

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**  
**MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT**  
**RAJYA SABHA**  
**QUESTION NO 21.12.2009**  
**ANSWERED ON**  
**VULNERABILITY OF CHILDREN TO GM FOODS**

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SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDEY

Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :-

- (a): whether her Ministry has done any assessment on the vulnerability of women and children to GM foods;
- (b): if so, the details thereof; and
- (c): if not, how her Ministry intends to proceed with regard to GM foods and their adverse impacts on women and children?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

(SHRIMATI KRISHNA TIRATH)

(a) to (c): Indian Council of Agricultural Research is undertaking research to develop genetically modified crops such as rice, rapeseed, mustard, soyabean, potato, brinjal etc.. Appropriate risk analysis of these GM crops is being undertaken for necessary approval of environmental release. Such risk analysis procedure includes aspects of vulnerabilities and hazard measurement of all categories of human beings. The Ministry of Environment and Forest has set up a mechanism to make bio-safety assessment of GM Crops/Foods by following a policy of case to case event based approval by the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC), an apex body to accord approval for large scale use and commercial release of genetically modified organisms.

Introduction of any new GM food/food crops is preceded by a careful analysis of risk and evaluation of long term benefits for which extensive rules and guidelines have been framed by the Government of evaluating environmental and health safety impacts of genetically modified organisms.

Rules for Manufacture, Use, Import, Export and Storage of Hazardous Microorganism/genetically engineered organism or cells 1989 under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 have been notified. The Government of India has put in place a robust and transparent regulatory mechanism to assess the positive and negative impact of GM crops. The GM crops are monitored and reviewed at all stages of development including research and field trials stage. Consultations with all stakeholders at each stage of development are an integral part of the regulatory mechanisms.

As of date, GEAC has approved commercial release of Bt cotton, 20 recombinant pharmaceuticals and import of GM soybean oil. The GEAC has also approved the confined field trials of several GM crops for generation of bio-safety data both from the private and public sector institutions of which Bt brinjal is under consideration for commercial release.

In so far as the issue of adverse impact on human health due to consumption of GM Food is concerned, Government of India is following a Policy of case by case assessment of GM crops. Any Company involved in the development of GM crops has to undertake extensive bio-safety assessment which includes environmental safety as well as food and feed safety assessment even if it has been approved for commercial cultivation in other countries.