

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:424

ANSWERED ON:15.05.2006

SUICIDE BY FARMERS

Kripalani Shri Srichand;Patil Shri Balasaheb Vikhe

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Minister has recently visited Hyderabad to discuss the issues related to the cases of suicide by farmers in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Maharashtra;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether any special package for the affected farmers was discussed during the visit;
- (d) if so, the extent to which the Union Government has agreed to provide assistance to the said States under the said package;
- (e) whether cases of suicide by farmers have also been reported from other States during the last one year;
- (f) if so, whether similar assistance is proposed to be extended to such States; and
- (g) the other steps taken by the Government to provide assistance/relief to the poor farmers and check recurrence of such incidents in future?

Answer

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR)

(a) to (g): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (g) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 424 DUE FOR REPLY ON 15TH MAY, 2006.

(a) to (g): A meeting was held by the Agriculture Minister with the State Governments of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Maharashtra on 10th April, 2006 at Hyderabad. The draft rehabilitation package for thirty identified districts of these four States was presented and discussed in the meeting. Based on the suggestions and feedback, the final package is under preparation. It is drawn up for providing relief to farmers in the districts reporting high incidence of suicides. The package will address their credit, insurance, irrigation and subsidiary income needs, through dairy, poultry and horticulture.

Incidents of farmers' suicide have also been reported from the States of Gujarat and Orissa during the last one year.

The rehabilitation package is presently limited to the States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Maharashtra.

Considering the fact that indebtedness has been a major cause of distress to farmers, in order to enhance credit flow to agriculture, the Government of India announced a credit package on 18th June, 2004, which envisaged doubling of agriculture credit over the next three years. It has, inter-alia, also envisaged debt restructuring/rescheduling in respect of farmers in distress and farmers in arrears, special One Time Settlement Scheme for settling the old and chronic loan accounts of small and marginal farmers; and financing from the institutional sources for redeeming the loans taken by farmers from private moneylenders.

The Government of India is also addressing the varied credit needs of farmers through Kisan Credit Cards. In mitigating risks of farmers, the National Agricultural Insurance Scheme is under implementation. The various measures for augmenting agricultural production and marketing are also expected to reduce the distress of farmers.

The target for provision of farm credit for the year 2006-07 has been fixed at a substantially higher level of Rs.175000 crores. To reduce the debt burden of farmers, the Government has decided to ensure that the farmer receives short-term credit at 7% with an upper limit of Rs.3.00 lakh on the principal amount.