

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH & EDUCATION

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1813
TO BE ANSWERED ON 28/12/2018

ILL EFFECT OF GM FOOD

1813. **SHRI P. BHATTACHARYA:**

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) the present status of production and usage of GM seeds in the country;
- (b) whether studies were carried out by the Agricultural Universities and Research Institutes about the ill-effects of GM food on human beings;
- (c) if so, the details thereof and the response of Government thereto; and
- (d) the steps taken by Government to protect citizens from the ill-effects of GM food?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
(SHRI GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT)

(a) *Bt* cotton is the only transgenic crop approved for commercialization in India since 2002 after extensive evaluation and regulatory process, primarily for bollworm control. Cotton area and production in India during 2017-18 was estimated to be 124.29 lakh hectares with production of 370 lakh bales, each of 170 Kg (Cotton Advisory Board, 2018). Presently, more than 88% of the cotton crop grown in India is estimated to be under *Bt* (GM) cotton. About 119.5 lakh tonnes of *Bt* cotton seed (*Binola*) is being produced in our country. The *Bt* cotton seeds is utilised for animal feed and oil for human consumption.

(b) to (d): All GM crops have to undergo elaborate food, feed and environmental safety assessment following regulatory guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures under Rules for the Manufacture, Use/Import/Export and Storage of Hazardous Micro Organisms/ Genetically Engineered Organisms or Cells, 1989 of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 for approval of commercial cultivation in the country. As of now, Bt. cotton is the only GM crop approved in 2002 by Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) of Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEF&CC) for commercial cultivation in the country after extensive evaluation and satisfying all regulatory requirements. There is no scientific evidence to prove that GM crops are unsafe. The GM foods are regulated under Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 which consolidates laws for manufacture, storage, distribution, sale and import to ensure availability of safe and wholesome food for human consumption.

So far, no Living Modified Organisms relating to food has been approved by the GEAC of MoEF&CC. To ensure safety for human health and environmental release in the country, the bio-safety assessment is done for each GM crop on a case by case basis as per applicable guidelines, manuals and protocols prescribed from time to time by relevant agencies under Rules, 1989 under Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

The biosafety studies conducted by the ICAR Institutes indicates that there was no effect of GM cotton seed feed on animals, poultry, fishes and goats after feeding them on cotton seed cake or green leaves.
