

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:121

ANSWERED ON:09.08.2011

SMALL SCALE FARMING

Ponnam Shri Prabhakar;Yadav Shri Dinesh Chandra

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) the present status of small scale farming in the country;
- (b) whether the Government has taken note of the United Nations latest World Economic and Social Survey report, which has advocated small scale farming for tackling food security issues;
- (c) if so, the details thereof including the observations and suggestions/recommendations made in the Report;
- (d) the reaction of the Government thereto; and
- (e) the steps being taken by the Government to promote small scale farming in the country?

Answer

MINISTER 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. 121 DUE FOR REPLY ON 9TH AUGUST, 2011.

(a): Small and marginal farm holdings account for nearly 82% of total landholdings in India. There are 7.54 crore marginal land holdings (less than 1 hectare) and 2.27 crore small (1-2 hectares) farm holdings that constitute 63% and 19% respectively of 12 crore total land holdings (Agricultural Statistics at a Glance 2010). They also account for nearly 44% of operated area and contribute to 51% of total output produced in the country (Report of National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector, 2008).

(b) & (c): Yes, UN World Economics and Social Survey Report 2011 has emphasized the need for focusing on small scale farming as the potential area for realizing food security. Broadly the strategy suggested relates to development and promotion of site specific sustainable agriculture technologies coupled with efforts to build institutions that group the small farmers. Major recommendations of the report are given below:

i. Promotion of green technologies leading to low use of chemical fertilizers, efficient use of natural resources, new high yielding varieties, low tillage, crop rotation, intercropping, integrated pest management, and adoption of resource conservation practices such as SRI (System of Rice Intensification).

ii. Provisioning support services such as adequate rural infrastructure, irrigation, grain storage, marketing, education and training facilities.

iii. Creation of dynamic Sustainable Agricultural Innovation System (SAIS) linking universities, research institutions, firms, farmers, civil society organizations and private foundations for dissemination of technologies & innovative practices.

iv. Increased investment on agriculture research and development.

v. New mechanisms for expanding payments for environmental services (PES) to small farm holders for the protection of natural resources, to conserve biodiversity and to increase carbon sequestration in agriculture.

(d) & (e): Government of India has been taking active steps to make small scale farming viable. Many of the recommendations of the report are included in the initiatives of Government of India as mentioned below:

i. Technologies relating to improved seeds, conservation of natural resources, improved water use efficiency, integrated nutrient and pest management are being promoted under various agriculture development programmes for sustainable agriculture.

ii. District Agriculture Development Plans are being prepared as per the agro climatic situations to meet the local needs.

- iii. Cluster approach has been adopted under various crop development programmes for better reach of technologies and services to the small and marginal farmers.
- iv. Farmers are being organized into groups for availing quality inputs and better market access.
- v. Venture Capital assistance to small farm enterprises through Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium is ensured.
- vi. Risk Management among others through strengthening of agricultural insurance mechanisms development and promotion of climate resilient technologies are being promoted.
- vii. Storage infrastructure is being developed along with modernization of market facilities.
- viii. Several Rural development schemes are focusing on development of infrastructure and irrigation facilities in the rural areas benefiting small and marginal farmers.
- ix. Partnership for research, development and policies with Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and other International organizations to address issues relating to global food security are being adopted.
- x. Innovations and knowledge management is being taken up on priority to evolve better technologies and approaches while addressing constraints of small scale farming.