

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3150

ANSWERED ON:30.08.2012

DEVELOPMENT OF WASTELAND

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Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether any schemes have been initiated to develop the wastelands across the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the wasteland development is providing considerable employment opportunities in rural areas;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether the Government has achieved its target set for reducing the wasteland area in the country; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof, State-wise for the last five years?

Answer

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

(a) & (b): The Department of Land Resources, Ministry of Rural Development has been implementing three area development programmes viz. Integrated Wastelands Development Programme (IWDP), Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP) and Desert Development Programme (DDP) since 1995 on watershed basis. The above three programmes have been consolidated and integrated into a single modified programme called Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) w.e.f. 26.02.2009 being implemented under the Common Guidelines for Watershed Development Projects, 2008 (Revised-2011). The major activities undertaken under watershed projects include ridge area treatment, drainage line treatment, soil and moisture conservation, rain water harvesting, nursery raising, afforestation, horticulture, pasture development etc. Under IWMP, watershed projects are implemented on rainfed/ degraded lands including wastelands in the country.

(c) & (d): A study on `Comprehensive Assessment of Watershed programmes in India` by International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), Hyderabad has inter alia revealed that the mean additional annual employment generation in the watershed area on various activities and operations was about 154 person days per hectare per year.

(e) & (f): No specific target has been fixed for reducing the wasteland area in the country. However, the Department of Land Resources has set a target of 22.65 m ha for implementation of IWMP during 11th Five Year Plan. Against this target, new IWMP projects covering an area of 24.216 m ha have been sanctioned. The project duration of these projects is 4-7 years and they are at various stages of implementation.

Besides, the updation of Wastelands Atlas was initiated by the Department of Land Resources in 2003 to monitor changes in wastelands. National Remote Sensing Agency (NRSA) carried out mapping of wastelands across the country using one-time IRS data (of the year 2003). The result of this exercise has been brought as `Wastelands Atlas of India-2005`. Further, in order to monitor the changes in wastelands in the country, the Department had initiated a project titled `National Wastelands Monitoring Project (NWMP)` in collaboration with National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC), Hyderabad. The results of the findings of these projects have been brought out as `Wastelands Atlas of India-2010`. Thereafter, a project on Wasteland Change Analysis between 2005-06 and 2008-09 was given by the Department to National Remote Sensing Centre, Hyderabad to understand the dynamics of wastelands through comparison of spatial statistics. The result of this study has been brought as `Wastelands Atlas of India-2011`.

As per the Wastelands Atlas of India 2005, 2010 and 2011, the extent of wastelands in the country has reduced from 55.64 m ha in 2005 to 47.23 m ha in 2010 and 46.70 m ha in 2011. The State-wise details of the extent of wastelands is at Annexure -I.