

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2357
ANSWERED ON:08.12.2011
WASTELAND DEVELOPMENT
Sugumar Shri K.

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether wasteland development work in rural areas has been undertaken under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) across the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Union Government had asked the State Governments to give priority to such works; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT(SHRI PRADEEP JAIN 'ADITYA')

(a)to(d): The focus of activities under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) for wage employment is laid down in Schedule – I of the Act. Drought proofing (including afforestation and tree plantation), land development and renovation of traditional water bodies including de-silting of tanks are already included in Schedule – I of the Act as priority activities. The choice of works suggested in the Act addresses causes of chronic poverty like drought, deforestation and soil erosion, so that the process of employment generation is maintained on a sustainable basis and durable assets are created in rural areas by strengthening the natural resource base. Section 16(1) of MGNREGA provides that Gram Panchayats shall be responsible for identification of projects in the Gram Panchayat area to be taken up under the scheme as per the recommendations of the Gram Sabha and Ward Sabhas. In accordance with Section 16(5) of the Act, at least 50% of the projects by cost are to be executed by the Gram Panchayats. Section 13(1) of MGNREGA provides that the Panchayats at district, intermediate and village levels shall be the principal authorities for planning and implementation of the schemes made under the Act.