

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
RURAL DEVELOPMENT  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1046

ANSWERED ON:15.11.2010

WASTE LAND

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**Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:**

(a) the details of waste land in the country till date, State-wise;

(b) the area of waste lands developed till now, State-wise;

(c) the acreage of waste land converted to cultivable land during each of the last three years, State-wise;

(d) the programme checked out by the National Waste Land Development Board during the last three years and the current year in this regard;

(e) the other steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard; and

(f) the funds allocated, released and utilized by the State Governments for the said purpose during the last three years and the current year particularly in the North- Eastern Region for the development Waste land in the country?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF STATE FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI SISIR KUMAR ADHIKARI)

(a): National Remote Sensing Centre, Department of Space has been sponsored by the Department of Land Resources to prepare Wastelands Atlas of India and the latest such study brought out in 2010 shows that estimated wasteland in the country is 47.23 million ha. The State-wise extent of wastelands in the country is at Annexure-I.

(b): The Department of Land Resources has been implementing three area development schemes viz., Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP), Desert Development Programme (DDP) and Integrated Wastelands Development Programme (IWDP) on watershed basis since 1995-96. Projects covering a total area of 32.31 million ha, including wastelands, have been sanctioned under these programmes. Since 26-02-2009, after integration of these three area development programmes into a single modified programme called 'Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP)', projects covering an area of 10.24 million ha, including wastelands, have been sanctioned under the programme. The Statewise details are at Annexure-II.

(c): A project on Wasteland Change Analysis between 2005-06 and 2008-09 has been given by the Department of Land Resources to National Remote Sensing Centre, Hyderabad to understand the dynamics of wasteland through comparison of spatial statistics. This study will enable the Department to assess the extent of wastelands converted to cultivable land between these two periods. However, the assessment of yearwise acreage of wasteland converted to cultivable land is not feasible through this study.

(d) & (e): The Technical Committee on Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP), Desert Development Programme (DDP) and Integrated Wastelands Development Programme (IWDP), under the chairmanship of Shri S. Parthasarathy (2006), addressed major issues in watershed programmes and recommended viable strategies and mechanisms for effective implementation of these programmes. Based on the suggestions of the Committee, National Rainfed Area Authority (NRAA), in coordination with Planning Commission, formulated Common Guidelines for Watershed Development Projects, 2008 to give an impetus to watershed development programmes. The Department of Land Resources, the erstwhile National Wasteland Development Board, integrated the three area development programmes into a single modified programme called 'Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP)' with effect from 26-02-2009 to be implemented under these guidelines. The provisions of treatment of micro-watersheds on cluster basis, reduced number of installations, delegation of power of sanction of projects to the States, dedicated institutions, capacity building of stakeholders, monitoring & evaluation, specific budget provision for Detailed Project Report preparation, livelihood for assetless people and productivity enhancement are the major features of IWMP.

(f): The objective of watershed development programme is not confined to converting wasteland to agriculture land and it is to promote prevention of soil run-off, regeneration of vegetation, rain-water harvesting, recharging of ground water, enable multi cropping and promote livelihoods. Since these area development schemes are demand driven, no fund is allocated to the States. A total amount of Rs. 6397.04 crore has been released under these schemes to all the States during last three years and the current year, out of which Rs. 603.81 crore has been released to the Northeastern States. As per the latest information available, the utilization of fund is Rs. 4840.69 crore and Rs. 393.17 crore for the whole of the country and Northeastern region, respectively.