

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2809

ANSWERED ON:15.03.2010

DEVELOPMENT OF WASTE LAND

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Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of land in hectares which is still lying waste and barren in the country at present despite implementation of Integrated Wasteland Development Programme (IWDP), Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP) and Desert Development Programme (DDP) by the Government, State-wise;
- (b) the reasons for the same;
- (c) the technique applied for making this land fertile;
- (d) whether the Government has lowered down the target in the Eleventh Five Year Plan due to non-spending of the amount allocated for turning wasteland into arable land;
- (e) if so, the details thereof; State-wise;
- (f) whether the Government is contemplating to take fresh steps to turn wasteland into arable land and also to change the existing technique; and
- (g) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI SISIR KUMAR ADHIKARI)

(a&b): As per the Wastelands Atlas of India-2005 brought out by the Department of Land Resources, Ministry of Rural Development in collaboration with the National Remote Sensing Agency (NRSA), Hyderabad using satellite imagery data, an area of 55.27 million hectares in the country is estimated to be wastelands. The State-wise details of wastelands are at Annexure ? I. The reasons for land still lying waste and barren are its enormity coupled with limited resources.

(c) The activities undertaken under IWDP, DPAP & DDP are as below:

- i. Development of small water harvesting structures such as low-cost farm ponds, nalla bunds, check-dams, percolation tanks and other ground water recharge measures.
- ii. Renovation and augmentation of water sources, desiltation of village tanks for drinking water/ irrigation/fisheries development.
- iii. Fisheries development in village ponds/tanks, farm ponds etc.
- iv. Afforestation including block plantations, agro-forestry and horticultural development, shelterbelt plantations, sand dune stabilization, etc.
- v. Pasture development either by itself or in conjunction with plantations.
- vi. Land Development including in situ soil and moisture conservation measures like contour and graded bunds fortified by plantation, bench terracing in hilly terrain, nursery raising for fodder, timber, fuel wood, horticulture and non-timber forest product species.
- vii. Drainage line treatment with a combination of vegetative and engineering structures.
- viii. Repair, restoration and up-gradation of existing common property assets and structures in the watershed to obtain optimum & sustained benefits from previous public investments.
- ix. Crop demonstrations for popularizing new crops/varieties or innovative management practices.
- x. Promotion and propagation of non-conventional energy saving devices, energy conservation measures, bio fuel plantations etc.

(d&e): The Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP), Desert Development Programme (DDP) and Integrated Wastelands

Development Programme (WDP) have been consolidated into single scheme namely Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP). This programme is based on the Common Guidelines for Watershed Development Projects, 2008. For operationalization of Common Guidelines 2008, the approval of Expenditure Finance Committee and Cabinet was required. However, the Cabinet approval for the IWMP was accorded on 26.02.2009 and therefore, the programme has been launched from 2009-10 onwards. The target for covering the area under IWMP in the remaining Eleventh Five Year Plan period has, therefore, been revised from 25 million hectare to 22.65 million hectare.

(f&g): Besides the existing activities, additional features like dedicated institutions with professional support at State, District & Project levels, flexibility in project period, cluster approach, scientific planning, livelihoods for assetless people, production system & micro enterprises with earmarked budget under the project have been added under IWMP for effective implementation of the programme.