

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5286  
ANSWERED ON:29.04.2013  
CHECK ON DEFORESTATION  
Aaron Rashid Shri J.M.

**Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether nearly a quarter of land mass is desert or turning into desert due to deforestation and overgrazing in the country as per the study by the Space Applications Centre and Current Science journal;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether any study with regard to the said report has been conducted by the Government;
- (d) if so, the details thereof, State-wise; and
- (e) the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN):

(a) & (b) Yes Sir. Space Applications Centre, ISRO has carried out desertification and land degradation status mapping on 1: 500,000 scale using Indian Remote Sensing Satellite data of 2003-2005 time frame following the classification systems of Thematic Mapping Network-1 (TPN-1) of UNCCD. The mapping shows that 105.48 mha (32.07% of the Country's geographic area) is under land degradation and out of which 81.4 mha area (25% of the Country's geographic area) is undergoing the process of desertification. The various processes of desertification are Water erosion, Vegetal degradation, Wind erosion, Frost shattering, Salinity/Alkalinity, Mass movement, Water logging, Rocky area/ Barren and Others (Man made, frost heaving). Desertification is the process of land degradation in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid regions (dryland regions).

(c) & (d) Department of Space does not have information about any study on the said report. This is the first spatial inventory of the land degradation/ desertification status for the entire country. State -wise details of the area undergoing the process of desertification and land degradation is given below:

State	Area under Desertification (in hectare)	Area under Land degradation (in hectare)
A.P	3971833	4964792
Arunachal Pradesh	0	1816688
Assam	0	2419086
Bihar	414783	414783
Chattisgarh	1844704	2635292
Goa	0	6245
Gujarat	12744447	13415208
Haryana/Delhi	235010	235010
H.P.	2210197	2762746
J&K	13497418	13497418
Jharkhand	1818886	1818886
Karnataka	1523462	1692736
Kerala	0	89877
M.P.	2599018	3465358
Maharashtra	10687341	13359177
Manipur	0	1496706
Meghalaya	0	876898
Mizoram	0	1665053
Nagaland	0	1065578
Orissa	546924	5469236
Punjab	10380	10380
Sikkim	0	328349
Rajasthan	22966167	22966167
T.N.	451028	451028
Tripura	0	681843
U.P	2125628	2237503
Uttarakhand	2685251	2983612
W. Bengal	1117480	2660667
TOTAL (in hectare)	81449957	105486322

(e) Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD) issues are being addressed through a number of programs of various Ministries/State Governments/UT's which include; Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP), National Afforestation Programme (NAP), National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas (NWDPA), National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP), The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), Swarnjayanti Gram Swarajgar Yojna (SGSY)/National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) and National Mission for a Green India, one of the Missions under the National Action Plan on Climate Change, etc.

Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education is implementing a Sustainable Land and Ecosystem Management (SLEM) Project, which focuses on tackling the issues of desertification, land degradation and drought in nine states.