GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:365
ANSWERED ON:07.07.2009
SALINITY OF LAND
Rathwa Shri Ramsinhbhai Patalbhai

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the farmers in the coastal areas of the country are facing an acute problem of heavy ingress of salinity of land;

(b) if so, the details thereof and reaction of the Government thereto;

(c) whether the Government proposes to provide special package for such areas including the State of Gujarat;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS)

(a) to (e): As per available estimate, about 1.33 million ha. of area in the coastal tracts are affected by the problems of salinity in the country including the State of Gujarat. The Ground Water Management and Artificial Recharge studies conducted by Ministry of Water Resources indicate that the saline water ingress in coastal aquifers has been observed prominently in Mangrol − Chorwad areas and Coastal Saurashtra of Gujarat, Minjur area in Tamilnadu, Pondicherry coast, parts of Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Maharashtra and Karnataka coast. Coastal area affected by salinity ingress in ground water are among the thrust areas for studies to be carried out by Ministry of Water Resources.

The Coastal salinity is widespread all along the coastal areas in a strip of land ranging from a few km to about 50 kms. from the coast. Seasonal intrusion of seawater leads to salinisation of large inland areas, which in turn reduces productivity, especially in Rabi season. Hence, the entire area is mostly mono cropped with rice in Kharif (monsoon) season.

Government of India is not implementing any specific scheme for reclamation and development of coastal salinity. However, Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has developed following technologies to boost the productivity of coastal agriculture:

Economically viable land-use package on rice cum-sweet water fish during Kharif followed by brackish water fish during rabi/summer.

Doruvu technology for skimming fresh water floating over saline aquifers in coastal sandy soils.

Construction of Brick-pitched earthen embankments for flood control in low-lying areas.

Growing of suitable varieties of Paddy viz CSR-1, CST 2, CSR 3, CSR 4, CSTR 6, CST 7-1 and sumati for coastal saline soils.

Cultivation of sugar beet, cotton, barley, tomato, chilli and linseed during rabi under moisture and salinity stress.

Demonstration on mulching with amendments like rice-husk, sand etc. to reduce salt accumulation at the soil surface.

Plantation of suitable mangrove forest species i.e. Avicennia, Xylocarpus, Excoecaria, Brugaria and Heretiera in non-tidal coastal saline soils.