

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT  
DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3966  
ANSWERED ON 17/03/2026**

**DISTRIBUTION OF DRONES TO SHGS**

**3966. Shri Bhaskar Murlidhar Bhagare:**

**Shri Sanjay Dina Patil:**

**Smt. Supriya Sule:**

**Prof. Varsha Eknath Gaikwad:**

**Shri Mohite Patil Dhairyasheel Rajsinh:**

**Dr. Amol Ramsing Kolhe:**

**Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether a limited number of drones have been provided to Women Self Help Groups (SHGs) in Maharashtra during 2023-24 to January, 2026 and if so, the district-wise details of drones distributed and SHG members trained as drone pilots;**
- (b) whether the Government has independently evaluated the actual economic viability of drone operations by SHGs in Maharashtra, particularly with respect to assured demand for spraying services, net income earned and recovery of operational and maintenance costs;**
- (c) whether instances have been reported where drones remain underutilised due to lack of market linkage, high repair costs, seasonal demand, or inadequate follow-up support in the State;**
- (d) whether any convergence has been planned with State agriculture departments, FPOs or cooperative societies to ensure regular deployment of drones; and**
- (e) the steps proposed to prevent the scheme from becoming asset-centric rather than livelihood-sustaining for rural women in Maharashtra?**

**ANSWER**

**MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT  
(DR. CHANDRA SEKHAR PEMMASANI)**

**(a): The Government has approved 'Namo Drone Didi' as Central Sector Scheme for providing drones to the Women Self Help Groups (SHGs) with an outlay of Rs. 1261 Crores for the period from 2023-24**

**to 2025-26. As per the information provided by the Department of Fertilizers, Lead Fertilizer Companies (LFCs) have distributed 1094 drones to drone didis of SHGs in 2023-24 using their internal resources. Out of these 1094 drones distributed, 500 drones have been distributed under the Namo Drone Didi Scheme. All these SHG members have been provided training at the Remote Pilot Organisations (RPTOs) authorised by DGCA. The district-wise details of drones distributed in Maharashtra and SHG members trained as drone pilots are attached as Annexure-I.**

**(b) & (c): Agricultural Development and Rural Transformation Centre (ADRTC), Bangalore have carried out a study on economics and business viability of drone operations on the 500 drones provided by LFCs under Namo Drone Didi scheme. The study indicates that the SHGs earlier were primarily engaged in agriculture and allied activities and the drones provided to them has expanded their niche to modern agricultural practices through drone technology, enhancing their efficiency and productivity. Overall, the adoption of drones has diversified SHG activities, improved agricultural practices, and increased income opportunities for women in rural communities.**

**The specific findings of the study concerning the western including the State of Maharashtra are as under:**

- i. farmers have shown willingness to use drone services at an average of Rs.379 per acre.**
- ii. 99% farmers expressed that they would recommend drone services to other farmers.**
- iii. 82% farmers felt the rental charges were comparatively cheap. 18% found the costs affordable.**
- iv. 97% reported water saving, 87% reported savings in labour cost, 74% reported savings in pesticide, 77% reported savings in Fertilizer use 48% reported saving of Diesel.**

**Apart from economical use of drones, the study also pointed out some operational challenges such as frequent crashes, overheating of batteries, repair delays, high maintenance costs, no timely service support, transport issues, lack of batteries & chargers, calibration and maintenance challenges.**

**(d) & (e): The Committee at State level with members drawn from Department of Agriculture/Agricultural Engineering of the State, Rural Development, State Mission Directorate of Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), State Cooperative Department, Lead Banks/ National Bank for Agriculture**

**& Rural Development (NABARD), representatives of Lead Fertilizer Company (LFC) nominated for the state, Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)/State Agricultural Universities (SAUs)/Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) is responsible for selection of appropriate clusters for drone usage, selection of the progressive women SHGs under DAY - NRLM in the States in the identified clusters for providing drones, selection of members of the women SHGs for drone pilot and drone assistant training, assessment of district-wise drone usage, identification of existing gap, availability and future requirements of drone usage, providing/ensuring business to selected Women SHGs in coordination with the LFCs and Pesticide companies etc. The District Level Committee through the District Administration for monitoring that the rent charged by the CLF/SHGs for drone services shall be less than the prevailing market rate.**

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**ANNEXURE-I**

**ANNEXURE REFERRED TO IN REPLY OF PART (a) OF LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3966 ANSWERED ON 17.03.2026 REGARDING “Distribution of Drones to SHGs”.**

<b>S.NO</b>	<b>SHG Districts</b>	<b>No. of SHGs supplied with drones and provided training</b>
1	Ahmednagar	06
2	Akola	02
3	Amravati	01
4	Beed	03
5	Bhandara	01
6	Buldhana	01
7	Chandrapur	01
8	Chatrapati Sambhajinagar	01
9	Dharasiv	03
10	Dhule	02
11	Gadchiroli	01
12	Hingoli	01
13	Jalgaon	01
14	Jalna	02
15	Kolhapur	05
16	Latur	01
17	Nandurbar	01
18	Nasik	04
19	Palghar	01
20	Parbhani	02
21	Pune	05
22	Raigad	01
23	Sangli	04
24	Satara	03
25	Sindhudurg	01
26	Solapur	04
27	Wardha	01
28	Washim	01

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