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

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 656
TO BE ANSWERED ON 08/12/2023

PROMOTION OF HORTICULTURE

656. SHRI MASTHAN RAO BEEDA:

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

(a) the steps taken by Government to mitigate the various challenges faced by farmers such as inadequate transport infrastructure, inconsistent supply chains and insufficient storage facilities that hinders export growth;
(b) whether Government is aware that Andhra Pradesh is emerging as one of the major horticulture hubs in the country with a record growth in production and research in horticulture with annual production of 312.34 lakh metric tonnes and drone and robotic technologies in horticulture are being encouraged by Dr. Y.S.R. Agricultural University; and
(c) whether Central Government plans to replicate similar approaches across the country; if so, the details thereof ?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

(SHRI NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR)

(a): Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH), a centrally sponsored scheme is being implemented for the holistic development of horticulture in the country including Andhra Pradesh. Under MIDH, financial & technical assistance is provided to States/UTs under various components to mitigate the various challenges faced by farmers such as inadequate transport infrastructure, inconsistent supply chains and insufficient storage facilities. Details of the major interventions/activities are as under:

- Increasing productivity through introduction of improved varieties, quality seeds and planting materials, protected cultivation, high density plantation, rejuvenation, precision farming and horticultural mechanization.

- Diversification to High Value Horticulture for orchards and Plantation crops, Vineyards, vegetable & flower gardens, Bee keeping, Mushroom cultivation.
- Promoting Protected cultivation, i.e. poly-house, green-house, etc, to improve the productivity & grow off season high value vegetables and flowers.
- Development of Post Harvest Management infrastructures such as cold storages, cold room, packing and grading house, reefer vehicles etc.
- Market infrastructure such as mobile vending cart, retail outlet, primary and wholesale markets. Creating direct market/farmers market.

Apart from the above, Government of India is implementing the following schemes to mitigate the various challenges faced by farmers.

- Department has launched Agriculture Infrastructure Funds (AIF) of Rs. 1.0 lakh crore under which there is a provision of collateral free term loan up to Rs. 2.0 crore and interest subvention of 3%. Post-harvest infrastructure including cold storages and warehouses are eligible under AIF. Since the inception of the scheme, Rs. 32,558 crores have been sanctioned for 43,517 projects under AIF.
- Department has launched Horticulture Cluster Development Programme (HCDP) to leverage the geographical specialization of horticulture clusters and promote integrated market led development of pre-production, production, post-harvest and marketing activities. Initially 12 clusters have been selected on Pilot basis out of 55 identified clusters under Horticulture Cluster Development Programme.
- Department is promoting Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) through a dedicated Central Sector Scheme "Formation and Promotion of 10,000 Farmer Produce Organizations (FPOs)" wherein FPOs are developed by bringing together small farmers who are provided end-to-end support in input, technical services, aggregation, branding & marketing to leverage economies of scale and better market access and returns for members. Under the scheme, a total of 7597 FPOs have been registered so far.

(b) & (c): As per 2nd Advance Estimate 2022-23, production of horticulture crops in Andhra Pradesh is 276.98 lakh metric tonnes. Dr. Y.S.R. Horticultural University is focusing on training, research and demonstrations of application of Agriculture drones in cultivation of horticulture crops. Further, Dr. YSRHU recently developed “Robotic Sprayer” using sensor technology for use in protected structures, demonstrating the university’s commitment towards innovation.

Looking into the unique advantages of Drone technologies in agriculture including horticulture, the Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare has released the Standard

Operating Procedures (SOPs) for use of drones in pesticide and nutrient application. In order to make drone technology affordable to the farmers and other stakeholders of this sector, 100% financial assistance of cost of drone together with the contingent expenditure is extended under Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM) to the Farm Machinery Training & Testing Institutes, Institutions of Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) and State Agricultural Universities (SAUs) for its demonstration on the farmer's fields. Farmer Producers Organizations (FPOs) are provided grants @ 75% for purchase of drones for its demonstration on the farmers' fields. In order to provide agricultural services through drone application, financial assistance @ 40% of the basic cost of drone and its attachments and maximum up to Rs.4 lakhs is also provided for drone purchase by existing and new Custom Hiring Centers (CHCs). The agriculture graduates establishing CHCs are eligible to receive financial assistance @ 50% of the cost of drone up to a maximum Rs.5.00 lakhs.

Apart from the above, Government of India has recently approved a dedicated Central Sector Scheme for providing drones to the Women Self Help Groups (SHGs), with an outlay of Rs. 1261 crores for the period from 2024-25 to 2025-26, under which a provision of financial assistance @80% of the cost of drone and accessories/ancillary charges up to a maximum of Rs. 8.0 Lakhs has been made for Women SHGs.

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