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Title : Flood situation in various districts of Karnataka.

SHRI H.D. DEVEGOWDA (HASSAN): With your permission, I would like to raise a very important issue pertaining to the States of Karnataka as well as Maharashtra. Due to the recent unprecedented rains and heavy flood, both the States of Karnataka and Maharashtra have suffered very badly. The issue concerning the State of Karnataka was raised recently through a Calling Attention. Unfortunately, at that time I was touring that area. I wanted to know the ground realities before raising the issue on the floor of this House. Hon. Prime Minister wanted to visit that area but because of bad weather he was unable to go there. Even then he has announced certain relief measures. Shrimati Sonia Gandhi has also visited some areas in Belgaum district. The hon. Minister of Agriculture, Shri Sharad Pawar has also visited some of the affected areas[R13]. He has also witnessed the damage that has taken place due to heavy floods.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Union Government for releasing about Rs.400 crore – Rs.300 crore yesterday and Rs.100 crore earlier. But I would like to make it clear that Rs.114 crore which was given from Calamity Relief Fund was given on the basis of the recommendation made by the Finance Commission. But this is not to be calculated for the relief that has been given by the Government. In addition to Rs.114 crore, what is the State's entitlement to get from the Calamity Relief Fund? The Government of India has released Rs.300 crore. Yesterday, I met the Finance Minister and he was kind enough to take a decision yesterday itself and communicate to the State Government. I do not want to elaborate particularly on some of these issues. I have got some photographs which show the ground realities. I want to exhibit them to the House but I cannot do that without your permission.

In Karnataka, entire crops spreading over more than two lakh hectares have been destroyed. Nobody can save those crops. Normal relief measures are not going to help. The people want that the same relief measures should be given as were given at the time of Tsunami and Gujarat earthquake. The people are very much agitated and they cite these two instances. They want that the same treatment should be given. Otherwise, they would totally collapse. I have shown these photographs to the hon. Finance Minister also. I have also shown them to the hon. Minister for Agriculture. He had also visited these places. When he went there, the water was not receding. It was flowing in full swing. I have enquired from several old people if they had seen such a flood before. They said that in the past 100 years, they did not witness such a heavy flood in the Cauvery basin. This is the position. Therefore, the Government of India should give special treatment so far as the relief measures are concerned.

The hon. Prime Minister had made an announcement in Goa about Rs.100 crore. I think your goodself was also present in Belgaum. Anyway, I do not want to go into those aspects. If there is a loss of life in a family, it has to be given Rs.1 lakh. In addition to that, the State Government has also provided Rs.50,000 to each family. But the crops have suffered a lot. They need to work for a fresh crops urgently. Now NABARD has been directed to provide a special relief package for that. Here the problem comes up. What are the NABARD guidelines? Kindly consider giving relief on the lines of relief given to the farmers who were affected by Tsunami. For cotton crop, Rs.4000 per hectare are being provided which comes to Rs.1600 per acre; for wet land, it is Rs.2500 which comes to Rs.800 per acre; and for dry land, it is Rs.1000 which comes to Rs.400 per acre. Soyabean and sugarcane are grown in thousands of acres of land.

As you know, seven to eight rivers flow through the areas from Maharashtra to Belgaum, Bijapur, Raichur, etc. They have witnessed unexpected and unprecedented flash floods. I do not want to blame anybody that they had released water. These are unnecessary things. In the last 50 years, such heavy floods were never witnessed. After I have come to politics, I have never witnessed such a huge damage[r14].

[snb15]

The relief, I demand, should not be on the lines, as announced, of rescheduling of loans over a period of seven years with moratorium for the first two years and with payment of seven per cent interest for the next five years. This is what the Government proposes to provide as a matter of relief to the farmers who have been affected. But I must submit that the farmers in the State of Karnataka have been fighting with severe drought for the last four years. Around 850 people have died because of drought and around 450 people have so far committed suicide. In my home district Hasan only, there have been a few deaths.

