

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
AGRICULTURE  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4493

ANSWERED ON:07.12.2010

SOIL EROSION

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**Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether the foodgrain production has been declining due to soil erosion in the country;
- (b) if so, the details in this regard;
- (c) the area of land which is rendered unfit for agriculture due to soil erosion every year;
- (d) whether the Government has prepared any action plan in this regard;
- (e) if so, the details thereof; and
- (f) the success achieved by the Government in preventing soil erosion as a result thereof?

**Answer**

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

(a) to (c): As per study conducted by Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) about 1 millimeter of top soil is being lost each year due to soil erosion. No specific assessment has been made on land which has become unfit for agriculture due to soil erosion. Soil formation and erosion is a natural process occurring simultaneously to maintain the equilibrium in eco-system. However due to developmental efforts, the food grain production has increased from 208.60 million tonne in 2005-06 to 233.88 million tonne in 2008-09.

(d) to (f): With a view to prevent soil erosion and land degradation, Ministry of Agriculture is implementing various Watershed Development Programmes, namely; National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas(NWDPA), Soil Conservation in the Catchments of River Valley Project and Flood Prone River (RVP & FPR), Reclamation and Development of Alkali & Acid Soils (RADAS) and Watershed Development Project in Shifting Cultivation Areas (WDPSA) across the country. Ministry of Rural Development is also implementing a major Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) for restoring ecological balance by conserving and developing degraded lands in the country. Ministry of Rural Development under IWMP is targeting to cover 22.65 million ha. during the XI Plan with an outlay of Rs. 15,359.46 crores. So far, 2157 projects covering an area of 10.24 million ha. have been sanctioned under IWMP. Ministry of Agriculture is also targeting a coverage of 3 million ha. under watershed development with an investment of about Rs. 3000 crores during the XI Plan and in the first three years, about 1.83 million ha. has been developed. The Comprehensive Assessment of Watershed Programmes in India conducted by International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) reveals that watershed interventions have prevented soil loss to the extent of about 1.12 tonnes per hectare per year.