

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2814

ANSWERED ON:27.08.2013

BIO TECHNOLOGY REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA

Antony Shri Anto;Kashyap Shri Virender;Meghwal Shri Arjun Ram ;Patil Shri A.T. Nana

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government proposes to introduce a Bill to set up the Bio-technology Regulatory Authority of India (BRAI) in the country;
- (b) if so, the details and the salient features thereof;
- (c) whether concerns have been raised from certain fora including stakeholders, NGOs, farmers' organisations, experts and committees in this regard;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto; and
- (e) the corrective measures being taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI TARIQ ANWAR)

(a) &(b): The Department of Bio-technology, Ministry of Science & Technology introduced the Biotechnology Regulatory Authority of India (BRAI) Bill 2013 in the Lok Sabha on 22nd April, 2013. As per legislative process the Bill subsequently was referred to the Department related Parliament Standing Committee on Science & Technology, Environment & Forests for examination and report. The Committee through advertisements in national newspapers invited comments from public, last date for receipt of comments being 25th August, 2013. Petitions are being received from various stakeholders.

The scope of the bill is to establish an authority to regulate the research, transport, import, manufacture and use of organisms and products of modern biotechnology in terms of safety and efficacy. The commercial aspects of sale, licensing, price control and distribution of all products of modern biotechnology including agriculture and health care are out of the purview of the BRAI Bill and shall be dealt by the existing policy, acts and rules in the Central and State Governments.

(c) to (e): The BRAI Bill has been prepared after several consultative meetings with State Governments and other concerned stakeholders representing farmers' and consumers' organizations, industry, legal experts, media and academia/ scientists from research institutions/ universities. The governmental process of inter-ministerial consultation was completed before the introduction of the Bill.

Objections received from certain stakeholders on the Bill include: conflict of interest in the ministries with regard to promotion of biotechnology versus regulation; aligning certain clauses with the RTI Act in relation to a professional and autonomous statutory body of confidential commercial information of the applicants; the need and provisions related to establishment of separate appellate tribunal to address substantial issues related to biotechnology (than current practice of approaching Supreme Court); the role of state governments in the proposed authority etc.

Due administrative and legislative process including recommendations of the department related Parliament Standing Committee on Science & Technology, Environment & Forests will facilitate firming up of the Bill.