

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EARTH SCIENCES
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 5912
TO BE ANSWERED ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29, 2015**

SMS BASED WEATHER ALERT

**5912. SHRI KALIKESH N. SINGH DEO:
SHRI RAHUL SHEWALE:
SHRI VINAYAK BHURAO RAUT:
DR. SHRIKANT EKNATH SHINDE:
SHRI NAGENDRA KUMJAR PRADHAN:**

Will the Minister of EARTH SCIENCES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government/Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has launched SMS based weather information and disaster alert system and if so, the details thereof including the modalities worked out for dissemination of weather and disaster related information to the public;**
- (b) arrangements made for smooth functioning of the system in case of disaster/calamity;**
- (c) the other agencies/departments involved in collecting data and its assembly for effective implementation of the system;**
- (d) the time by which the SMS-based disaster alert system will be fully operational; and**
- (e) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government/IMD to create awareness about the system among the public?**

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND
MINISTRY OF EARTH SCIENCES
(Shri Y.S.Chowdary)**

- (a-b) Yes Madam. The Earth System Science Organization-India Meteorological Department (ESSO-IMD) had launched an SMS-based alert system for general public for dissemination of weather and disaster-related (cyclone, severe weather storms, heavy rains) information. Under this round-the-clock web-based operational system, the ESSO-IMD will send SMS to individuals who would register themselves at the weather forecaster's official website (www.imd.gov.in) for this purpose. Besides giving information about natural calamities, the system will also suggest what action needs to be taken.**

In addition for countries in the North Indian Ocean, a free registration procedure has been started in the ESSO-IMD at Regional Specialized Meteorological Centre (RSMC), cyclone Website (www.rsmcnewdelhi.imd.gov.in).

ESSO-IMD has started sending SMS based Cyclone/Tsunami/ Earthquakes parameters based alerts to disaster managers of Government of India like National Disaster Management and their Control Room of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Central Water Commission (CWC) and DG Shipping etc. along with the disaster managers of the states in 2012.

Earth System Science Organization–India Meteorological Department (ESSO-IMD) has launched a mobile application for Android based smart phone/tablets on Good Governance Day Observed on 25th December 2013. The mobile app by the name ‘Indian Weather’ is downloadable from Google play store, free of cost. Presently, the app provides current weather and 4 days weather forecast across the country for 310 cities. The mobile app. shall also be hosted for free download from the government mobile appstore (<https://apps.mgov.gov.in/indwx.isp>).

The Gramin Krishi Mausam Seva (GKMS) of the ESSO-IMD has been successful in providing the crop specific advisories to the farmers at the district level twice weekly through different print/visual/Radio/ IT based wider dissemination media including short message service (SMS) and Integrated Voice Response System (IVRS) directly to farming community.

It has been extended to fishermen along the coast through the SMS facility of ESSO-Indian National centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), Hyderabad, since October 2013. It was further extended to be disseminated through ‘Kisan Portal’ since 2014.

All the above services are rendered through National Informatics Centre’s (NICs) country-wide network, dedicated to the Ministries/Departments/Units/Agencies of Government of India and States, has full redundancy/stand-by/fail-safe/alternate mirror support systems to function in all eventualities especially during periods of disaster/calamity.

(c-d) SMS-based disaster alert system is fully operational in ESSO-IMD. At present, 10.27 million farmers have directly subscribed and are receiving advisories through SMS/IVRS mode under GKMS service operated in PPP mode with various state level partners (who extracts/translates crop specific information sought by subscribers) and through “Kisan SMS” operated through Kisan portal (<http://farmer.gov.in/>) launched by the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India during July 2013. It has been extended to fishermen along the coast through the SMS facility of ESSO-Indian National centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), Hyderabad, since October 2013. It was further extended to be disseminated through ‘Kisan Portal’ since 2014.

(e) Major efforts taken to expand the outreach of these efforts include

- i) To increase the awareness among disaster managers about cyclones/tsunami/earthquake alerts, measures are taken by ESSO-IMD from time to time are also presented as a part of pre-cyclone exercise conducted twice a year during April and September by the MHA where in all stakeholders/disaster managers involved with the responsibility of organizing appropriate emergency response at central, state and district levels are invited.**
- ii) Besides the fisherman community that are already getting benefited by not cruising to the affected open sea zones, other community level emergency response planning can become possible involving media, civil defence organizations, NGOs and general public for avoiding panic and to organize the effective response and relief as well for the life safety.**

Farmer Awareness Programmes are organized in different parts to make the farmers aware of such services. Besides, wider publicity and outreach activities about the service are carried out during Kisan Melas, Field Day, Krishi Darshan, India International Trade Fair etc. Contact details of the farmers are collected during such programmes and their names are registered for the free SMS service by our field units.

Weather forecast and agro-meteorological advisories issued for the areas sensitive to different kinds of weather hazards help the farmers in taking appropriate decisions on weather sensitive farm operations like selection of crop varieties, sowing time, application of fertilizers, pesticides, advancing harvest etc. Some of the accrued benefits at large owing to ESSO-IMD services include:

- i) Due to prior intimation provided during cyclone HUDHUD in the second week of October 2014, around 1.9 million farmers in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Odisha, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, East Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh could take possible preventive measures to safeguard the crops like rice, sugarcane, banana etc. from heavy rainfall and high winds.**
- ii) Similar alerts and warnings issued in association with cyclone NILOFAR sent to 2.1lakh farmers in Gujarat State during end of October 2014 had benefitted farmers to prevent the crop damage like rice, cotton and groundnut from heavy rainfall.**
- iii) Alerts and warning along with agro-meteorological advisories issued to 51.5lakh farmers in the second week of April 2015 about the occurrence of thunder/squall along with possible hailstorm in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Telangana had benefitted large number of farmers in taking appropriate safeguards to minimize the crops damage.**
