

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

**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 4266**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 19<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST, 2025

**NATIONAL POLICY TO PROMOTE GIAHS SITES IN INDIA**

4266. SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH:

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware that India has only a few sites designated under the FAO's Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) programme, despite its rich traditional agricultural diversity;
- (b) whether the Government has taken steps to leverage the development, conservation, and branding potential of GIAHS, especially in culturally significant regions like Kuttanad, Koraput, and Kashmir;
- (c) whether any comparative assessments have been made of countries like China that have successfully integrated GIAHS into rural development and eco-tourism policies;
- (d) if so, the reasons for not adopting similar frameworks or incentives; and
- (e) whether the Government proposes to formulate a dedicated national action plan or policy to support and promote GIAHS sites as part of India's sustainable development and agrobiodiversity conservation strategies?

**ANSWER**

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

कृषि एवं किसान कल्याण राज्य मंत्री (SHRI RAMNATH THAKUR)

(a) & (b): As informed by Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), India currently hosts three Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS): the Koraput region in Odisha, the Kuttanad farming system in Kerala, and the Saffron Heritage of Kashmir. The Koraput region is renowned for its subsistence paddy cultivation, predominantly on highland slopes, and is home to a vast diversity of paddy landraces and farmer-developed varieties.

It also harbors rich genetic resources of medicinal plants, deeply interwoven with the indigenous tribal communities and their traditional knowledge systems. The Kuttanad system in Kerala stands out as a unique below-sea-level farming landscape, comprising wetlands for paddy cultivation and fish catching, garden lands for coconut and food crops, and inland water bodies for fishing and shell collection. Meanwhile, the Saffron Park of Kashmir represents a rich agro-pastoral system characterized by traditional saffron cultivation, intercropping, and the use of organic farming practices, all of which contribute to maintaining local biodiversity and soil health.

(c) & (d): No such assessments have been made.

(e): GIAHS is an FAO programme. Schemes and policies of Government of India support these sites. As reported by the Government of Jammu and Kashmir, for economic revival of saffron cultivation in Jammu and Kashmir has been supported under the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) and Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH).

Government of Odisha reported that proactive steps have been taken on conserving its biodiversity, preserving landraces of different crops and branding in Koraput. The programme also incorporates community seed banks and organic farming methods, focussing on revival of neglected crops and forgotten foods.

As reported by the Government of Kerala, two works for the development of infrastructure in the paddy sector in the Kuttanad region are included under the current year's RKVY-DPR projects. These include: (i) 'Haritam Harippad'—infrastructural development works of various Padasekharams in Alappuzha District. (ii) Assistance to Research on 'Ecological Utilization of Water Hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*) in Kuttanad'.

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