

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5426
ANSWERED ON:13.12.2010
DEVELOPMENT OF DEGRADED LAND
Ram Shri Purnmasi

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) the steps taken to develop degraded land in rainfed areas including land under dryland farming to meet food security demands for the year 2020;
- (b) whether the Government has examined the Parthasarathy Committee Report;
- (c) if so, the main features/ recommendations of the said report and action taken by the Government thereon;
- (d) whether sixty percent of agricultural land is unirrigated and dependent on rain; and
- (e) if so, the measures taken to bring more agricultural land under irrigation?

Answer

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

(a), (b), (c) & (e): To develop degraded land in rainfed areas including land under dryland farming, 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. To address major issues in watershed programmes and to recommend viable strategies & mechanism for effective implementation of these programmes, the DoLR constituted a 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, in 2005. The main recommendations of the Technical Committee include - more thrust to rainfed areas through an improved watershed development programme; provision of dedicated institutions to implement the watershed programmes; raising of cost norms to Rs.12000/- per hectare; provision of flexibility in project duration; implementation of the project in three phases i.e., Preparatory Phase, Resource Augmentation and Institution Building Phase and Sustainable Livelihoods and Productivity Enhancement Phase; separate budget provision for monitoring and capacity building; special provision for landless and dalits; provision for ensuring transparency and accountability; provision for productivity enhancement and livelihoods; etc. The full report of the Parthasarathy Committee is available at DoLR's website (<http://watershed.nic.in>). 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 provisions in the Common Guidelines and the observations of the Parthasarathy Committee have necessitated modifications in the watershed schemes of the Department of Land Resources. Accordingly, DPAP, DDP and IWDP of the Department of Land Resources have been integrated and consolidated into a single modified programme called Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) w.e.f. 26.02.2009. The provisions of treatment of micro-watersheds on cluster basis, enhanced cost norms, reduced number of installments, 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 main features of IWMP which will facilitate achieving the desired results, bringing more area under irrigation being one of them.

(d) As per `Harmonization of wastelands/ degraded lands datasets of India` published by National Rainfed Area Authority, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, National Remote Sensing Agency and National Academy of Agricultural Sciences in 2008, the total rainfed area in the country is 82.75 million ha which is 58.53 % of net sown area of the country.