

Shortfall in rains

3043. SHRI N.K. SINGH:

SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is aware that shortfall in rains is likely to affect the Kharif crops production and food security this year;
- (b) if so, whether any assessment has been made by Government in this regard;
- (c) if so, whether Government proposes to declare drought in several parts of the country; and
- (d) if so, the steps taken by Government to tackle the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS):

(a) and (b) Agriculture production is dependent on various factors such as climatic and edaphic conditions, area coverage, application of required inputs at appropriate time etc. With improvement in monsoon, the sowing/crop coverage of jowar, bajra maize, small millets, oilseeds and cotton has improved. However, there is a decrease in Paddy area mainly in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and Chhattisgarh that may adversely impact the production of paddy. As on 27th July, the area coverage under paddy is 168.34 lakh ha, which is 54.68 lakh ha. less than last year's coverage of 223.12 lakh ha. IMD's long range forecast for the 2009 south-west monsoon season (June-September) for the country as a whole was likely near normal. Quantitatively, monsoon season rainfall is likely to be 96% of the long period average with a model error of $\pm 5\%$. For the period ending 22.7.2009, the percent departure of rainfall was (-19%).

It is too early to assess the likely fall in agriculture production. Ministry of Agriculture has been constantly monitoring the sowing progress and providing required technical advices to the States through weekly videoconferences/meetings, telephonic discussions. Contingency plans suitable to specific agro climatic conditions have been prepared. Under the contingency plans-replacement of main crop with alternate crops like, millets, oil seeds, pulses; planning for short duration varieties of the main crop; planning for protective irrigation by efficient use of available water; and Promoting Technical Package of Practice like direct sowing, less plant spacing, more seed rate etc. are being recommended.

(c) and (d) Declaration of drought is being done by States. The Government of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Assam, Jharkhand, Manipur, have declared drought in some of the districts. For management of drought crises management group have been formulated and the situation is being monitored by Central Drought Relief Commissioner on daily basis. An amount of Rs. 271.31 crores has been released to the States of Assam, Bihar, Manipur and Uttar Pradesh as a central share of Calamity Relief Fund (CRF). Additional assistance is also provided from National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF) on submission of memorandum for assistance by the affected States.