

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5518
ANSWERED ON:06.09.2011
LOCAL SEEDS
Yadav Shri Ranjan Prasad

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of seed banks operating in the country and their role in general and particularly the preservation of local seeds, State-wise;
- (b) whether local seeds are disappearing from these banks and farmers are discouraged to use them;
- (c) if so, the reasons therefor; and
- (d) the steps taken by the Government to encourage farmers to use local seeds for agricultural purpose?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI HARISH RAWAT)

(a): Seed banks are in operation in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttarkhand, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Kerala through the State Seed Corporations/Seeds Development Authority (SSCs) and in Tamil Nadu through State Department of Agriculture. National Seeds Corporation and State Farms Corporation of India also operate Seed Banks at National Level. The objectives of the Seed Bank are to meet requirement of Seed arising due to natural calamities and other unforeseen conditions like drought, floods etc. The certified and foundation seeds of location specific varieties including local varieties which are suitable for such situations are generally kept in the Seed Bank.

(b) to (d): Seed Bank works with a specific mandate to provide alternative seeds in the event of unforeseen calamities, drought etc. For this purpose the concerned State Seed Corporations in consultation with State Agricultural Universities and State Departments of Agriculture identify suitable varieties that can thrive in such areas where drought/floods have been experienced. Such area appropriate varieties are kept in the Seed Bank. However, the National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (NBPGR) and national active germplasm sites which are operating as Gene Banks in different states have objectives to collect, characterize, evaluate, conserve and to make available germplasm including land races, wild species and traditional varieties of different crops for agricultural research purposes. Also, these gene banks conserve local varieties. To encourage farmers/farming communities to conserve and use the local strains for development of new varieties of seeds, the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Authority under Ministry of Agriculture has instituted Plant Genome Savior Community Awards.