

Mechanisation of Indian Agriculture

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The adoption of mechanization by the farmers depends on various factors such as socioeconomic conditions, geographical conditions, crops grown, irrigation facilities etc. The farm mechanization levels assessed by Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) for major cereals, pulses, oil-seeds, millets and cash crops indicates that the seedbed preparation operation is highly mechanized (more than 70%) for major crops whereas harvesting and threshing operation is the least mechanized (lower than 32%) for major crops except for rice and wheat crops. In seedbed preparation, mechanization level is higher in rice and wheat crops as compared to other crops. However, mechanization level for sowing operation is the highest for wheat crop (65%). The mechanization levels in planting/transplanting operation for sugarcane and rice crops are 20% and 30%, respectively. In case of harvesting and threshing, the mechanization levels in rice and wheat crops are more than 60% and very less in cotton crop.

The Government has not carried out assessment of number of farmers that have access to the mechanized tools and equipment. However, the emphasis of the Government is always to promote mechanization for all section of the society with the aim of increasing the reach of farm mechanization to small and marginal farmers and to the regions where availability of farm power is low and promoting 'Custom Hiring Centres' to offset the adverse economies of scale arising due to small landholding and high cost of individual ownership.

For promotion of agricultural mechanization in the country, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme 'Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization' (SMAM) is being implemented through the State Governments w.e.f. 2014-15. Under this scheme, financial assistance @ 40% to 50% of the cost of machines depending on the categories of farmers, is provided for purchase of agricultural machines. Financial assistance @ 40% of the project cost is also provided to rural youth & farmer as an entrepreneur, Cooperative Societies of Farmers, Registered Farmers Societies, Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) and Panchayats for establishment of Custom Hiring Centres (CHCs) and Hi-tech hubs of high value agricultural machines. Financial assistance @ 80% of the project cost for the projects costing upto Rs. 10 lakhs is provided to the Cooperative Societies, Registered Farmer Societies, FPOs and Panchayats for setting up of village level Farm Machinery Banks (FMBs). The rate of financial assistance for the North Eastern States for establishment of FMBs is @95% of the project cost for the projects costing up to Rs. 10 lakhs. The major focus of the scheme is towards expanding the network for Custom Hiring Services of agricultural machines and equipments to increase utilization of farm power and ensuring availability of farm equipment and machines for small farms. Since inception of the scheme, more than 40900 CHCs/Hi-tech Hubs/FMBs have been established in various States.

This information was given by the Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Shri Narendra Singh Tomar in a written reply in Rajya Sabha today.

SNC/PK/MS

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