

Further, to increase productivity and production of agricultural crops in the country, Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) is having research and development programmes in rice, wheat, maize, millets, fodder crops, oilseeds, pulses, sugarcane, cotton, etc. These research programmes are undertaken by 26 commodity/theme based Research Institutions and 33 All India Coordinated Research Projects (AICRPs) & All India Network Projects (AINPs) to develop location-specific crop varieties and matching technologies as per the agro-ecological needs. The crop improvement programmes give emphasis on development of new crop varieties/hybrids with improved quality and tolerance/resistance to biotic and abiotic stresses.

Besides above, to encourage farmers to increase agricultural production by ensuring remunerative prices for their produce, the Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) of agricultural commodities have also been increased over the years.

Reinforcement of co-operatives

631. SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is scope for augmenting the integral linkage between Parts IX, IXA and IXB of the Constitution; and

(b) if so, whether the Ministry would consider constituting a Group of Experts to explore ways in which rural and urban local bodies might mutually reinforce the co-operatives?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI MOHANBHAI KALYANJIBHAI KUNDARIA) : (a) Parts IX and IXA of the Constitution of India relate to the Panchayats and Municipalities respectively. Panchayats and Municipalities are both institutions of local self-Governments. Ministry of Panchayati Raj has the primary objective of implementation of Part IX of the Constitution to attain decentralized and participatory local self-government through rural local bodies. District Planning Committees (DPCs) have been constituted in every State at the district level under Article 243ZD of Part IXA of the Constitution. The DPCs have the mandate to consolidate the plans prepared by the Panchayats and Municipalities, established under Part IX and IXA of the Constitution and to prepare a draft development plan for the district as a whole, thereby providing a linkage at the level of planning.

Co-operative Societies included in the Constitution of India through 97th Amendment Act are body corporate, autonomous and democratically managed organizations formed for furthering economic interests of members. Economic activities of Co-operatives operating in the Panchayat and Municipal areas help in the progress of the area.

Panchayats and Municipalities have an important role in the promotion and development of Co-operatives by way of dissemination of information on Co-operatives, facilitating well functioning of Co-operatives through good governance etc. Part IXB of the Constitution has, however, been struck down by the High Court, Gujarat declaring it as ultra vires of the Constitution.

(b) No such proposal is under consideration.

Proposal for new insurance scheme for agriculturists

632. SHRI C.M. RAMESH : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government proposes to scrap the existing Agriculture Insurance Scheme - Krishi Bima Yojana;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and whether Government would replace it with a new insurance scheme; and

(c) the details of the new proposed insurance scheme for agriculturists in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI MOHANBHAI KALYANJIBHAI KUNDARIA) : (a) to (c) With a view to make the crop insurance more farmers' friendly, government replaced National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS) by Modified National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (MNAIS) w.e.f Rabi 2013-14. However, on the representations from some State Governments, NAIS was allowed to such States for implementation during Rabi 2013-14. Again all State Governments/UT Administrations have been given the option to implement either NAIS or MNAIS for the year 2014-15. Further, improvement in existing Crop Insurance Schemes is a continuing process to ensure that farmers get adequate insurance coverage to compensate them reasonably well in case of adverse situations leading to loss in crops.

Revitalization of agriculture sector in West Bengal

633. SHRI VIVEK GUPTA : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :-

(a) the per capita income of farmers in the country, State-wise during the last ten years, year-wise;

(b) the measures taken by Central Government to assist Government of West Bengal in revamping the agrarian sector over the last ten years;

(c) the steps taken to revitalize the condition of jute cultivators in West Bengal during the last three years;