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Title: Need to include agriculture sector under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme and enhance the rate of wages and reschedule the working hours of women under the Scheme.

SHRI K. P. DHANAPALAN (CHALAKUDY): In Kerala there is shortage of labourers in the field of Agriculture, especially in the Paddy field leading to cultivable lands being kept idle and rotting of food grains in the paddy field itself due to timed out reaping. It is equally important that the milch animal owners also face the shortage of labourers. It is adversely affecting the food security of the State. Kerala is deficit in the area of food grains and milk and it depends on other states to meet the demand. Besides, labour charge in all the sectors in Kerala is higher than the present wage of Rs. 150 under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme.

So, I would like to request that the Rural Employment Guarantee Programme may be extended to the agricultural field especially to the Paddy field for including the agricultural operations like seeding, removal of pests, reaping, milch animal etc., It is also requested that daily wage may be raised to Rs. 200 considering the special situation of Kerala. Besides, it will be more convenient to the women if the working hours may be refixed as 9.00 A.M. to 5.00 P.M.