

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:188
ANSWERED ON:20.10.2008
DECREASE IN PRODUCTION DUE TO SOIL EROSION
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Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the possibilities of decrease in agricultural production rate due to soil erosion in the country have been assessed;
- (b) if so, the estimated average annual decrease in production rate in the country, as a result thereof; and
- (c) the amount of annual loss being suffered by the agriculture sector as a result of this decrease?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA)

(a) to (c) Yes, sir. As per study conducted by Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), out of a total geographical area of 328.60 million ha., about 146.82 million ha. area is subject to various kinds of land degradation in the country. The average annual productivity of agricultural land decreases with increase in soil erosion, being 2210, 1490 and 670 Kg. per ha. under low, medium and high erosion categories respectively as per details below:

| Status of erosion | Soil loss (Tonnes/ ha) | Area (Million ha.) | under water erosion (Kg./ha.) | Productivity |
|-------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|
|-------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|

| | | | | |
|-----------|--------------|-------|-------------------------|--|
| Low | Less than 10 | 3.15 | 2210 | |
| Medium | 10-20 | 15.29 | 1490 | |
| High | 20-40 | 67.45 | 670 | |
| Very High | More than 40 | 7.81 | Not fit for agriculture | |
| Total | 93.70 | | | |

The average rate of soil erosion in the country is 16.4 tonnes per hectare per year. Out of total eroded soil, 61% simply moves from one place to another, nearly 29% is lost permanently to the sea and remaining 10% is deposited in the reservoirs. The soil erosion leads to land degradation in upper reaches of the river system, whereas when deposited at various locations of river system in the downstream, it may increase the soil fertility. About 5.3 billion tonnes of soil and around 8.40 million tonnes of plant nutrients are displaced annually through water erosion. Rough estimate also show that agricultural loss from soil erosion varies to the tune of Rs.5200 - 8400 crore per annum in the country.