

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:189
ANSWERED ON:03.07.2009
DISTRIBUTION OF WASTELANDS
Singh Shri Brij Bhushan Sharan

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) the total area of wasteland and barren land in the country, state-wise;
- (b) the steps taken/being taken by the Government to make these wastelands fertile;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to distribute these lands to the landless poor; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof ?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT(SHRI SISIR ADHIKARI)

(a) As per 'Wastelands Atlas of India-2005' prepared by NRSA, Hyderabad, the total waste lands in the country are estimated at 55.27 million hectare (ha). This includes 12.117 million hectare of unculturable barren/rocky/steep slopes/snow covered areas and 12.655 million ha. of degraded forests. The State-wise area of wasteland and barren land is at Annexure.

(b) The Department of Land Resources has been implementing three demand driven programmes, namely, Integrated Wasteland Development Programme (IWDP), Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP) and Desert Development Programme (DDP) for development of non-forest wastelands, drought proofing and checking desertification on watershed basis. From 01.04.2008, these three programmes have been integrated and modified under the Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP). The major land based activities are soil and moisture conservation works, water harvesting, afforestation, pasture development and horticulture.

(c & d) Land and its management falls within the legislative and administrative jurisdiction of the State Governments as provided under Entry No.18 of State List (List II) of the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution. The role of the Central Government in this field is only of a n advisory and coordinating nature. Implementation of land reforms programmes including distribution of Govt. wasteland is, however, reviewed from time to time at various fora, including Conferences of the Revenue Ministers/Secretaries of States and UTs organized by the Ministry of Rural Development.

It is accepted policy that wasteland at the disposal of government should be distributed among the eligible rural poor. The State Governments have been requested from time to time for distribution of govt. wastelands to eligible rural poor. They have also been requested for development of wastelands under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme and the watershed management programmes.

'Distribution of wasteland to the landless' has been included in the restructured Twenty Point Programme, 2006 (TPP-2006) of the Government of India which became operational on 1.4.2007. As per information received from the States/UTs, 3.04 lakh hectares of wasteland was distributed to the landless during 2007-08 and 1.03 lakh hectares during April, 2008 to January, 2009.