13.16 hrs. (Mr. Deputy-Speaker *in the Chair*)

Why has such a situation arisen? The farmers have suffered because of severe drought conditions. They were unable to clear their old debts. The crop loan for this year has been rescheduled for seven years. This step is not at all going to help the cause of the farmers. How could the farmers go in for their second crop? What is the support that the Government is providing to them? It has only

asked NABARD to give loans. But still the farmers are unable to go for their second crop because of the damage caused to the soil. There has been erosion and reclamation of the soil. All these problems would invariably have to be fought by the farmers before they could go in for their second crop. If one visits the area it would be seen that the entire top soil of that area has been completely washed away and the condition is so bad that one would even find it difficult to enter that area. As you would know, it is a black cotton soil. I believe, an inter-Ministerial Group comprising of the hon. Finance Minister, the hon. Home Minister and the hon. Agriculture Minister is working on this. Though I understand that it would entail a heavy burden on the Central Government, yet to save the farmers, I would make an honest and sincere demand that the entire loan amount sanctioned to the farmers for this year – those farmers who have lost their entire crop, crops like sugarcane, *jowar*, soyabean – should be waived for this year. This is my humble request. The Government should not consider just providing normal relief measures. This is a colonial approach that we have adopted from the imperialist powers. But I would like to request the Government to take all steps to see that the entire loan amount for this year, for those farmers who have lost their entire crop, is waived. Even a House Committee, consisting of Members from all political parties, could be sent to visit the area. It would not be possible for the State Government to provide relief to the affected people because the resources of the State are very limited.

Sir, a decision has been taken by NABARD that for small farmers a loan of Rs. 50,000 would be converted into a medium-term loan to be repaid in seven years with a moratorium for the first two years. Now, I must submit here that there are no big farmers so to say after vigorous pursuance of the policy of land reforms that was first initiated during the times of the late Morarji Desai. So, for all the farmers, the loan amount at least for this current year should be waived-the Government may reschedule the loan of the previous years.[\[snb16\]](#)

As [\[bru17\]](#) regards sugarcane, they have already entered into an agreement with the sugarcane factories for Rs. 1200 per tonne. Even if you take 50 tonnes per acre, the crop value at the rate of Rs. 1200 per tonne comes to Rs. 60,000 per acre. What is the use of this rescheduling business or a moratorium for two years? I sincerely request your goodself to please see that the entire loan for this year is totally waived off. Whether it is the loan from commercial banks or district central banks, the loan should be totally abolished.

The other point on which the Government should pay attention is the crop insurance. Crop insurance is there. They will provide for it. But there is no question of any insurance in the case of sugarcane, soyabeans and some of the horticulture crops. It is an optional one. If they want it, they can go in for it. Otherwise, they may not opt for it. I have enquired from many people about it. They have not taken any protection under the so-called crop insurance. When there is no crop insurance, how will the farmers be able to sustain? This is an issue to be tackled. The hon. Agriculture Minister is here. I am grateful to him that he is present in the House and I hope he will give a suitable reply. I would request that for this year - not for all the years - the present loan should be waived off. For the next crop, interest-free loan should be given. This is my sincere demand.

About construction of houses, the amount is Rs. 10,000. That is the guideline given by the NABARD. What is the fun in giving this amount? How can the people reconstruct their houses when their entire house is demolished? The people belonging to Scheduled Castes and the landless labourers have nothing left with them. So, the construction of houses should be taken up by the Government itself with full responsibility. An amount of Rs. 40,000 is given to the people as it was done in the case of adversely affected by Tsunami. The amount of Rs. 40,000 is given to each family whether they belong to Scheduled Castes or are landless labourers or whichever community they belong to. What is the way out for people living below the poverty line while fixing a guideline? The houses of all such people should be reconstructed and the entire cost should be borne by the Government. The people belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have to deposit 10 per cent of the total amount. I think the total amount is Rs. 20,000 or Rs. 25,000 under the Indira Awas Yojana or the Ambedkar Scheme. They may be given only Rs. 10,000 and the remaining amount should be a loan. For others, there is nothing provided. I would sincerely request the hon. Minister for Agriculture on this point. Although I have discussed the matter with the Finance Minister, I would appeal to the Prime Minister on this issue. I would appeal to the hon. Home Minister who has replied the other day on some of these issues. I have seen the ground reality by visiting these areas for three days. The conditions of the farmers are so bad that it is very difficult for them to survive. They cannot survive and they may have to commit suicide. In Southern Karnataka also, particularly in Hemavati, I myself know that 1.5 lakh cusecs of water have been flown. For the first time, such a heavy flood has occurred. We have never seen such a thing before in our life. It is an unexpected rain this time even in the Cauvery Basin. All the southern districts are affected adversely.

