

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

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. -825

TO BE ANSWERED ON 09/02/2024

BURNING OF AGRICULTURAL WASTE

825 Shri C. Ve. Shanmugam:

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

- (a) whether it is a fact that the farmers in Punjab, Haryana and other neighbouring States of Delhi are forced to burn their agricultural waste;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether Government has taken any initiative to reduce stubble burning in this region;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (e) further action contemplated to completely eliminate stubble burning and to have alternative methods to dispose of the agricultural wastes?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

(SHRI ARJUN MUNDA)

(a) to (e): Paddy stubble burning is practiced in Indo-gangetic plains of the States of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh to clear the fields for Rabi crop sowing. The Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare is implementing Crop Residue Management Scheme from 2018-19 to support the efforts of the Governments of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and NCT of Delhi to address air pollution and to subsidize machinery required for management of crop residue. The scheme promotes the usage of machines such as Super Straw Management Systems, Happy Seeder, Super Seeder, Smart Seeder, Surface Seeder, Zero Till Seed cum Fertilizer Drill, Mulcher, Shrub Master/Rotary Slasher, Paddy Straw Chopper, Hydraulically Reversible Mould Board Plough, Crop Reapers and Reaper Binders for in-situ management of paddy straw and Balers & Straw Rakes for ex-situ management of paddy straw. Financial assistance @ 50% of the cost of machinery is provided to the farmers for purchase of these identified machinery and financial assistance @ 80% of the project cost is provided to the Rural Entrepreneurs (Rural youth and farmer as an entrepreneur), Cooperative Societies of Farmers, Self Help Groups (SHGs), Registered Farmers Societies, Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) and Panchayats for establishment of Custom Hiring Centres of crop residue management machinery.

With a view to enable efficient ex-situ management of paddy straw generated in these States, provisions have been made to establish pilot projects for paddy straw supply

chain under the bilateral agreement of beneficiary/ aggregator (Farmers, Rural entrepreneurs, Cooperative Societies of farmers, Farmers Producer Organizations (FPOs) and Panchayats) and Industries utilizing the paddy straw. Financial assistance @ 65% on the capital cost of machinery costing up to Rs. 1.50 crores is provided by the Government. Industry as primary promoter of the project has to contribute 25% of the project cost and the balance 10% will be the contribution of beneficiary/aggregator. The intervention aims at establishing a robust supply chain of paddy straw for various end user industries in biomass power generation and biofuel sectors.

Under the aforementioned scheme, so far a total of Rs.3333.17 Crore have been released to the States of Punjab, Haryana, UP and NCT of Delhi including Implementing agencies like Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) etc. The States have established more than 40,000 Custom Hiring Centres (CHCs) of crop residue management machines and more than 2.95 lakh crop residue management machines have been supplied to these CHCs and individual farmers of these States. The State of Punjab has sanctioned 12 projects of paddy straw supply chain and the State of Uttar Pradesh has sanctioned 90 projects.

Apart from above, the following other Schemes/initiatives of the Government under different Ministries/Departments also supports the ex-situ utilization of paddy straw.

(i) The Ministry of Power has issued biomass policy to mandate use of biomass pellets for co-firing in Thermal Power Plants. The policy mandates 5% biomass pellets co-firing from financial year 2024-25 and this obligation shall increase to 7% from financial year 2025-26.

(ii) One time financial support under Environment Protection Charge (EPC) funds is provided by the Central Pollution Control Board for establishment of palletization and torrefaction plants to promote utilization of paddy straw.

(iii) To support manufacturing of briquettes & pellets, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy is providing Central Financial assistance

(iv) Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has introduced a scheme to provide financial assistance to Compressed Biogas (CBG) units for purchase of biomass aggregation equipments

(v) Ministry of New and Renewable Energy under its Waste to Energy Programme is providing financial assistance for establishment of CBG Plants. Under the Biomass Programme of MNRE, financial assistance is also provided for Biomass (non-bagasse) based cogeneration plants.

(vi) Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas is implementing Pradhan Mantri Ji-Van Yojana for providing financial support to integrated Bioethanol projects using Lignocellulosic biomass & other renewable feedstock.

All these initiatives of the Government aim at managing the biomass including the paddy straw in an holistic manner.
