

Effect of Floods on Agricultural Production

*14. SHRI M. V. CHANDRA-SHEKHARA MURTHY:

SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether due to recent floods much of land has become unfit for agricultural produce for some years in various States;

(b) whether this loss of agricultural crops has affected our food position, and if so, to what extent and what steps are being taken to meet the situation and also help the affected States; and

(c) whether Government have appointed a committee to see the effects of floods and how to help and prevent the floods in the country and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION (SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA): (a) According to the reports received so far from the States, due to recent floods, about 92.35 lakhs hectares of cropped area have been adversely affected. Twenty thousand acres have been sand-cast in West Bengal. The precise area in other States that may have been rendered unfit for agriculture can only be known after the full assessment of the flood damage is available.

(b) The loss of agricultural crops has affected the food position only in the flood affected areas whereas for the country as a whole, the overall food production and supply situation is quite good. The exact impact of this loss on the food position in the affected areas cannot be readily assessed. However, because of the comfortable buffer stock of foodgrains, sizable assistance has been given to the State Governments by way of gratuitous relief to flood victims and also for operating the Food for Work Program-

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me. In the flood affected States, Rabi operations are being intensified to recoup part of the flood damage.

(c) A Working Group consisting of the concerned departments at the Centre and the States has been set up to prepare an outline of integrated project and plan of action for controlling and mitigating the effects of floods in the Indo-Gangatic Basin. The approach of the Working Group is to integrate priority schemes of engineering work downstream with the schemes of watershed management including afforestation and soil conservation in the catchments of the flood-prone rivers and tributaries on a selective basis so that there is noticeable mitigation of flood disaster within a period of 5--7 years. The Working Group has been working in close association with the State Governments. The Working Group would finalise its report shortly.

Parity in Procurement prices for Paddy and Wheat

*15. SHRI K. MAYATHEVAR:
SHRI VENUGOPAL GOUNDER:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the growing force of opinion of various State Governments for parity in the procurement prices for paddy and wheat;

(b) the reasons why the prices for paddy continue to be pegged down to lower level despite the costs of production being more or less the same for both the foodgrains; and

(c) the steps proposed by Government to bring about parity?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION (SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH): (a) Government are aware of the views of some States