As regards ginger cultivation, the cost of cultivation is Rs. 1,35,000. You can ask your officers also about this point[\[bru18\]](#).

The cost of cultivation itself is Rs. 1,35,000. Of course, if there is a good crop, they can pay Rs. 6 lakh or Rs. 7 lakh or Rs. 8 lakh. Unfortunately, this year, more than 30,000 acres of ginger crop in Hassan district has been totally spoilt. I have personally visited those areas along with the officers. It is all rotten and smelling. You cannot even see that. When the Central team visited those areas, the floods did not rescind. They were unable to get full facts. You can send the team again. Let them re-assess the whole thing. Let them update the whole thing as to what is the crop loss, what is the actual loan amount from the financial institutions, from the commercial

banks or from the cooperative banks. All the loans for this year of the farmers should be waived. In the next year, for the crop loans only interest should be charged. For building houses, Rs. 40,000 should be given to all the affected people, whether they are Scheduled Castes, landless labourers or people belonging to any other community. The Government of India should treat this as a special situation and circumstance. Please do not take shelter under normal guidelines or the NABARD guidelines or the Reserve Bank of India guidelines. It is an alarming situation. Otherwise, once the farmers lose their patience, things will go from bad to worse. With all sincerity, you had gone there and studied the situation. I compliment you for that. The hon. Prime Minister also went to see the spot. Hon. President of the Indian National Congress, Shrimati Soniaji had also gone there. You have to save the situation. Shri Sharad Pawar, the Finance Minister and the Home Minister, all the three together should come to the rescue of the poor farmers.

With these words, I would like to conclude.

SHRIMATI TEJASWINI SEERAMESH I would like to associate myself with what the hon. Member, Shri Devegowda, has said about the plight of the farmers, particularly in the northern Karnataka. The hon. Member has very correctly explained the situation. Shri Sharad Pawar, who is the true son of the soil, knows the plight of the farmers. The State of Karnataka had drought for the past four and a half years. I will be very grateful to the Central Government, particularly to Shri Sharad Pawar and the Finance Minister, if they waive the loans as well as the interest for four and a half years. This is my humble request.

SHRI S. BANGARAPPA I may kindly be allowed to associate myself with what the hon. Member, Shri Devegowda, said just now. I have also toured all these areas, particularly these four districts, Belgaum, Bijapur, Bagalkot and Gulbarga for about three to four days. Of course, you had also visited our districts. All these areas come under Krishna basin. The water has flown down from Maharashtra, may be from Ujjaini, Koyna, etc. You cannot avoid that when there is heavy downpour, when there is cloudburst in the catchment areas of Krishna basin, especially in Maharashtra. Heavy flooding was there. Thousands of houses have collapsed. Nearly 26,000 houses have collapsed in one district. I am highly thankful to the hon. Minister, Shri Sharad Pawar for having visited these areas and for having announced certain relief measures to the affected people, who have lost standing crops in their respective lands or their houses.

The only demand that we are making, as usual, is to release more funds to the State Government. Otherwise, the State Government cannot deal with the demands of the local people.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Shri Bangarappa, you can only associate yourself with the hon. Member.

SHRI S. BANGARAPPA : That is what I said.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: You are making a long speech.

SHRI S. BANGARAPPA : I understand that. That is why I am saying I am associating myself with what he has said.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: That is more than sufficient.

