

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF TEXTILES
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-1440
ANSWERED ON- 06/12/2024

CHALLENGES FACED BY COTTON FARMERS IN PUNJAB

1440. SHRI RAGHAV CHADHA:

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has taken note of the decade-long decline in Punjab's cotton crop, with acreage reportedly reduced significantly over the years;
- (b) the specific reasons identified for this decline, including pest attacks, climatic changes, and soil degradation;
- (c) the measures taken to address the challenges faced by Punjab's cotton farmers, including technological and financial support;
- (d) whether Government plans to launch targeted initiatives to promote sustainable cotton farming in Punjab; and
- (e) the financial assistance provided to affected cotton farmers over the last five years?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TEXTILES
(SHRI PABITRA MARGHERITA)

(a) & (b): During the last decade, area under cotton crop in Punjab declined due to variability in rainfall patterns, prevalence of extreme temperature during the crop season, incidence of weeds, whitefly, pink bollworm, cotton leaf curl viral disease, shift to other remunerative crops, etc.

(c) & (d): Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare is implementing Cotton Development Programme under National Food Security and Nutrition Mission (NFSNM) in 15 major cotton growing States including Punjab from 2014-15 to enhance production and productivity of cotton. The Government has been increasing the Minimum Support Price (MSP) of cotton over the years to encourage farmers for cultivation of cotton and ensure remunerative prices. During the year 2024-25, MSP for medium staple cotton and long staple cotton has increased to Rs. 7,121/ quintal and Rs. 7,521/quintal respectively, which is 7.6% and 7.1% higher than previous year.

State Government of Punjab is ensuring timely availability of canal water to cotton farmers for timely sowing of cotton crop besides organizing awareness programmes for timely management of insect pests and weeds. State Government of Punjab has provided assistance of Rs. 2,000 to Rs. 12,000 per acre to cotton farmers in 2021-22 due to loss caused by pink bollworm based on the extent of damage to the crop. State Government of Punjab has also provided 33% subsidy to cotton farmers on purchase of recommended Bt cotton hybrids during 2023-24 amounting to Rs 17 crores for approximately 88,000 farmers. Further, 6,000 demonstrations conducted under Crop Diversification Programme during 2024-25.

Best management practices to combat pest and diseases in cotton cultivation are being disseminated to Punjab farmers by Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) through trainings/field visits/demonstrations.

(e): Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) protects the interest of farmers by procuring cotton at MSP rates as and when market prices fall below MSP level. The details of cotton procured under MSP operations during the last five years in Punjab are as under:

Crop Year	Procurement of cotton under MSP operations (Lakh Bales)	Value (Rs. in Crore)	Farmers benefitted (in Lakhs)
2019-20	3.56	954	0.67
2020-21	5.36	1,529	1.09
2023-24	0.38	128	0.09

Note: In the year 2021-22 & 2022-23, farmers were getting better prices over and above MSP rates, hence, procurement under MSP was Nil.
