

INDIA IS PROMOTING SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH TO REDUCE INPUT COSTS FOR FARMERS WHILE PROVIDING BENEFICIAL ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE OUTCOMES AS CO-BENEFITS

Relevant for: Indian Economy | Topic: Agriculture Issues and related constraints

Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Ashwini Kumar Choubey in a written reply to a question in Lok Sabha said that India, while home to more than one-sixth of humanity, has contributed only about 4% of the global cumulative greenhouse gas emissions between 1850 and 2019, and its per capita emissions are about one-third of the world average. The total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions of the country in 2016 were around 2838 million tonnes of CO₂ out of which agriculture sector emissions were only 14%.

Apart from ensuring food security at national level, India continues to serve the rest of the world with its food exports. India's agricultural emissions must be considered in the background of being globally home to the largest cattle population, the largest producer of milk, the largest rice exporter and tenth largest exporter of wheat. Despite its scale, Indian agriculture shows little or no incidence of large-scale industrial agriculture. In this light, India's agriculture sector emissions must be considered significantly low.

It is also to be noted that agriculture emissions are survival emissions, emissions arising from productive activity for essential commodities, and not luxury emissions, the buildup of which is causing the damage to the world through global warming. Such emissions are attributable, in the main, to the profligate lifestyles and production and consumption patterns of the developed world. It may also be emphasized that if the entire world's per capita annual emissions were to match India's then there would be no climate crisis at all.

In the written reply it was stated that for developing countries, India included, agriculture is predominantly a site of adaptation, with mitigation co-benefits. In this regard, government is undertaking and promoting research regarding GHG emissions from the agriculture sector. Among the scientific and technological initiatives being focused on are neem coated urea, slow release/coated fertilizers, soil test-based fertilizer application, leaf colour chart-based N application, direct seeded rice, system of rice intensification, aerobic rice, sprinkler irrigation and drip fertigation. These initiatives of the Government are directed at encouraging the rational use of all inputs to promote savings in input costs for farmers, while providing beneficial environmental and climate outcomes as co-benefits.

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