

Upsurge in farmers' suicides

3380. SHRI D. RAJA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of farmers who committed suicide in India in 2015-16 and in the current year;

(b) whether there has been an upsurge in suicides in 2015-16 and in 2016-17 due to agrarian crisis and poverty; and

(c) whether Government has done any study in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI PARSHOTTAM RUPALA): (a) and (b) The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) under the Ministry of Home Affairs compiles and disseminates information on suicides, in its publication titled 'Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India' (ADSI). These Reports on suicides upto 2015 are available at its website. The Report for the year 2016 has not been published yet. As per ADSI Report of 2015, the numbers of suicides by farmers/cultivators are 8,007 in 2015. Suicides by agricultural labourers are 4,595 in 2015. Further, as per this Report, 'Bankruptcy or Indebtedness' and 'Farming Related Issues' are reported as major causes of suicides among farmers/cultivators. Other prominent causes of farmers/cultivators suicides are family problems, illness, etc.

(c) Taking cognizance of the problem of Agrarian distress and consequent farmers suicide in country, Government has undertaken a study "Farmers Suicide in India: Causes and Policy Prescription" as an All India coordinated study in the work plan 2016-17. The study was allotted to Institute of Social and Economic Change (ISEC), Bengaluru as a coordinator of the study. The study is being conducted in major suicide hit States of the country.

Adverse effect of chemical fertilizers and pesticides on human health

†3381. SHRI RAM NATH THAKUR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the fact that impact of deadly diseases is on the rise in the country due to indiscriminate use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides;

(b) if so, whether Government has carried out any study to assess the relation between lethal diseases like cancer and use of these fertilizers or pesticides, if so, the outcome thereof; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) the measures being taken by Government to promote bio-fertilizer to protect the people from the ill effects of chemical fertilizers, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI PARSHOTTAM RUPALA): (a) and (b) There is no scientific evidence that balanced and judicious use of fertilizers and registered pesticides cause rise of deadly diseases in the country. However, imbalanced use of chemical fertilizers coupled with low addition of organic matter over years may cause multi nutrient deficiencies as evident from the study conducted under All India Coordinated Research Project on 'Long-Term Fertilizer Experiments' in different soil types (fixed locations) under dominant cropping systems. There is also possibility of nitrate contamination in groundwater above the permissible limit of 10 mg NO₃-N/L due to excessive use of nitrogenous fertilizers including urea particularly in light textured soils that has consequence on human/animal health if used for drinking purpose. No study has been carried out to assess the relation between disease like cancer and use of fertilizers.

(c) Government has taken following steps to promote bio-fertilizer:-

- (i) Financial assistance to State Governments is provided for setting up liquid/carrier based bio-fertilizer/bio-pesticide units @ 100% project cost up to a maximum limit of ₹ 160 lakh per unit. Financial assistance to individuals/ private agencies through NABARD as Capital Investment @ 25% of project cost limited to ₹ 40 lakh per unit is provided.
- (ii) Under Soil Health Management (SHM), financial assistance is given for promotion of organic inputs (manure, vermi-compost, bio-fertilizers, compost, herbal extracts etc.) @ 50% of cost subject to a limit of ₹ 5000 per hectare and ₹ 10000 per beneficiary.
- (iii) Under Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) financial assistance is given for liquid bio-fertilizer consortia (nitrogen fixing/Phosphate solubilizing/Potassium mobilizing bio-fertilizer) @ ₹ 500 per acre amounting to ₹ 25000 per cluster of 50 acres.
- (iv) The National Centre of Organic Farming (NCOF) undertakes various extension activities like exhibitions, radio talks, TV programmes,

distribution of literature on organic inputs (including bio-fertilizers) to educate the farmers. The NCOF is also publishing biannually Bio-fertilizer News letter. In addition, various books on production and use of bio-fertilizers have been published in various languages for distribution to the farmers.

- (v) Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has developed improved and efficient strains of bio-fertilizers specific to different crops and soil types under Network Project on Soil Bio-diversity-Bio-fertilizers. Liquid bio-fertilizers technology with higher shelf-life has also been developed. Besides, ICAR imparts training, organizes, frontline demonstrations etc. to educate farmers on use of bio-fertilizers.

Decline in the production of foodgrains

†3382. SHRI PARVEZ HASHMI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the extent of decline in the production of foodgrains during last two years and the comparative details of all the crops including rice, wheat, pulses, oilseeds, jute and cotton etc. separately for a period of last ten years; and

(b) the comparative details of enhancement in Minimum Support Price during 2004 to 2014 and 2014 to September, 2016 for above crops?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA): (a) On account of deficit/deficient rainfall during monsoon season, unseasonal rains/hailstorms and adverse temperature conditions etc., the production of foodgrains during 2014-15 and 2015-16 declined to 252.02 million tonnes and 251.57 million tonnes respectively as compared to record foodgrains production of 265.04 million tonnes achieved during 2013-14. The Details of production of major agricultural crops during 2006-07 to 2015-16 are given in Statement-I (*See below*).

(b) Details of Minimum Support Prices of major agricultural crops in the country during 2004-05 to 2016-17 are given in Statement-II.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.