

Polyhouses to boost agriculture in Himachal

PC Lohumi ■ Shimla

The tiny hill State of Himachal, with difficult topography and limited irrigation sources, is heading towards a silent green revolution by adopting precision farming practices for production of cash crops and polyhouse cultivation and diversification of agriculture through micro-irrigation.

The about Rs 353 crore, Pt Deen Dayal Kissan Bagwan Samridhi Yojna, under implementation in the State in a time-bound manner, has made a visible difference in the condition of farmers and horticulturists who are fast adapting to the new farm technologies. The first part of the scheme, split into two components, envisaged setting up of 16,500 polyhouses and 12,320 sprinklers at a cost of Rs 154.92 crore while diversification of agriculture through

micro-irrigation and development of related infrastructure were being taken up simultaneously in the second part with an outlay of Rs 198.09 crore. The farmers being provided 80 per cent subsidy under these schemes which would generate gainful employment to 10,000 youth and ensure faster and inclusive growth of agriculture, an official spokesman said. Besides this, 2,650 tanks and wells would also be constructed under this project for which 50 per cent subsidy is being provided to the farmers.

The project was launched in January this year and so far 929 polyhouses have been sanctioned and work started on 219 polyhouses. Training modules for imparting training to farmers, masons, artisans and officers engaged in implementation of the project have been prepared and 407 farmers, 117 masons/artisans and 351 agriculture officers have been imparted training in polyhouse technology till date.

Under part-II of the scheme started in June this year, 20,000 hectares would be brought under sprinkler/drip irrigation schemes and 17,312 micro irrigation units would be installed. Besides, 16,020 water resource units would be

installed under for which 50 per cent subsidy would be made available to the farmers.

To ensure expeditious implementation of the scheme, a time frame has been drawn for disposal of applications at various levels within 25 days, the visit of Subject Matter Specialist of the concerned Block within 10 days of the submission, recommendation to the District Nodal Officer (DNO) in the next five days and issue of authorisation to the beneficiary after scrutinising the application, within 10 days from its receipt.

As many as 19 experienced companies have been empanelled to provide expertise to the farmers for construction of polyhouses, installation of micro irrigation systems and supply of cladding materials. For construction of polyhouses local material such as bamboo and wood was being used.

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