

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
FINANCE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1411
ANSWERED ON:03.03.2006
SUBJECT CULTIVATION OF OPIUM
Rawat Shri Kamla Prasad

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has curtailed the opium cultivation area in Barabanki district of Uttar Pradesh;
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor and the effective measures taken by the Government to increase the opium cultivation area in the said district;
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor;
- (d) whether the opium growers are being trained to do opium cultivation in a scientific manner; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S.PALANIMANICKAM)

(a), (b) & (c) The maximum area a cultivator is licenced to grow opium in has been reduced from 20 ares (1/5 of a hectare) to 10 ares (1/10 of a hectare) for all opium growing areas in the country (including Barabanki district) since the crop year 2004-05, considering the stocks of opium and demand for opium.

Further, licences for cultivation of opium are issued only to such cultivators who tendered the Minimum Qualifying Yield (MQY) in the previous crop year and fulfill other licensing conditions. Cultivators, including those of Barabanki district, who could not tender the MQY and/or do not fulfill the other eligibility criteria of opium Licensing Conditions, were not issued licences resulting in reduction in number of licensed cultivators and licensed area.

At present, the Government has no plans to increase the opium cultivation area in Barabanki or anywhere else in the country.

Area under poppy cultivation has to be strictly controlled as opium is prone to abuse. Only that quantity of opium, which is required for medical and scientific purposes needs to be produced. As such, opium cultivation area cannot be increased either in Barabanki district or anywhere in India, keeping in view the large stocks of opium with the government factories and the relatively low annual demand.

(d) & (e) Opium cultivators in the traditional opium growing areas possess the requisite expertise in the cultivation of opium poppy crop and in extracting of opium through the capsule incision process. In addition, the Department distributes technical literature/pamphlets prepared by Agricultural scientists amongst the poppy licensees/cultivators at the time of grant of licence. This literature indicates the best practices for cultivation of opium poppy crop as well as precautions to be taken to prevent damage to opium crop due to pests, etc.