

## Bihar to launch conservation plan to protect 'Marcha rice' 'Govind Bhog' 'Sona Chur'

PTI | Updated: January 18, 2023 12:59 IST

Patna, Jan 18 (PTI) Concerned with a sharp decline in farming of traditional varieties of rice in certain districts, the Bihar government has decided to conduct a preliminary survey and also to launch a conservation plan to protect rare varieties such as 'Marcha rice', 'Govind Bhog' and 'Sona Chur' in the state, an official said.

The Bihar State Biodiversity Board (BSBB) has also decided to conduct a study to find out the reason behind the sharp decline in the cultivation of India's famous 'Magahi paan' (betel leaf), which received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag in 2018, in four districts - Aurangabad, Gaya, Nawada and Nalanda - in the state.

"We are really concerned with the decline in cultivation of rare varieties of rice that includes 'Marcha rice', 'Govind Bhog' and 'Sona Chur' in the state. These are rare varieties of rice cultivated in certain districts in Bihar. A preliminary survey/study will soon be conducted to find out the reason behind decline in cultivation of these varieties of rice", Ashutosh, Chairman of the BSBB told PTI.

Echoing a similar view, K Ganesh Kumar, Secretary of the BSBB, told PTI, "Based on the findings of our survey, the board will launch a conservation plan to protect these rare varieties of rice. While, Marcha rice (appears like black pepper) is cultivated in Gaunaha, Narkatiaganj, Ramnagar, Chanpatiya and Lauriya blocks of West Champaran district, Govind Bhog rice is grown mainly in Kaimur. Govind Bhog rice is known for its fine quality and rich fragrance, and is cultivated on a large scale in Kaimur district".

The BSBB official said data available with the board suggest a decline in farming in traditional varieties of rice without specifying the figure.

As far as aromatic Sonachur rice is concerned, it is mainly grown in Bhojpur, Rohtas, and certain parts of northern Bihar, he said, adding decline in cultivation of this variety of rice is also a matter of concern.

The secretary said, "The conservation plan will also include creating awareness among the local farmers regarding newer improved crop production technologies, efficient water application tools, plant protection, nutrient management, cropping system based training to the farmers, etc. Focused attention for improving the seed quality will also be part of the conservation plan".

Further, the BSBB has also decided to conduct a survey to find out the reason behind decline in the cultivation of 'Magahi paan', said K Ganesh Kumar.

"Farmers had hoped for better days when the paan got the GI tag, but nothing substantially changed for them. The board will suggest options to the farmers for increasing the cultivation of Magahi paan in its conservation plan," he said.

According to the state government's data, Magahi paan is currently cultivated in only 440 hectares in the state. And the number of paan farmers is on the decline because of lack of any state help to ease their high cost of production.

*(This story has not been edited by THE WEEK and is auto-generated from PTI)*

### ALSO READ



Shiv Sena crisis: Uddhav Thackeray faction moves SC against EC decision



Pakistan, Afghan Taliban trade fire at border crossing



India beat Australia by six wickets in second test to go 2-0 up in series



'All Quiet on the Western Front' wins big at 2023 BAFTA Awards



Software assembles genome sequences in days, done manually task took

years

