

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UN-STARRED QUESTION NO. 826
TO BE ANSWERED ON 14.12.2018

Air Pollution due to Stubble Burning

826. SHRI VENKATESH BABU T.G.:
SHRI DINESH TRIVEDI:
SHRIMATI POONAM MAHAJAN:
SHRI OM BIRLA:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether stubble burning in Northern States is a major source of air pollution in Delhi and National Capital Region (NCR) in winter season, if so, the details thereof and the steps being taken to mitigate air pollution caused due to stubble burning;
- (b) whether the Union Government has allocated funds to discourage stubble burning and improve air quality in the country including Delhi and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government proposed a special scheme to support the efforts of the State Governments to address the problem of air pollution due to burning of crop residues and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether satellite-based monitoring for tracking and enforcing agriculture waste burning is being undertaken by the Government, if so, the details thereof along with the alternate mechanism envisaged for crop residue disposal and increasing awareness among farmers in this regard;
- (e) whether the Government has also taken note of the fact that weak enforcement of the statutory ban by States close to Delhi on stubble burning coupled with laxity towards the sensitivity and gravity of the matter has also adversely affected the ongoing efforts to tackle the issue of air pollution in Delhi and NCR; and
- (f) if so, the steps that have been taken by the Government to ensure that the laid down guidelines and statutory provisions are implemented in letter and spirit?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(DR. MAHESH SHARMA)

(a) to (c) Stubble burning in Northern States contributes to air pollution in Delhi and NCR in winter season as per the report of Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology(IITM),Pune, Ministry of Earth Sciences. System of Air Quality &Weather Forecasting & Research (SAFAR)-has analysed the contribution of stubble burning in the total PM2.5 for the kharif season of this year. This estimated % share of stubble burning in PM2.5 reached to a high of 36% on 26th October, 2018 and 33% on 5th November, 2018.

To stop burning of crop residue that leads to higher level of air pollution in Delhi and NCR especially during adverse meteorological conditions in early winter in North India, the Central Government has introduced a new Central Sector Scheme on 'Promotion of Agricultural Mechanization for in-situ management of Crop Residue in the States of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and NCT of Delhi' for the period from 2018-19 and 2019-20 with an outlay of Rs. 1151.80 crore. This year's allocation of Central funds is Rs. 591.65 crore.

- (d) Satellite-based tracking of Active Fire Incidents due to stubble burning has been done by State Governments and remote sensing institutes. Daily tracking of active fire events in Punjab and Haryana is done on the basis of reports sent by Remote Sensing Institutes/Organisations. In Punjab, active fire events reported till 30th November 2018 are 59695 (11% reduction) compared with 67079 in 2017 for respective period (30th Sep-30th Nov). And in Haryana, 9232 (29 % reduction) active fire events have been reported till 30th November 2018 from 30th Sep 2018 and for the same period 13085 events were reported in 2017.

Ministry of Power has brought out the policy for Biomass Utilization for Power Generation through Co-firing in Pulverised Coal Fired Boilers in November, 2017. As per the policy, all fluidized bed and pulverized coal units (coal based thermal power plants) except those having ball and tube mill, of power generating utilities, public or private, located in India, shall endeavour to use 5-10% blend of biomass pellets made, primarily, of agri residue along with coal after assessing the technical feasibility, viz. safety aspects etc. In line with the policy, Central Electricity Authority has issued an Advisory to all concerned State Governments, power plant utilities, power equipment manufacturers and other stake holders to promote use of biomass pellets.

Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities under Central Sector Scheme on 'Promotion of Agricultural Mechanization for in-situ management of Crop Residue in the States of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and NCT of Delhi' have been conducted involving demonstrations, training, farmers' awareness camps, distribution of pamphlets, display of hoardings and banners, radio talks, discussion on T.V. and advertisement in print and electronic media.

- (e) & (f) The satellite remote sensing data on crop residue burning is shared with State Governments. The progress is regularly monitored by the High level Monitoring Committee under the chairmanship of Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Research and Education and DG (Indian Council of Agricultural Research). Further, directions have been given to agriculture departments and State Pollution Boards of Delhi and NCR States along with Punjab for strict enforcement and ban on stubble burning.
