the ground realities and the cost of production incurred. The small tea growers are entitled for a reasonable return and the Centre should fix the Minimum Support Price as it did for sugarcane and rubber growers.

Regarding vegetable farming, I would say that many exclusive varieties of English vegetables are grown with utmost care undergoing many hardships by the farmers of Nilgiri. The production of vegetable is not up to the mark because of heavy rise in fertilizer cost. The production can be increased if subsidised fertilizer and other agricultural inputs are supplied to the suffering farmers.

Hence I urge upon the Government to take corrective measures by fixing the MSP of green leaf tea for small tea growers and providing subsidised fertilizer to vegetable farmers.

Hon. Chairman, Sir, I once again thank my leader Amma and the people of my constituency, who supported and elected me in the 16th Lok Sabha.