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Title: Need to take steps to enhance areas under irrigation and cultivation.

SHRI C. RAJENDRAN (CHENNAI SOUTH): Madam Speaker, thank you. I would like to raise a very important matter during the 'Zero Hour' regarding the constant and continuous shrinking of land under agriculture in India putting self-sufficiency in food in jeopardy.

According to the figures given by the Ministry of Agriculture, the Government of India, it is very clear that India is losing its agricultural lands. During the last six years, from 2006-2011, India has lost approximately 4,91,000 hectares of agricultural land for other purposes such as buildings, roads, railways, etc. This may create irreparable damage in the future. India predominantly is an agrarian country. Agriculture provides livelihood for about sixty per cent of our population. It contributes to nearly one-fifth of the total GDP.

In the name of industrialisation and development, in many States several hectares of agricultural land are being converted and used for non-agricultural purposes. Over the last two decades, the agricultural land had shrunk by nearly two per cent. This does not augur well for our economy.

Basically, agriculture has become a loss-making venture and the farmers are no more interested in doing cultivation because of non-remunerative prices. Exploiting this situation, the real estate lobby plays havoc with the Indian agriculture by purchasing the lands for construction of houses.

If India wants to achieve self-sufficiency in food grains, the Government should undertake efforts to have the Second Green Revolution. Hence the Government should take necessary steps to enhance areas under irrigation and cultivation for the good of the future of India. Thank you.