

Regarding establishment of a dedicated Coconut Development Board regional office in Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Konaseema district

SHRI G. M. HARISH BALAYOGI (AMALAPURAM): Sir, coconut is the backbone of Andhra Pradesh horticulture economy with my State having the highest coconut productivity in India and contributing over 10 per cent of our countrys gross value output. At the centre of this stands my Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Konaseema District which alone produces 50 per cent of Andhra Pradesh coconut. In Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Konaseema District, coconut is a cultural and economic lifeline sustaining families, cottage industries, and traditional livelihood. However, this vital coconut belt is now under severe distress. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Konaseema Districts deltaic, geographic, high-salinity and shifting groundwater tables have cost widespread osmotic stress, resulting in premature fall and weakened trees. During the dry months, salt water enters the coconut groves due to the inadequate drainage. Since 2019, the groves have remained under sustained saline stress.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Please raise your demand.

SHRI G. M. HARISH BALAYOGI: I am coming to that, Sir. Recently, the NDA State Government has sanctioned the balance revetment works worth Rs.22 crore but the delay has caused significant soil degradation. The land will take another two to three years to recover fertility after which replanting must begin, resulting in substantial losses to farmers.

Sir, I request that these can be really avoided if there is a local Coconut Development Board office in Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Konaseema District. This kind of an office will help us to resolve these issues in scenarios mentioned earlier. Therefore, I request the hon. Agriculture Minister to establish a dedicated Coconut Development Board regional office or a State centre in Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Konaseema District to enable faster response to the coconut farmers.