SHRI S. BANGARAPPA : In Shimoga, which is my constituency, Wardha river is there. That also comes under Krishna basin^[r19]. Thousands of acres are completely inundated. Even now, water is there. Of course, enumeration of acre-wise loss and all those things has been done by the State Government. But the point is that unless there is more release of funds from the Government of India, the State Government is not in a position to come to the aid of these people. Therefore, I am making a request to the hon. Prime Minister and also the hon. Agriculture Minister. Instead, I have written letters also to both. Perhaps, you might have received it yesterday, or, today you are going to receive that letter. Please take action immediately. Shri Devegowda has explained all those things in detail, and I appreciate. The point is we are now requesting you to release more funds immediately to the State Government of Karnataka.

SHRI S. MALLIKARJUNIAH Sir, I associate myself with this.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Wait a minute. Though it is not a practice, I would allow you, Mr. Mallikarjuniahji because you also belong to the same State. You can only associate with this.

SHRI S. MALLIKARJUNIAH : Definitely, Sir. I associate myself with this.

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member, Shri Devegowdaji has raised a very important issue, which the State of Karnataka has faced recently. It is true that this year's flood and rains, especially in Krishna and Bhima basins, were abnormal. In fact, Shri Devegowdaji, myself and Shri Bangarappaji have been associated with the State Government for a number of years. For a number of years, there was a discussion between us whether Maharashtra should release more water in the Krishna basin or Bhima basin. But this was the first year that both the States were taking a different line. There was a request that if it is possible to stop water, that can be used. ...(*Interruptions*) It is true that in the entire belt, there was abnormal rain. Rain and flood have really created havoc in

both the States. The damage is abnormal and whatever information has been given by hon. Devegowdaji, which has been supported by hon. Members Smt. Tejaswini and Shri Bangarappaji and from the other side, by Shri Mallikarjuniahji, I entirely agree with that proposition. I have myself visited some of the areas but not all the districts. In Belgaum, Chikori, Raibagh, Athni and certain other areas, I myself have seen what type of damage has been caused by this flood and extra rains. On many occasions, we have seen this type of situation in the country. But the overall size of the damage is such that we have come to the conclusion that Karnataka alone cannot face this type of situation. So, in this situation it is the responsibility of the Government of India to support all these affected people. The crop that has been damaged in the entire belt has really ruined the entire farming community of that area. The damage of the public property is also abnormal. In this situation, we have to take a different approach. It is true that there are some norms which have been introduced in the country, which we are implementing for many years. Shri Devegowdaji has given a proposal and suggestion that we have to give second thought to the entire norms. It is true that when there was a problem due to Tsunami, the Government of India took a different approach to resolve that problem. I would like to assure this House and through this House, to the affected people of all these States – whether they are from Gujarat, Maharashtra or Karnataka or any other State – in this situation, we will definitely look into the matter of these norms. We will take up a pragmatic approach. For instance, Shri Devegowdaji has made a suggestion about the monitoring provision for construction of houses [\[mks20\]](#).

It is true that today the provision is for Rs.10,000. It is also true that at the time of the Tsunami problem, we introduced new norms, that is, up to Rs.40,000 plus land cost. I have no hesitation in accepting the suggestion which the hon. Member Shri Devegowda has made.

The problem of crop loss is there. Especially, sugarcane, tomato, soyabean, banana and groundnut have been practically wiped out. I do not think the farmer is in a position to face the situation. He will be out from farming at least in the next two to three years. That is why, one has to take a different approach.

The hon. Member suggested certain things, for instance, waiver of interest, waiver of loan. These are the issues that we have to discuss with the NABARD and the Reserve Bank. The Government cannot take these decisions because money has been provided by various banks. Unless and until some arrangement has been made from our side, we would not be able to resolve that problem. But I would like to assure the hon. Members and the House that we will definitely look into the matter.

Recently, a team was sent by Government of India. The team has returned from Karnataka yesterday night only. We are expecting that they will give their report in another three or four days' time. Today only, I got a request from the hon. Chief Minister of Karnataka from Gulbarga and from the hon. Deputy Chief Minister Shri Prakash from Bangalore saying that whatever proposal has been submitted by the Government of Karnataka is not sufficient; that is an initial proposal and the Government of Karnataka would like to give their secondary proposal.

