

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
AGRICULTURE  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2889

ANSWERED ON:03.09.2007

SOIL EROSION

Nayak Shri Ananta

**Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether the Government is aware of the increasing soil erosion in the mining areas in the country; and
- (b) if so, the steps taken to develop the land and save from further degradation?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA)

(a):&(b): The Government of India is aware of the soil erosion in the mining areas in the country.

The Government of India have formulated a National Mineral Policy (NMP), 1993 (updated upto 29-11-2004) for mineral development and protection of the degraded areas due to mining in the country. The NMP envisages that extraction and development of minerals are closely inter-linked with other natural resources like land, water, air, and forest. The mining activities often leads to environmental problems like land degradation particularly in opencast mining, land subsidence in underground mining, deforestation, atmospheric pollution, pollution of rivers and streams, disposal of solid wastes, etc. affecting the ecological balance of the area. Open-cast mining in areas with actual forest cover leads to deforestation. Prevention and mitigation of adverse environmental effects due to mining and processing of minerals and repairing and revegetation of the affected forest area and land covered by trees in accordance with the prescribed norms and established forestry practices form integral part of mine development strategy in every instance. The National Mineral Policy (NMP) lays down that mining operations shall not ordinarily be taken up in identified ecologically fragile and biologically rich areas. Strip mining in forest areas should as far as possible be avoided and it should be permitted only when accompanied with comprehensive time-bound reclamation programme. It also directs that no mining lease would be granted to any party, private or public, without a proper mining plan including the environmental management plan approved and enforced by statutory authorities. The environmental management plan should adequately provide for controlling the environmental damage, restoration of mined areas and for planting of trees according to the prescribed norms. As far as possible, reclamation and afforestation will proceed concurrently with mineral extraction. The NMP also emphasizes that efforts should be made to convert old disused mining sites into forests and other appropriate forms of land use.

In addition to above, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) through Central Soil & Water Conservation Research & Training Institute, Dehradun along with its eight Regional Stations is providing requisite technology support in terms of appropriate soil-water conservation measures, land treatments, physical, chemical and biological reclamation and agro-forestry interventions for rehabilitation of mine spoil areas and to prevent further land degradation in the country.