

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1412
ANSWERED ON:03.12.2012
IMPACTS OF GM ORGANISMS
Rao Shri Sambasiva Rayapati

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has noticed the long-term impact of Genetically Modified (GM) Organisms in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the research made so far in this direction by the Government;
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (d) the steps taken by the Government in this regard ?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN)

(a) to (d) The Government of India is following a policy of case by case assessment of genetically modified (GM) crops. In view of various concerns related to the safety, efficacy and agronomic performance of GM seeds, extensive evaluation and regulatory approval process takes place before any GM plant is approved for commercial cultivation. Accordingly Bt cotton, the only GM crop approved for commercial cultivation has been developed in full compliance with the existing regulatory framework and biosafety guidelines which are at par with international norms. This includes generation of relevant biosafety information and its elaborate analysis to ensure food, feed and environmental safety. The environmental safety assessment includes studies on pollen escape out-crossing, aggressiveness and weediness, effect of the gene on non-target organisms, presence of protein in soil and its effect on soil micro-flora, confirmation of the absence of terminator gene and baseline susceptibility studies. The food and feed safety studies include assessment on composition analysis, allergenicity and toxicological studies and feeding studies on fish, chicken, cows and buffaloes. Bt cotton has a history of safe use as it is cultivated in several countries for nearly two decades; and was released globally even before it was released in India in 2002. There is no scientific evidence to conclude that Bt cotton has adversely impacted the environment or health.