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

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1351
TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 3RD DECEMBER, 2024

LEVERAGING THE BENEFITS FROM AGRI-TECH SECTOR

1351. Dr. Amar Singh**:**

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE कृषि और किसान कल्याण मंत्री be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is taking strategic steps and initiatives to ensure that theexponential growth in the Agri-tech sector is appropriately leveraged for the benefit of farmersacross the country, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;

(b) whether the agricultural sector is witnessing the emergence of unique themes such as hyperspectral data analysis, photo-analytics, and the retrieval of precise weather parameters through geostationary satellites; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

कृषि और किसान कल्याण राज्य मंत्री (SHRI BHAGIRATH CHOUDHARY)

(a) Yes, the government acknowledges the significant potential of the Agri-Tech industry in driving the transformation of food systems and enhancing the efficiency and profitability of small farms. Further, various initiatives and policies have been introduced to promote technological advancements in agriculture, recognizing the role of Agri-Tech in addressing challenges and fostering sustainable agricultural practices. The Government has approved the Digital Agriculture Mission, which envisage the creations of Digital Public Infrastructure for Agriculture such as Agristack, Krishi Decision Support System, Comprehensive Soil Fertility & Profile Map and other IT initiatives. Agristack project is one of the major components of this Mission, which consists of three foundational registries or databases in the agriculture sector, i.e., the Farmers' Registry, Geo-referenced village maps and the Crop Sown Registry. This system aims to enhance interoperability and convergence of efforts, fostering the development of applications in the agricultural sector using emerging digital technologies.

Further, a component called “Innovation and Agri-Entrepreneurship Development” has been launched under Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY-RAFTAAR) in 2018-19 with the objective of promoting innovation and agri-entrepreneurship by providing financial support and nurturing the incubation ecosystem. Under this programme, start-ups are encouraged to use innovative technologies to resolve challenges faced in agriculture and allied sectors. A total of 1176 start-ups have been selected in various areas of agriculture and allied sectors under this programme for providing financial support through Knowledge Partners and Agri Business Incubators appointed by the Department for implementation of this programme.

The Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR) has been supporting Agri-based startups under the project called National Agriculture Innovation Fund (NAIF) initiated in year 2016-2017. It has two components viz. (I) Innovation Fund; (II) Incubation Fund and National Coordinating Unit (NCU):

I. Component I: 10 Zonal Technology Management Units and 89 Institute Technology Management Units (ITMUs) established in 99 ICAR institutes provide a single-window mechanism to manage innovations, showcase intellectual assets, and pursue matters related to intellectual property (IP) management and transfer/commercialization of technologies in these institutes.

II. Component II: Agri-business Incubator Centres (ABICs) are set up to speed up the delivery of the new technologies to stake holders. The ABICs are the nodal point to provide the desired link for Agriculture Research &Development (R&D) Institutions for incubation/ commercialization of the validated technologies. So far, 50 Agri-Business Incubation Centers have been established and are operational in the ICAR network under the NAIF scheme.

(a) & (c): Yes, agriculture sector is witnessing emergence of various technologies viz hyperspectral remote sensing, photo- analytics, retrieval of precise weather parameters through geostationary satellites, AI/ML based analytics etc. In this direction Department has taken various initiatives such as use of Hyperspectral data in agricultural applications i.e crop identification, crop health monitoring, soil organic carbon estimation etc. on pilot basis in collaboration with Start-up industry and Weather information and Network Data System (WINDS) to strengthen weather data infrastructure in the country and to provide good quality weather datasets from a single digital platform.

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