

Regarding providing the transportation facilities to banana growing farmers of Anantapur at low cost and considering the option of financial assistance in view of less rainfall in the region

SHRI G. LAKSHMINARAYANA (ANANTAPUR): Thank you Madam. Anantapur district receives scanty rainfall and is one of the most backward areas in our country. I would like to bring to the notice of this August house about the problems faced by the farmers of this district. Anantapur is one of the major producers of banana and is also the heart of the horticulture sector in Andhra Pradesh. Madam, in Anantapur, Kadapa and Kurnool districts around 40,000 hectares is under banana cultivation. Prices of Banana collapsed this season. Farmers are not getting even the expenditure spent for cultivation and harvesting. The situation is so pathetic that farmers are throwing away their produce on roads. They are cutting away their plantations and are shedding tears out of sadness.

The crop which was once a ray of hope for these farmers has now become a source of despair and disappointment. Our Chief Minister Shri Nara Chandrababu Naidu, swiftly responded by instructing officials to provide transportation facilities for transporting the produce to the market. Though this transportation facility is essential for now there are problems which are plaguing our farmers. Though our farmers are producing better quality bananas than bananas from Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, our farmers do not have the capacity to compete in the national market. The main reason is the lack of transportation facilities for our farmers. Indian railways container charges and refrigeration charges are expensive and are in addition to transportation charges. Farmers will have to bear empty container charges also. These reasons are weakening our farmers' ability to compete in the national market. As a result our farmers are not finding a place in the markets of Delhi and Mumbai. I also request that farmers' should be given financial assistance to come out of the crisis that they are facing in the present season. Madam, freight charges should be reviewed and revised so that our farmers can find it viable to market their produce to the national markets. These steps will reduce the burden of transportation charges on our farmers.