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Title : Need to provide financial relief to the farmers who lost their crops due to unseasonal rain in Orissa.

SHRI B. MAHTAB (CUTTACK): I rise here today to raise an important issue relating to my State, Orissa. Around 12 lakh hectares of Agricultural land in more than 26,000 villages suffered crop loss of more than 50 percent due to heavy unseasonal rains from 6th December to 14th December, 2010. The loss to the farmers is estimated to be Rs.6,000 crore. More than 7 lakh hectares of cropped area in more than 11,000 villages incurred crop loss of more than 50 per cent due to acute drought that occurred in Orissa during August and September, 2010. The crop loss due to drought is estimated to be Rs.4,000 crore. Orissa Government has already submitted a Memorandum on drought with a request to release Central Assistance of Rs. 1,187.19 crore and the Inter-ministerial Central Team has admitted it to be genuine and just. I therefore demand that the Government of India to release the Central assistance on account of drought immediately. During the year 2010, more than 37,000 villages out of total 51,000 villages of Orissa have been affected either by drought or unseasonal rain resulting in severe crop loss. The total loss is estimated to be Rs. 10,000 crore. Thus, Orissa has faced a calamity of rare severity during the year 2010.

The existing norms for the scale of assistance from the CRF to farmers affected by natural calamities need to be enhanced to Rs.25,000 per hectare in view of the escalating costs of modern agricultural practices. The Working Group on Agriculture Production headed by the Haryana Chief Minister, Shri Hooda have already made a similar recommendation to the Government of India.

Loss is not only economic; it is psychological as well. Because the ripe paddy and vegetable fields on the verge of harvesting create a sense of well being among the cultivators, crop loss at this critical juncture compounds to the plight of the farmers, both psychologically and economically.

During this year's procurement, the Government of India has not declared on the Minimum Support Price (MSP) a Bonus of Rs.100/- per quintal over and above the MSP for paddy. I urge the Government that the same should be declared immediately.

The Government of Orissa has submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister. The Chief Minister had come to Delhi in the last week of December, 2010 and had also met the Agriculture Minister and had apprised him about the problems being faced by the farmers in Orissa. The demand from the Government of Orissa was to sanction Rs.1,027 crore out of the National Disaster Response Fund. The total amount of the Central assistance for floods, drought and unseasonal rains comes to Rs.2616.19 crore which may be released and sanctioned immediately. What has happened in-between? Already January has passed. The Central team had gone to Orissa and had visited the interior parts. They had divided themselves into 3-4 groups. Now, we are in the last week of February, not a single pie had been provided to our State. At the same time, Andhra Pradesh had been provided funds from the Central release. Maharashtra Government had been provided funds from the National Disaster Response Fund. Why is Orissa getting discriminated? I fail to understand this. ...(*Interruptions*) I would only urge upon this Government to release the funds and not to play with the future of the farmers. With these words, I conclude.