

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1463**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 15/12/2023

**SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES IN OIL SEED CULTIVATION**

1463. SHRI ABIR RANJAN BISWAS:

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

- (a) whether Government has any data on the area of land that has been brought under oil palm cultivation under the National Mission on Oilseeds and Oil Palm (NMOOP);
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has any mechanism to ensure that oil palm cultivation does not adversely affect the water availability, soil quality, forest cover, biodiversity, or local community;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefore; and
- (e) whether the government has considered or incorporated the latest climate change projections and scenarios in identifying suitable areas for oil palm cultivation?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE  
(SHRI ARJUN MUNDA)

(a) & (b): Yes, Year-wise area covered under Oil Palm during the implementation of National Mission on Oilseeds and Oil Palm (NMOOP) from 2014-15 to 2017-18 is given below -

Name of the Scheme	Year	Area Covered (ha)
National Mission on Oilseeds and Oil Palm (NMOOP)	2014-15	17526.66
	2015-16	13127.00
	2016-17	15296.42
	2017-18	14222.26

(c) & (d): Yes, The government has ensured several safeguards against any adverse effect of oil palm cultivation on environment and local communities, which includes the following :

Water availability: Oil palm requires less water compared to crops like rice, banana and sugarcane for its optimum production. Precise irrigation schedules are made available to the oil palm growers in the form of Mobile Apps so that oil palm cultivation does not adversely affect water availability.

Soil quality: The high biomass potential (30-35 T/ha/year) in oil palm plantations enables recycling of biomass wastes, which could reduce use of inorganic fertilizers by 50%. Soil quality is maintained and erosion is avoided by implementing good management practices like mulching and adopting oil palm based cropping systems.

Forest cover: Oil palm cultivation in India (particularly North Eastern Region) is recommended in non forest lands only. The present policy of Oil Palm Development Programme is to promote oil palm cultivation mainly in agricultural lands of low value crops, orchards, grass land with shrubs and shifting. Hence, oil palm cultivation does not lead to deforestation.

Biodiversity & Local community: As oil palm cultivation is not recommended by replacing the existing forests, biodiversity is not affected. Rather it improves green cover and carbon sequesters (36.25 T/ha/year), supporting environmental benefits. Hence, the local communities would not be disturbed.

(e): The suitable areas for oil palm cultivation were identified in the IIOPR-report, considering effects of climatic factors such as rainfall, minimum temperature, ground water level, water availability, soil quality, forest cover & biodiversity.

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