

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

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 669
TO BE ANSWERED ON 3RD FEBRUARY, 2026

RESEARCH TO IMPROVE EXISTING LOCAL VARIETIES

669. SHRI MANSUKHBHAI DHANJIBHAI VASAVA:

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

- (a) the measures taken by the Government to conserve and augment traditional agricultural produce in the country;
- (b) whether the Government proposes to encourage research work to improve existing local varieties of agricultural produce and seeds; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof along with the steps being taken in this regard?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (c): ICAR-National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (NBPGR) is the nodal organization for conservation of germplasm including local landraces and traditional varieties in its National Genebank which currently holds 4.74 lakh accessions of 2147 species including 85633 landraces and 14515 traditional cultivars viz., 208 and 153 of Agroforestry, 13690 and 7776 of Cereals, 244 and 123 of Fibre crops, 1563 and 48 of Forage crops, 7 and 6 of Fruits & Nuts, 10873 and 1690 of Grain legumes, 1200 and 489 of Medicinal & Aromatic plants, 16496 and 776 of Millets, 32267 and 1577 of Oilseeds, 15 and 14 of Ornamental, 1676 and 400 of Pseudocereals, 1200 and 213 of Spices Condiments and Flavour and 6194 and 1250 of Vegetables, respectively.

ICAR-NBPGR is characterizing/ evaluating the germplasm collections including traditional varieties and landraces; and the information is shared with the plant breeders.

Traditional varieties are promoted and traditional varieties with special traits are used in the crop improvement programmes in different crops. The All India Coordinated Research Projects (AICRPs) on various crops utilize local varieties/ germplasm including traditional varieties as base material to develop new cultivars by introgression of superior agronomic traits. Till now, total 509 varieties in 26 crops viz. rice, maize, horse gram, linseed, Indian mustard, pigeonpea etc have been developed using trait specific germplasm including traditional cultivars.

Under National Food Security and Nutrition Mission (NFSNM) Government of India (GoI) has component for supporting the interventions for “Boosting seed production of traditional varieties” including Production Incentive, Assistance on Seed Distribution, Assistance for Capacity Building (60% GoI Share & 40% State Share in Normal States and 90% GoI Share & 10% State Share in North-Eastern and Hilly States), Assistance for Establishment of Seed Banks (100% GoI Share). Agriculture Department of States/Union Territories, State Seed Corporations and State Agricultural Universities, ICAR-Institutes, Central Agricultural Universities or National Seeds Corporation (NSC) and other National Level Agencies are implementing agencies for this component. Government of Odisha is promoting the traditional varieties of millets under Odisha Millet Mission in tribal areas. The Mission is involved to increase millet production and consumption, improve nutritional security, support decentralized millet enterprises, and institutionalize millet inclusion in public nutrition schemes.

Government has enacted the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers Rights (PPVFR) Act 2001, which is globally first initiative of giving rights to the farmers for conservation of their traditional varieties. Since the establishment, Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers Rights Authority, 5241 farmers varieties including the land races and traditional varieties have been registered. Also, the farmers and communities involved in conservation of farmers varieties, land races and traditional varieties are awarded/ rewarded/ recognized as per PPVFR Rules (2012 and 2018) which include Plant Genome Saviour Community Awards, Plant Genome Saviour Farmer Reward and Plant Genome Saviour Farmer Recognition. So far 45 Plant Genome Saviour Community Awards, 69 Plant Genome Saviour Farmer Rewards and 88 Plant Genome Saviour Farmer Recognition have been conferred to farmer(s)/ farming communities across different states and UTs. Provision of financial support for conservation of traditional varieties has been made under PPVFR Rules 2025 also.
