

During my recent visit to Buldana, my Lok Sabha constituency, I had discussion with the officials and I visited some difficult villages also. Out of 1392 villages in the district 397 villages are facing this problem. Because of lack of finance the problem has not been solved. Similar kind of situation exists in the other part of the State.

I request the hon. Minister to give necessary direction and the necessary finance to the State Government to solve the problem at the earliest.

- (v) Need to release adequate funds by the Centre to the Uttar Pradesh Government to meet the unprecedented drought situation in the State.

SHRI CHANDRA MOHAN SINGH NEGI (Garhwal): Eight Hill Districts of Uttar Pradesh, i.e. Pauri Garhwal, Almora, Pithoragargh, Tehri Garhwal, Chamoli, Uttar Kashi, Dehradun and Nainital are facing severe drought condition resulting in damage of more than 50% of the Rabi crops and acute scarcity of drinking water. The above condition is also prevailing in 12 other districts i.e. Allahabad, Banda, Kanpur Rural, Hamirpur, Saharanpur, Mirzapur, Varanasi, Jhansi, Agra, Jaunpur, Ghasipur and Etah. Uttar Pradesh Government has requested the Army to provide 100 tankers and 175 canvas bags for transporting drinking water to the people of the affected area.

The Government of India should meet the demand of the State Government immediately and also release adequate funds to meet the unprecedented drought condition prevailing in the State.

- (vi) Need to purchase paddy from the paddy growers of Andhra Pradesh at the same price as is paid to Punjab farmers and also to give bonus to them.

SHRI V. SOBHANADREESWARA RAO (Vijayawada): The Union Government has announced very recently its decision to allow any person or institution to export wheat saying that the godowns are full with foodgrains. The farmers in the South are wondering why the Government has not taken decision to allow fine and superfine rice that is grown in South also for export just as wheat is allowed. Though technically FCI has opened purchase centres, it is not purchasing paddy

from farmers of Krishna and Godavari districts but is purchasing rice from rice mills only. The FCI is however purchasing lakhs of tonnes of paddy from farmers of Punjab.

There is a difference of about Rs. 12/- per quintal of fine and super-fine varieties of rice that is procured in Punjab and that in Andhra Pradesh. Because of this, the farmers of Andhra Pradesh who are subjected to natural calamities often are put to loss. So, the FCI should pay the same price to the Andhra farmers also. In fact, one member of APC recommended giving of higher price to paddy produced in coastal States because of the risk element involved. The Government is announcing bonus to Punjab farmers while it does not do so in regard to the farmers in South. I would, therefore, urge the Union Government to look into all these matters and take necessary steps in this regard.

- (vii) Need to review the provisions of the Employees State Insurance (Amendment) Act, 1984

SHRIMATI BIBHA GHOSH GOSWAMI (Nabadwip): The Employees State Insurance (Amendment) Act, 1984 has not been able to safeguard the interests of the employees. It has enhanced the rates of contribution of the employees while reducing the corresponding benefits to them. Employees' Unions have complained that the provisions of the Act as well as Rules of the General Regulations make it evident that the ESI Corporation is using the institution more and more as a profitable business at the cost of the employees rather than as a guarantee of social security to them. It is also relevant to mention that before the amendments were made there had been no endeavour on the part of the Government to get the opinion of the Central Trade Unions on the matter.

The Amendment has been particularly hard on women employees who will be deprived of their benefits during the period subsequent to maternity leave. The interests of substitute and casual workers have also been adversely hit.

Government should refrain from implementing the Amendment Act and review the provisions after discussion with the Central Trade Unions.