

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5105

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SMALL AND MARGINAL FARMERS

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Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether a large number of small and marginal farmers continue to live below poverty line in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government for the welfare of such farmers;
- (c) whether the National Sample Survey (NSS) has made any assessment on the socio economic condition of the farmers in the country;
- (d) if so, the outcome of such survey; and
- (e) the remedial measures taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS)

(a)&(b): Planning Commission has estimated that at all-India level, 28.3% of population in rural areas are below poverty line based on data of National Sample Survey (NSS) 61st Round (July 2004 – June 2005) on Uniform Reference Period. According to them, there is no official estimate regarding the number of farmers living below the poverty line. As per NSS Report on Employment and Unemployment Situation in India (2004-05), 35.9% of households in rural area are self-employed in agriculture at all-India level.

(c)&(d): National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) conducted the Situation Assessment Survey, a comprehensive socio-economic study of the Indian Farmers covering educational level, level of living, farming practices, possession of productive assets, awareness and access to modern technology, resource availability, indebtedness and a host of other relevant issues during January – December 2003 in the rural areas as part of the NSS 59th round. Highlights of the results of the survey at all-India level are as follows:

An estimated 27% of farmers did not like farming because it was not profitable. In all, 40% felt that, given a choice, they would take up some other career.

About 18% of farmer households knew what bio-fertilisers were and 29% understood what Minimum Support Price meant. Only 8% had heard of the World Trade Organisation.

Only 4% of farmer households had ever insured their crops and 57% did not know that crops could be insured.

Improved seeds were used by 46% farmer households during the kharif and 34% during the rabi season.

40% of farmer households accessed various sources of information for Modern Technology for Farming.

The average Monthly Per Capita Consumer Expenditure (MPCE) for farmer households was Rs. 502.83 (less by 9.3) compared to Rs.554.15 for all rural households.

Out of 89.35 million farmer households, 43.42 million (48.6%) were reported to be indebted.

More than 50% of indebted farmer households had taken loan for the purpose of capital or current expenditure in farm business. The most important source of loan in terms of percentage of outstanding loan amount was banks (36%), followed by moneylenders (26%).

(e): The Government of India is implementing the National Policy for Farmers, 2007 with the objective of increasing the income of farmers by enhancing the economic viability of farming in addition to increasing production and productivity. The policy provisions, inter-alia, include asset reforms in respect of land, water, livestock, fisheries and bio-resources; provide support services and inputs like application of frontier technologies; agricultural bio-security system; supply of good quality seeds and disease-free planting material, issue of soil health passbooks to the farmers and integrated pest management system; region and crop specific implements and machinery; support services for women like crèches, child care centres, nutrition, health and training timely, adequate and easy reach of institutional credit at reasonable interest rates and farmer-friendly insurance instruments; use of Information and Communication Technology and setting up of farm schools to revitalize agricultural extension; coverage of farmers under a comprehensive National Social Security Scheme; effective implementation of Minimum Support Price across the country and establishing community foodgrain banks; development of agricultural market infrastructure and terminal markets for agriculture; curriculum reforms in agricultural universities; special categories of farming like organic farming and contract farming; rural non-farm employment initiative for farm households; and integrated approach for rural energy. Many of the Schemes/Programmes being implemented by different Departments and Ministries are as per the provisions of National Policy for Farmers 2007. Major Plan Schemes/Programmes being implemented are Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, National Food Security Mission, National Bamboo

Mission, National Horticulture Mission, Micro Irrigation Schemes, Watershed Development Programme, Integrated Nutrient Management and Integrated Pest Management and Schemes covered under Macro Management of Agriculture.