

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2668
ANSWERED ON:28.08.2012
ECOLOGICALLY SUITABLE FARMING METHODS
Jagannath Dr. M.

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has constituted an expert panel to study and recommend on the farming practices in the Western Ghats;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the said expert panel has recommended urgent curtailment of the disastrous farming practices in the Western Ghats;
- (d) if so, the details thereof along with the other recommendations of the said panel; and
- (e) the measures being contemplated by the Government to promote ecologically suitable farming methods in the area?

Answer

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

(a) & (b): In view of the environmental sensitivity and ecological significance of the Western Ghats region and the complex interstate nature of its geography, as well as possible impacts of climate change on this region, the Ministry of Environment & Forests Government of India has constituted, by an order dated 4th March 2010, a Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP).

The panel has been asked to perform the following functions:

- (i) To assess the current status of ecology of the Western Ghats region.
- (ii) To demarcate areas within the Western Ghats Region which need to be notified as ecologically sensitive and to recommend for notification of such areas as ecologically sensitive zones under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. In doing so, the Panel shall review the existing reports such as the Mohan Ram Committee Report, Hon'ble Supreme Court's decisions, recommendations of the National Board for Wildlife and consult all concerned State Governments.
- (iii) To make recommendations for the conservation, protection and rejuvenation of the Western Ghats Region following a comprehensive consultation process involving people and Governments of all the concerned States.
- (iv) To suggest measures for effective implementation of the notifications issued by the Government of India in the Ministry of Environment and Forests declaring specific areas in the Western Ghats Region as eco-sensitive zones under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
- (v) To recommend the modalities for the establishment of Western Ghats Ecology Authority under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 which will be a professional body to manage the ecology of the region and to ensure its sustainable development with the support of all concerned states.
- (vi) To deal with any other relevant environment and ecological issues pertaining to Western Ghats Region, including those which may be referred to it by the Central Government in the Ministry of Environment and Forests.

(c) & (d): The recommendation of the expert panel on Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries are as follows:-

Agriculture: Promote organic agricultural practices, introduce incentive payments for sequestration of carbon in soils, introduce incentive payments for maintenance of select traditional cultivars, encourage participatory breeding programmes to improve productivity of traditional cultivars, encourage precision agricultural practices. No GMOs. Phase out all use of chemical pesticides/weedicides and chemical fertilizers within five to ten years.

Animal Husbandry: Introduce incentive payments as "conservation service charges" for maintenance of land races of livestock, redeploy subsidies for chemical fertilizers towards maintenance of livestock and production of biogas and generation of organic manure.

Fisheries: Strictly control use of dynamite and other explosives to kill fish, Provide fish ladders at all reservoirs, Introduce incentive

payments as "conservation service charges" for maintenance of indigenous fish species in tanks under control of Biodiversity Management Committees or Fishermen's co-operatives, monitors and control trade in aquarium fishes with the help of Biodiversity Management Committees.

(e) The Panel has since submitted its report to the Ministry of Environment & Forest. In order to examine the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel Report in a holistic and multidisciplinary fashion, the Ministry has constituted a High Level Working Group under the Chairmanship of Dr. K. Kasturirangan, Member (Science), Planning Commission.