

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH & EDUCATION

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 390
TO BE ANSWERED ON 4TH FEBRUARY, 2025

NATIONAL RESEARCH CENTRE FOR MAKHANA

390. SHRI GOPAL JEE THAKUR:

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

- (a) whether there is any plan/proposal to develop the National Research Centre for Makhana at Darbhanga as an institute of the national importance, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (b) whether all the basic infrastructure and other facilities related to Makhana and its development are present in the said institute as per the requirements of National Research Centre and if so, the details thereof along with the action taken in the field of research; and
- (c) the total amount spent by the Government for the development of this institute till now, year and item-wise along with the details of total number of Makhana producers being benefitted from this institute?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
कृषि और किसान कल्याण राज्य मंत्री (SHRI BHAGIRATH CHOUDHARY)

(a): At present, there is no proposal to develop National Research Centre for Makhana at Darbhanga as an Institute of National Importance.

(b): The National Research Centre for Makhana (NRCM), Darbhanga, is a well-equipped facility dedicated to Makhana research and innovation, supported by a skilled team of scientists. Its key achievements include developing high-yield makhana and thornless water chestnut varieties, introducing water-efficient and integrated farming systems, and launching Makhana-cum-fish farming. The cultivation practices of Indian Lotus, medicinal plants like *Acorus calamus* (Sweet flag) and *Alocasia montana* have also been established. Several equipment/machines for Makhana popping and value-added products have been developed and licensed to manufacturers for commercialization namely Makhana seed washer, Makhana seed grader, Makhana seed primary roasting machine, Makhana seed popping machine, Popped Makhana grader and various type of value-added products. The NRCM has trained thousands of farmers and entrepreneurs, driving regional industries and livelihoods. Makhana cultivation has expanded from approximately 13,000 to 35,000 hectares across multiple states.

(c): Since May 2023, the NRCM, Darbhanga, has incurred expenditures of ₹2.65 crore in 2023-24 and ₹1.27 crore in 2024-25 (as of January 2025). The amount of funds spent during last five years:

Financial Year	Expenditure (In Lakhs)
2023-24	265.00
2022-23	15.95
2021-22	17.87
2020-21	23.50
2019-20	18.00
Total	340.32

Over the years, 15,824.1 kg of high-yielding Makhana seeds have been distributed to farmers, KVKs, and organizations across various states. Significant beneficiaries include institutions like NABARD, fisheries departments, Bihar Horticulture Development Society and farmers from regions such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.

Between 2012 and 2023, NRCM trained over 3,000 farmers in advanced Makhana cultivation, processing, and marketing techniques, focusing on water-efficient practices, cropping systems, and nutrient management. Additionally, NRCM has assisted 24 enterprises, including Mithila Naturals, Maa Vaishnavi Makhana, and Swastik Food Group, by providing technical inputs and fostering Makhana-based industries, further boosting the agricultural economy.
