

(a) whether it is a fact that the predictions of below normal rainfall during the current monsoon season would affect production and prices of Kharif pulses such as arhar, moong and urad; and

(b) if so, to what extent and the measures being taken to minimize its impact on the production of pulses in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. SANJEEV KUMAR BALYAN): (a) and (b) Production of Kharif agricultural crops including pulses viz. arhar, moong and & urad and their prices are impacted by the overall rainfall situation in the country during monsoon season. As per forecast of India Meteorological Department (IMD), the overall rainfall in the country during the current monsoon season is likely to be lower by 7% as compared to Long Period Average (LPA). At all India level, the cumulative rainfall during 1st June to 6th July, 2014 has been deficient by 43% as compared to LPA.

To tackle the aberrant rainfall situation in many parts of the country, the States have prepared district-wise Contingency Plans in consultation with Central Research Institute of Dryland Agriculture (CRIDA), State Agricultural Universities and Institutes of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR). Besides, they have also been asked to ensure availability of seeds of shorter duration, drought tolerant varieties and alternate crops, availability of fertilizers, power supply and other critical inputs in time.

Farmers are also being regularly advised through Farmers SMS Portal to adopt techniques such as in-situ moisture conservation and on farm water harvesting through farm ponds, etc., ridge-furrow, broad bed furrow, promoting agronomic practices like mulching, timely weed management, zero tillage practices including direct seeded rice through seed drills/drum seeder, use of short duration and drought resistant varieties of paddy like Sahbhagi Dhan, intercropping & mixed cropping with pulses/oilseeds/coarse cereals, spray of drought mitigating chemicals, etc. For pulses production, Indian council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has also developed several short duration photo-thermo insensitive varieties of pulses viz. mungbean and uradbean, besides varieties of Pigeonpea, Clusterbean, Mothbean, Cowpea and Horsegram suitable for low rainfall and delayed monsoon situations.

#### **Impact of weak monsoon on production**

388. SHRI D. RAJA:

SHRI M.P. ACHUTHAN:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that monsoon is expected to be weak this season thereby raising concern about decreased agricultural production and higher agricultural prices; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. SANJEEV KUMAR BALYAN): (a) and (b) Yes Sir, as per reports of Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), the rainfall deficit in the current monsoon season (01.06.2014 to 06.07.2014) as compared to Long Period Average is as follows:

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India as a whole:	(-) 43%
East & North East India:	(-) 20%
North West India:	(-) 46%
Central India:	(-) 64%
South Peninsula:	(-) 41%

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Due to delay in arrival of monsoon and deficient seasonal rainfall, kharif crops area coverage as on 04th July, 2014 is about 182.40 lakh hectares, against 237.43 lakh hectares normal (5 years average) area of corresponding period. However, sowing window of most of crops is available till early August. Hence, it may be too early to estimate the decrease in production of kharif crops or increase in prices of agricultural commodities.

To tackle the aberrant rainfall situation in many parts of the country in the current monsoon seasons, States have prepared district-wise Contingency Plans in consultation with Central Research Institute of Dryland Agriculture (CRIDA), State Agricultural Universities and Institutes of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR). Besides, they have also been asked to ensure availability of seeds of shorter duration, drought tolerant varieties and alternate crops, availability of fertilisers, power supply and other critical inputs in time. Government is reviewing the situation with States regularly.

Farmers are also being regularly advised through farmers SMS portal to adopt techniques such as in-situ moisture conservation & on farm water harvesting through farm ponds, etc., ridge-furrow, broad bed furrow, promoting agronomic practices like mulching, timely weed management, zero tillage practices including direct seeded rice through seed drills/drum seeder, use of short duration and drought resistant varieties of paddy like

Sahbhagi Dhan, intercropping & mixed cropping with pulses/oilseeds/coarse cereals, spray of drought mitigating chemicals like thio-urea, KCl, KNO<sub>3</sub> and hydrogel, etc. States have also been advised to raise community nurseries of paddy and arrange seeds of contingent crops like coarse cereals, pulses, oilseeds, vegetable fodder etc.

#### **Stagnation in net sown area**

389. DR. R. LAKSHMANAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the net sown area is stagnant at around 140 million hectares during the last four decades;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken/planned to be taken to come out of this stagnation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. SANJEEV KUMAR BALYAN): (a) and (b) Due to shift in area for non-agricultural purposes the net sown area is stagnant at around 140 million hectares during the last four decades.

(c) As per the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India, land comes under the purview of State Government and therefore, it is for the State Governments to take suitable steps to check the diversion of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes. Under the, National Policy for Farmers 2007 (NPF 2007), State Governments have been advised to earmark lands with low biological potential such as uncultivable land, land affected by salinity, acidity, etc., for non-agricultural development activities, including industrial and construction activities. National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy, 2007 (NRRP, 2007) has recommended that, as far as possible, projects may be set up on wastelands, degraded land or un-irrigated land. Acquisition of agricultural land for non agricultural use in projects may be kept to the minimum and avoided, to the extent possible, in respect of multi-cropped land. Acquisition of irrigated land, if unavoidable, may be kept to the minimum.

Further Ministry of Rural Development is implementing an Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) for development of rainfed/degraded areas.

#### **Post-harvest management**

390. SHRI MOHD. ALI KHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state: