

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3395

ANSWERED ON:13.12.2012

BARREN LAND DEVELOPMENT

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Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) the main reasons for agrarian land converting into barren land in various States;
- (b) the States where increase in desert area has come to the notice of the Government along with the reasons therefor, State-wise;
- (c) the steps taken by the Government to convert barren land into cultivable land during each of the last three years and the current year, State-wise;
- (d) the financial assistance provided in this regard during the above period, State-wise; and
- (e) the area of barren land converted into arable land along the sea coasts in the country including Gujarat during the above period, State-wise?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI LALCHAND KATARIA)

(a): As per the information of Department of Agriculture & Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture, barren land includes all land covered by mountains, deserts etc. which cannot be brought under cultivation except at an exorbitant cost and is classified as unculturable whether such land is in isolated blocks or within cultivable holdings. As per Land Use Statistics at a Glance, February 2012, published by Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Ministry of Agriculture, barren and unculturable land has decreased from 17.47 million hectare in 2004-05 to 16.79 million hectare in 2009-10 in the country. However, there is marginal increase in barren and unculturable land in the States of Haryana, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Nagaland and Delhi.

(b): As per Wastelands Atlas of India, 2011 brought out by Department of Land Resources in collaboration with National Remote Sensing Centre, Hyderabad, there is an overall decrease of 4608.32 square kilometres of desert sand area in the country from 2005-06 to 2008-09. However, there is a marginal increase of 0.93 square kilometre of desert sand area in Andhra Pradesh during the period.

(c): There is no scheme/ programme exclusively to convert barren land into cultivable land. However, 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 1995-96 on watershed basis. The above three programmes have been integrated into a single modified programme called Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) with effect from 26.02.2009. The major activities taken up under IWMP inter alia include ridge area treatment, drainage line treatment, soil and moisture conservation, rain water harvesting, nursery raising, afforestation, horticulture, pasture development etc.

(d) & (e): Question does not arise.