

Chairmanship of Chief Secretary is authorized to sanction any project to any agency which fulfils conditions prescribed in operational guidelines of RKVY Scheme.

(b) As per operational guidelines of RKVY, expenditure which is directly related to the development of agriculture sector such as watershed development including State's share on Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP); Forestry and Wildlife, Agricultural Marketing, Food Storage and Warehousing etc. will be considered for determining eligibility of the State for accessing RKVY funds. However, expenditure on output subsidies such food subsidy, subsidy for procurement of milk, bonus on procurement of food grains and other crops etc. and expenditure on Civil Supplies and Public distribution system etc. will not be considered for ascertaining eligibility of the State for RKVY.

(c) On the basis of fund utilization and progress of implementation reported by the State, ₹ 233.82 crore was released to Government of Chhattisgarh during 2013-14 against an allocation of ₹ 407.63 crore. Allocation and release under the scheme are made on a year to year basis.

Keeping farmers informed of moisture in their agricultural land

3262. SHRI BAISHNAB PARIDA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to keep farmers updated about the content of moisture in their agricultural land to help them in timely watering their crops through use of mobile phones;

(b) if so, the details of this farmer-friendly action plan; and

(c) how far has the above system proved successful and implemented across the country to help the farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. SANJEEV KUMAR BALYAN): (a) Yes, Sir. Weather related information including agro-met advisories are being given to registered farmers through mobile phones.

(b) A nation-wide SMS Portal for farmers has been in operation for more than a year to provide SMS based advisories to farmers as per their preferences of crops/ agricultural practices for their location and selected language. In particular, rainfall related information, which has a bearing on moisture content in the soil, is also given. Before this, there were some isolated efforts of providing advisories by SMS. SMS Portal is an integrated platform which can be used by all organizations and departments of the

Government of India and State Governments [including State Agriculture Universities (SAUs), Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) and Agro Meteorological Field Units (AMFUs)] to give advisories and provide services. Integrated databases (collated from different sources and organizations) of farmers are used to maximize the outreach.

More than 130 AMFUs set up by the India Meteorological Department (IMD) in collaboration with ICAR and other organizations provide weather forecast based agro-met advisories. Weather forecast is done on 7 parameters including rainfall, relative humidity and cloudiness. Kisan Call Centres set up by the Government of India also disseminate this information to thousands of farmers who call up everyday. Besides this, there are some non government initiatives which include IFFCO Kisan Sanchar Limited, Reuters Market Light, Nokia Life Tools. ICAR has created a network of 100 Automatic Weather Stations in selected KVKs and SAUs for online collection of weather data and preparation of micro-level weather based agro-advisories.

(c) The above system has proved highly successful in helping the farmers all over the country. Nearly 60 lakh farmers have registered for receiving SMS messages through SMS Portal. So far more than 125 crore SMS messages have been sent to farmers in 12 languages by thousands of officers and experts of the Government of India and the State Governments (including SAUs, KVKs and AMFUs) spread across the country down to the Block level.

The AMFUs and other higher level entities of IMD have so far sent 15873 weather related advisories through 631.52 lakh messages to farmers.

In addition, 148 KVKs also sent 1,749 voice messages on different aspects of agriculture and allied enterprises to 30,752 registered farmers during 2013-14.

Saving agriculture from drought

†3263. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that there is a possibility of weak monsoon this year;
- (b) if so, the names of the districts of the country that are likely to face drought like situation;
- (c) the plan of the Government to provide relief to people of the affected districts in view of the possibility of weak monsoon; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.