



Myths about Pesticides Use



MYTH

Indian farmers use excessive pesticides.

REALITY

India ranks **2nd** in the world in agricultural production but it ranks **10th** in pesticides use.

Most other countries including USA and those in the EU such as France, Spain, Italy, Germany etc. use more pesticides than India on per unit area and per unit of output basis. (Source: FAOSTAT)

"Indian farmers use excessive pesticides" is a false propaganda by some vested interests aimed at reducing market access to our agricultural products globally.



MYTH

Agricultural commodities in India carry high level of pesticide residues.

REALITY

Annual studies under All India Network Project on Pesticide Residues show that on average only about **2.2%** of the agri. commodities show pesticide residues above Maximum Residual Limit (MRL).

In other words, **98%** of our agri. commodities do not carry unacceptable levels of pesticide residues. This compares well with data from other countries.

MRLs are legally imposed commercial standards and not safety standards.



MYTH

Pesticides use has led to high cancer rates in states like Punjab.

REALITY

Globally India ranks **172nd** in cancer rate. Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, USA and Denmark are the top five that lead in cancer rate. (Source: WHO)

The largest incidence of cancer in India are in the states like Mizoram, Meghalaya, Sikkim etc., that hardly use pesticides in agriculture. Punjab ranks **24th** among various states in age standardized cancer rates in India. (Source: ICMR)

Singapore with nil area under agriculture has more cancer rate than India.



MYTH

Accidental exposures to pesticide spray drift kill farmers.

REALITY

Pesticides are sprayed diluted with water. The water content would be as high as **99%** in the pesticide spray when applied to the crops.

Accidental short exposures to such pesticide spray drift would not deliver lethal dose to the body of the sprayman.

Of course, it is always recommended that such exposures are avoided.



MYTH

India's water systems, remain highly polluted with pesticides.

REALITY

Fish species are highly sensitive to water quality and toxic pollutants.

India ranks the **second** largest in inland fish production. This shows that our water systems remain conducive to production of fish.



MYTH

Pesticide are the primary means to commit suicide.

REALITY

Self-hanging is the most common method for suicides in India.

Sikkim that does not allow use of pesticides has suicide rate four times than in Punjab. (Source: NCRB)

93% of the suicides in India are by non-farmers i.e., by people not engaged in agriculture.



MYTH

India uses pesticides that are banned in other countries.

REALITY

Use of pesticides, in every country depends on local crops, environment and occurrence of pests and diseases.

Pesticides registration/use, therefore, varies from one country to another.

The number of registered pesticides in India is **318** as against over **400** in the EU.



MYTH

India's domestic market for pesticides is substantially met by indigenous production (Atmanirbhar).

REALITY

Nearly **50%** of our domestic market has been lost to imports due to import friendly policies introduced in recent years.

In FY 2021-22, India's pesticide import reached a historic high of **Rs 13,365 cr.** (Source: Ministry of Commerce)

"Atmanirbhar Bharat" requires policies aimed at discouraging imports and encouraging indigenous manufacture.



MYTH

Pesticides use has adversely impacted honeybees and honey production.

REALITY

India's honey production has increased from **10,000 tons** in 2000 to **133,000 tons** in 2021. (Source: Indiatat)

India now exports more honey than black pepper.

There is significant increase in the production of bee pollinated crops.



MYTH

Substandard pesticides are abundant in Indian market.

REALITY

The regular quality control tests conducted by the State and Central Govt. laboratories show only **1.17%** of the pesticides are found to be substandard. (Source: Parliamentary Q&A)



MYTH

Pesticides use considerably affects our rice exports.

REALITY

In the year 2021, India's rice export registered a historic high of **21 million tons.** (Source: UN-International Trade Statistics)

India is the global leader in rice exports with a share of **44%**.



MYTH

Organic and bio-pesticides are safer than chemical pesticides.

REALITY

All substances used as pesticides, whether organic, bio or synthetic undergo the same toxicity, safety and efficacy assessments before allowed for commercial introduction.

Crop protection industry in fact offers a variety of pesticide products - organic, bio and synthetic - to farmers enabling a diverse and inclusive approach to pest control.

