

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:93

ANSWERED ON:01.03.2011

SOIL HEALTH

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Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the health of soil is degenerating in the wake of the indiscriminate use of chemical fertilisers and insecticides;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether some of the non-governmental organisations have commissioned a survey on the state of soil health in the country and suggested ways and means to improve soil health;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the other steps being taken by the Government to improve soil health?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR)

(a) to (e): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (e) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 93 DUE FOR REPLY ON 1ST MARCH, 2011.

(a) & (b): The imbalanced use of fertilizers coupled with low addition of organic matter and neglect of micro and secondary nutrients over the years has resulted in nutrient deficiency and deterioration of soil health in many parts of the country, particularly in the intensively cultivated Indo-Gangetic plains. However, the balanced and judicious use of fertilizers and registered pesticides does not have adverse effect on soil health.

(c) & (d): 'Greenpeace India' launched a 'Living Soils Campaign' which involved social audit of soil health management policies and schemes in selected districts of Assam, Orissa, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Punjab. The recommendations, inter alia, include need for convergence of policies at the grassroots level, need for an umbrella policy for ecological fertilization, launching of mission on ecological fertilization, support to various components of ecological fertilization practices such as in-situ and ex-situ bio-mass generation, on-farm and off-farm composting, bio-fertilizers and farm made liquid manure, eco-bonus to farmers for maintaining soil health and institutional support for ensuring soil health.

Most of these recommendations are already a part of the schemes and programmes being implemented by the Government.

(e): The schemes being implemented by the Government promote soil test based balanced and judicious use of fertilizers for improving soil health and productivity, setting up/strengthening of static/ mobile Soil Testing Laboratories, training of soil testing laboratory staff/extension officers/farmers, field demonstrations on balanced use of fertilizers and use of organic manure, soil amendments and micronutrients.