

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3411

ANSWERED ON:17.03.2015

SHORTAGE OF AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS

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Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the cultivation of major food crops and other agricultural operations have been hit badly in some States due to acute shortage of agricultural labourers;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has assessed the impact of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) on the agriculture sector and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether the Government proposes to improve skill development of farm labourers to gain better production and productivity in the agriculture sector, if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the mechanism put in place by the Government to address the shortage of farm labourers in the agriculture sector?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI MOHANBHAI KUNDARIA)

(a) & (b): Total foodgrains production in the country increased from 257.13 million tonnes in 2012-13 to 265.57 million tonnes in 2013-14. As per 2nd Advance Estimates, production of food- grains for 2014-15 is estimated at 257.07 million tonnes. The decline in estimated foodgrains production in 2014-15 over the previous year is mainly due to below normal monsoon. There is no indication that shortage of agricultural labourers has adversely impacted cultivation of food crops.

(c): Studies conducted by the Ministry of Rural Development have shown that the implementation of MGNREGA leads to reduction in distress migration from rural areas and substantial increase in rural wages.

(d): Ministry of Agriculture is implementing Sub Mission on Agricultural Mechanisation (SMAM) w.e.f. 2014-15. One of the thrust areas in SMAM is skill development through the Component namely, "Promotion and Strengthening of Agricultural Mechanisation through Training, Testing and Demonstration", with a view to acquaint the end users of their effective utilisation.

(e): As per Census 2011, the total number of agricultural labourers increased from 106.78 million in 2001 to 144.33 million in 2011. However, farmers are assisted under farm mechanisation programmes for purchase of agricultural equipment including hand tools, bullock- drawn/power-driven implements, planting, reaping, harvesting and threshing equipment, tractors, power-tillers and other specialized agricultural machines, which may reduce the dependence on human labour in various agricultural operations. It has also been the endeavor to link MGNREGA with agricultural operations to ensure that at least 60% of the works in a district in terms of cost is for creation of productive assets in agriculture and allied activities through development of land, water and trees.