SHRI H.D. DEVEGOWDA : They want to give a comprehensive proposal.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: Yes, they would like to give a comprehensive proposal in a week's time. The hon. Chief Minister has communicated to me. He and his colleagues would like to come to Delhi in the next week and they would like to

give a power point presentation to the hon. Prime Minister and others about the damages to crops. They are going to visit Delhi on 1st or 2nd. Definitely we will get all the information from the State Government.

We have also got a similar request from Maharashtra. The Maharashtra Chief Minister also, along with his team, would like to visit Delhi; would like to give a detailed presentation and their final report. I would like to assure that whatever report, information, additional information that will be given by them, that also would be re-assessed. We will call the meeting of the High Level Committee as early as possible and give proper support to resolve this problem in all the three States.

It is true that the situation is not normal. That is why, the Government of India has to take a very positive approach. I would like to say

that we will take a positive approach. At this juncture, the Government of India will support both the States.

SHRI H.D. DEVEGOWDA : While thanking the hon. Minister for Agriculture, I would like to give only one suggestion for the consideration of the Union Government. So far as reimbursement of the loan amount is concerned, I have demanded that they should waive it. Unless the Central Government is going to reimburse the nationalised banks, they will not agree to it because we know the guidelines of the Reserve Bank and the NABARD. Unless the Government of India takes the responsibility to reimburse the entire amount for at least this year, it is practically impossible. That is why, I would humbly request the Government to consider it. Not only I make this on the floor of the House, but also I had already met the hon. Finance Minister. I must compliment the Agriculture Minister who knows the subject very well. I will meet the Prime Minister. This is an issue concerning the entire House. If you go there, you can see that it is such a pathetic situation that something is to be done immediately. Mr. Minister, I would welcome you again. I would thank you very much for your kind consideration. Before I went there and before the other leaders went there, you went there and had seen some of the villages in Belgaum district. In almost all the areas, the farmers are suffering. The Krishna Basin is suffering. The Cauvery Basin is equally bad. I would request you to come once again and see for yourself the situation. The Inter-Ministerial Team has seen the pathetic situation that Karnataka is facing. I would request you to bail it out. We will be grateful to you.

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR (BANGALORE SOUTH): Sir, I thank you very much. At the outset, I would like to share the concern of the former Prime Minister of India hon. Shri Devegowda and the former Chief Minister of Karnataka hon. Shri Bangarappa. As the House very well knows, last week I had raised a Calling Attention when the hon. Agriculture Minister Shri Sharad Pawar was here [\[R21\]](#). Shri Shivraj Patilji gave the reply. I requested him that it is a Tsunami-like flood in Karnataka and the whole Karnataka State has been devastated. More than five lakh acres of crop loss is there. Therefore, Advaniji, myself, Ramesh Jigajinagiji and Yediurappaji also visited the flood-affected areas. Sir, 130 people are dead. More than 12,000 cattle have died. We have requested that a package of Rs. 3,272 crore should be given. We also requested that the Calamity Relief Fund (CRF), guidelines should be revised because now for an acre of dry land they are giving Rs. 400, for wet land they are giving Rs. 1,000 and for garden land they are giving Rs. 1600. We have requested that Rs. 10,000 should be given per acre.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: He has already said that. They will look into the matter.

SHRI H.D. DEVEGOWDA : This time, the entire crop loan should be waived...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR : I entirely agree that the entire crop loan should be waived. We are not only saying that the entire crop loan should be waived but we are saying that compensation should also be given over and above that.

SHRI H.D. DEVEGOWDA : Let us not dilute the issue. The entire crop loan for this year for all farmers should be waived. In addition to that, the compensation should be given for the crop based on the actual loss. I have made all these requests. He wanted to take this issue before the Cabinet and consider it. This is altogether a different matter.

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR : Sir, our hon. former Prime Minister has raised that the entire crop loan should be waived.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: You have made your point.

SHRI ANANTH KUMAR : The entire crop loan should be waived and the hon. Agriculture Minister is ready to compensate the entire crop loss. We are more than happy but that is our demand. He should reply. He should kindly respond again.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Thank you. He has given the reply. Please sit down.