

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
AGRICULTURE  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5123

ANSWERED ON:27.04.2010

FARMERS SELF HELP GROUP

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**Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether the National Commission on Farmers has suggested for mobilization and organisation of farmers into self help groups;
- (b) if so, the details in this regard;
- (c) whether the Government has included such suggestion in the National Agriculture Policy; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

**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): The National Commission on Farmers (NCF) emphasized that small farm families will have to be conferred with the power of scale at the production and post-harvest phases. Accordingly, it had suggested adoption of different institutional devices including the formation of self help groups (SHGs) according to local socio-cultural and agro-economic conditions. Moreover, these SHGs will have to be made sustainable through backward linkages to credit and technology and forward linkages with markets. Further, women SHGs have to be at the core of initiatives along with close interaction with partner agencies. Also, in the context of making use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), the NCF had suggested that the village knowledge centres, proposed by it, can be run by SHGs after the members of the SHGs are thoroughly trained.

Some other specific suggestions in this regard made by the NCF include:

- # Organization of a Livestock Food Corporation of India for the purpose of promoting the growth of Fodder and Feed SHGs and Fodder and Feed Banks set-up all over the country by local SHGs with financial support through NABARD and financial institutions
- # Need for at least 50 SHG capacity building and mentoring centers in every State to enhance the management and marketing capacities of members of the SHGs
- # Consortium of agencies like SHGs, Mahila Mandals, Farmers' Clubs etc. to provide oversight to the implementation of the integrated food for work and employment guarantee approach to the elimination of hunger and poverty
- # Micro-finance scheme of North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd. aiming to support NGOs/SHGs for promotion of medicinal and aromatic plants, which definitely enjoy a niche in the North Eastern Region
- # Establishment and operation of Water banks in areas which are highly vulnerable to water shortages & stresses and Panchayats, SHGs, Water Associations should play the leading role in implementing this programme
- # Small farmers SHGs should be helped to organize establishment of Small Farmers Estates covering an area of 100-200 ha each to capture the economies of scale
- # Group approach of new extension and technology transfer mechanisms through SHGs
- # Specialized marketing SHGs to undertake Group Marketing
- # Crop insurance through SHGs.

(c) & (d): The National Policy on Farmers (NPF), 2007 envisages encouragement and support to SHGs of farmers for various purposes in different contexts. These include providing foundation seeds to grass root level seed growers; maintaining pedigree animals of Indian breeds of cattle and buffaloes for exploiting export opportunities; training of progressive fishermen in induced fish seed breeding, production and availability; control of the market channels and improve profit opportunities; association as stakeholders and not just as shareholders in the companies that are now coming into existence in the area of seed production, production of biofertilizers, bio-pesticides and other forms of biological software essential for sustainable agriculture; group farming for consolidating farming activities; improving access to credit; export. Moreover, to mainstream the gender dimension in all farm policies and programmes and to make appropriate use of ICT are included among the major policy goals of NPF.