

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
AGRICULTURE  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1637  
ANSWERED ON:14.03.2005  
USE OF ENDOSULPHAN  
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**Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether the Government has realised the use of deadly pesticides like Endosulphan is harmful to human life as well as environment in many parts of the country;
- (b) if so, whether the Government has received any representation in this regard; and
- (c) if so, the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA)

(a) to (c): The Government of India had received a number of representations regarding unusual in certain villages of Kerala allegedly associated with aerial spray of Endosulfan in cashew plantations. The National Institute of Occupational Health (NIOH) has reported higher prevalence of usual diseases like mental retardation, congenital defects and abnormalities of reproductive system in children in the affected villages of Kasargod district of Kerala. However, the Expert Group constituted under the Chairmanship of Dr. O.P. Dubey, Assistant Director General (Plant Protection), Indian Council of Agricultural Research, to assess the safety of Endosulfan has observed that there is no link established between use of Endosulfan in Plantation Corporation of Kerala (PCK) plantations and health problems reported in Padre village. Another Committee of Experts constituted by the Government of Kerala under the Chairmanship of Dr. P.K. Sivaraman, Additional Director of health Services, Kerala has stated that it could not find any reason other than Endosulfan spraying to explain the reported health hazards.

However, Endosulfan is currently in use in more than 60 countries. Various scientific reports published in India, as also by WHO and other countries recommend use of Endosulfan in Agriculture and State that Endosulfan does not adversely affect environment and health as it degrades rapidly after use and is thus not persistent in the environment. Further, ICAR has reported the unique role of Endosulfan in Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and in insecticide Resistance management (IRM) in a variety of crops.

In view of the lack of consensus amongst various experts on this issue which may have serious implications on public health, the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation decided to revisit the issues pertaining to the safety of Endosulfan. Thus a Committee was constituted under the Chairmanship of Dr. C.D. Mayee, the then Agriculture Commissioner, Government of India vide order dated 6.09.2004 to review the safety of Endosulfan.

The Expert Group made the following recommendations :-

- (1) There is no link established between use of Endosulfan in PCK plantations and health problems reported in Padre Village.
- (2) Aerial spraying of pesticides may be allowed in case of national exigencies after permission of the Central Insecticides Board.
- (3) The application of all pesticides including Endosulfan is to be done adhering to regulatory stipulations in force from time to time.
- (4) The pesticides manufacturers should take necessary steps to promote and educate sellers and users to ensure correct and safe use of all pesticides.
- (5) Since India has adequate pre-registration data requirement and post registration review processes concerning use of pesticides, the Committee recommended that science based responses be made available to all stake holders and general public by registration authorities. There is often a huge gap between perception of the risk and actual scientific risk assessment. This gap is to be filled by proper and timely propagation of knowledge and information.
- (6) The Committee also recommended to conduct a comprehensive, well designed and detailed health and epidemiological study in the entire cashew plantation areas of Kerala to ascertain the incidences of diseases in Padre vis-à-vis other relevant locations in Kerala State to investigate and if possible pin-point the probable factors that are responsible for alleged health problems at Padre.
- (7) Use of Endosulfan is not clearly linked to the alleged health problems in Kasargod district of Kerala. However, considering the apprehensions in the minds of the public in Kerala, the Committee recommended that it would be better if use of Endosulfan is kept on hold in Kerala.

(8) Finally, after considering all above factors and available reports, the Committee recommended that use of Endosulfan be continued as per provisions of the Insecticides Act, 1968.

As per Section 27(2) of the Insecticides Act, 1968, the report of the Expert Group was referred to the Registration Committee constituted under Section 5 of the Insecticides Act, 1968 for its comments. The Registration Committee endorsed the recommendations of the Expert Group.

The report of the Expert Group alongwith the recommendations of the Registration Committee thereon has been considered by the Government of India and it has been decided to refer the recommendation no. 7 to the Inter-ministerial Committee of the Government of India constituted to review the use of Insecticides and Hazardous Chemicals to recommend the final decision thereon. The other recommendations of the Committee have been accepted.

Further, with a view to check the indiscriminate and injudicious use of hazardous chemical pesticides, the Government has adopted Integrated Pest Management (IPM) as the cardinal principle and main plank of plant protection in the country. 26 Central Integrated Pest Management Centres (CIPMCs) in 22 States and 1 Union Territory are engaged in pest/disease survey, surveillance and monitoring and training of farmers in IPM.