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

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 485
TO BE ANSWERED ON 14/12/2018

TECHNOLOGY-DRIVEN REVOLUTION IN AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

485. **SHRI SANJAY RAUT**:

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

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian agriculture needs a technology-driven revolution, especially given the extant challenges of fragmented landholding, low level of input usage, limited access to irrigation, absence of extension services and inadequate linkage to markets; and

(b) if so, the steps Government is taking to infuse multiple technologies in farming to transform agriculture from being a means of livelihood to one of agri-business where every farmer becomes an entrepreneur?

ANSWER

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

(a) Yes, Sir. Fragmentation of landholding in India has fallen to average size of 1.1 hectare (ha) in 2015-16 from 1.6 ha in 2011-12, according to a rural survey carried out by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development. Nearly 87% farm holdings are less than 2 ha falling under small and marginal category. Agriculture sector (i.e. crop sector) in India is technology driven since mid-1960s. Other allied sectors of agriculture are also making use of technology in a big way. Technology driven agriculture has been input responsive and input use in agriculture increased constantly. Technology-led growth has helped in yield gain by several times. Selective mechanization of Indian farms is essential to increase agricultural productivity, to achieve timeliness in farm operations, to enhance input use efficiency and to reduce drudgery of agricultural workers. In the field of agricultural mechanization, some of the major challenges are due to variations on account of geography, climate, soil-type, crop and crop varieties, farm holding size, power availability, drudgery involved in farm operations etc. In situation of limited resources, the importance of increased use of technology in agriculture assumed much significance. Research system is trying to develop technology requiring low quantity of input need and their efficient utilization.

(b) The Government is making efforts to use a number of available technologies to improve irrigation reach and efficiency, extension services and market access to farmers. To provide irrigation to every field, micro-irrigation systems are being encouraged in a big way. To meet knowledge demand and fill gap, use of information and communication technology are being utilized extensively to reach out to farmers and for meeting market access, markets are being linked with national grid under the ambit of e-NAM. Also Council started a project 'Attracting & Retaining Youth in Agriculture' (ARYA) which is being implemented in 25 States through KVKs, one district from each State. In each district, approximately 4-5 clusters of contiguous villages has been identified. Depending upon the type of enterprise, individual or group-based activities/enterprises are being encouraged. In one district, about 100-200 rural youths were identified for their skill development in entrepreneurial activities and establishment of related micro-enterprise units in the area of Apiary, Mushroom, Seed Processing, Soil testing, Poultry, Dairy, Goatry, Carp-hatchery, Vermi-compost etc. Under this project, operational costs to support critical inputs like seeds, fertilizers, small equipment are being provided to farm youth. This provides additional opportunities to the unemployed rural youth in primary and secondary agriculture and related enterprises. Moreover, ICAR has established a network of 25 Agri-business Incubation (ABI) Centers. These ABIs act as an effective platform for fostering the growth of sustainable business endeavor to nurture the techno-entrepreneurs by providing a wide range of services such as research support, business planning, office space, access to information and communication technologies, and advice on management, marketing, technical, legal and financial issues. These measures has infused multiple technologies in farming to transform agriculture from being a matter of livelihood to one of agri-business where every farmer can become an entrepreneur.

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