

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3868

TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 12TH AUGUST, 2025

LABOUR SHORTAGE IN AGRICULTURE

3868. SHRI G KUMAR NAIK:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE कृषि एवं किसान कल्याण मंत्री be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware that labour shortages in agriculture have become a growing concern, with a 15% decline in rural workforce participation in agriculture over the last five years, according to recent reports from the National Statistical Office;
- (b) the impact of this shortage on agricultural productivity and how it is affecting the overall food production, especially during peak seasons such as sowing and harvesting;
- (c) the measures being taken by the Government to address these labour shortages, including any skill development programs aimed at increasing labour availability for agriculture; and
- (d) the steps the Government is taking to help poor farmers reduce dependency on manual labour, including the provision of modern machinery, financial incentives and support for mechanization, to ensure that they can continue farming sustainably and improve their productivity?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

कृषि एवं किसान कल्याण राज्य मंत्री

(SHRI RAMNATH THAKUR)

(a) & (b): As per the latest Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) annual report by National Statistics Office (NSO), Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI), the percentage of rural workforce engaged in agriculture and allied sector has been increased from 58.4% in 2022–23 to 59.8% in 2023–24. Further, there has been a marginal decline in rural workforce engaged in agriculture and allied sector over the last five years—from 61.5% in 2019–20 to 59.8% in 2023–24, as detailed below:

S. No.	PLFS Survey Year	Percentage of workers engaged in Agriculture & Allied sector* in Rural
1.	2019-20	61.5
2.	2020-21	60.8
3.	2021-22	59.0
4.	2022-23	58.4
5.	2023-24	59.8

Source: Annual Reports, Periodic Labour Force Survey, MoSPI. (2019-20 to 2023-24)

*Includes Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing

The Government has implemented various policies, reforms, and development programs, covering the entire spectrum of the agriculture sector. These initiatives focus on promoting mechanization, enhancing skill development, and ensuring farmers' access to modern agricultural equipment. Programs such as the Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM), Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs), and targeted skill development schemes are empowering farmers to adopt timely, efficient, and technology-driven agricultural practices. As a result of these efforts, productivity of food grain crops has increased and food grain production has seen a substantial increase—from 297.5 million tonnes in 2019-20 to 353.96 million tonnes in 2024–25 (as per third advance estimates). Similarly, horticulture production has risen from 320.47 million tonnes in 2019-20 to 367.72 million tonnes in 2024-25 (second advanced estimates).

(c) & (d): The Government is committed to support farmers by strengthening the agricultural workforce and promoting sustainable farming practices to improve productivity through initiatives emphasizing skill development, supporting mechanization, providing financial incentives and ensuring access to modern agricultural technologies. To support these objectives, several targeted schemes have been implemented—such as the Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM), Agri Fund for Start Ups & Rural Enterprises' (AgriSURE), Skill Training of Rural Youth (STRY) program under the Sub-Mission on Agricultural Extension (SMAE), Support to State Extension Programs for Extension Reforms” popularly known as ATMA, Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF), Modified Interest Subvention Scheme (MISS), Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN), ,among others.

Additionally, Government has taken various initiatives to promote farming as a viable career option for youth, among which the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has set up 731 Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) in the rural districts of the country for dissemination of new technologies of agriculture and allied sectors through technology assessment, demonstration and capacity development among the extension functionaries and the farmers of the concerned district. The KVKs perform following activities for the purpose:

- i. on-farm testing to identify the location specificity of technology under various farming systems;
- ii. frontline demonstration to establish the production potential of improved agricultural technologies on the farmers' fields;
- iii. capacity development of extension functionaries and farmers for knowledge and skill up gradation;
- iv. production of quality seeds, planting materials and other technology inputs for the farmers;
- v. extension activities to develop awareness of improved agricultural technology among the farmers.
