

(c) There are several Bt. food crops that are in commercial production in more than 25 countries and are also being imported by many more countries for consumption as food and feed. So far there is no scientific evidence to conclude that Bt. crops are harmful to the health and environment.

Enquiry into conclusion on glacier melting

4045. SHRI MOINUL HASSAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has conducted any inquiry about the reasons for drawing a conclusion over glacier melting by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Changes (IPCC) and thus causing serious concern for the people;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether it is a handiwork of any vested interests?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) The Government has not conducted any inquiry about the reasons for drawing a conclusion over glacier melting by IPCC. However, the Government had introduced a 'Discussion Paper' on "Himalayan Glacier: A state of Art review of Glacial Retreat and Climate Change". The discussion paper seeks to encourage informed science-based discussion on relevant issues.

(c) The IPCC reports are peer review of existing literatures prepared through a well laid-down procedure. IPCC has stated that clear and well established standards of evidence required by the IPCC procedures, were not applied properly in drafting the paragraph on the subject of melting of Himalayan glaciers.

Introduction of Bt. Brinjal

4046. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the final decision of the Central Government on the introduction of genetically modified crop like Bt. Brinjal;

(b) the names of States opposing the move and announcing a ban on Bt. Brinjal even before the Central Government takes a final decision;

(c) what are the ill and evil effects on the one side and good effects on the other in the introduction of Bt. Brinjal; and

(d) when the ill-effects and disadvantages are more and manifold, which interest was responsible to advocate the introduction of this attempt?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) The Government has imposed a moratorium only on commercialization of Bt. brinjal event EE-1 till such time independent scientific studies establish, to the satisfaction of both the public and professionals, the safety of the product from the point of view of its long-term impact on human health and environment. The moratorium is not applicable to other GM food or food crops. All Genetically Modified (GM) crops are required to undergo prescribed tests to establish that they are safe for human health and environment.

(b) The Governments of Kerala and Uttarakhand have informed that they have taken a decision to prohibit environmental release of all GM seeds and keep the State totally GM free.

(c) Bt. brinjal plants have an inbuilt mechanism of protection against Fruit and Shoot borer, one of the major pests that cause damage to the brinjal crop throughout its life cycle. The advantage include reduced insecticide application, lesser exposure of the farmers to insecticides and lesser pesticide residues in brinjal fruit and therefore safer to consumers. The potential risks associated with GM crops include risk to the environment and human health, and loss of biodiversity.

(d) So far there is no scientific evidence to conclude that ill-effects and disadvantages of Bt. brinjal are far more than its advantages. However, in view of the concerns that have emerged during the public consultations on Bt brinjal, the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee in consultation with eminent scientists would draw up fresh protocols for specific tests to evaluate the safety of Bt. Brinjal. A final view on the commercialization of GM plants is taken only when scientific studies establish that it is safe for the human health and environment.

People displaced from forests

4047. Dr. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 25 million people have been displaced from forests of which 40 per cent are tribals, since Independence;

(b) if so, what is the rehabilitation measures taken to accommodate the displaced tribals; and

(c) by resorting to such displacement, whether the purpose of improving forest wealth and environment was achieved?