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Title: Need to continue Sugarcane Breeding Institute, Coimbatore, the National Research Centre for Banana, Tiruchirappalli and the Central Institute of Brackishwater Aquaculture, Chennai as the premier Research Centres under ICAR.

SHRI P. NAGARAJAN (COIMBATORE): Sugarcane Breeding Institute (SBI) Coimbatore was established in 1912 with a 250 acre farmland to promote research efforts in sugarcane production. Sugarcane varieties introduced by the institute occupy more than 90% of total sugarcane cultivated area in India. More than 200 people, including 75 scientists are employed with SBI.

Likewise the National Research Centre for Banana (NRCB) was established in 1993 at Tiruchirappalli, with an aim to increase the production and productivity of banana and plantains and the Central Institute of Brackishwater Aquaculture (CIBA), Chennai was established for catering to the needs of the brackishwater aquaculture research in India.

The move to merge the 105-year-old globally renowned Sugarcane Breeding Institute with the Indian Institute of Sugarcane Research, Lucknow, is unjustified as SBI will lose its prominence and its identity. In the event of merger, SBI should be accorded the status of headquarters. Also the Government should defer any decision to shift or belittle the prominence of these premier Research Centres in Tamil Nadu at any point of time.

I urge the Government to desist from shifting the Sugarcane Breeding Institute (SBI), Coimbatore.