

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3094
ANSWERED ON:29.08.2013
BARREN LAND
Kanubhai Patel Jayshreeben

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether a large area of land is lying barren across the country;
- (b) if so, whether the Union Government has formulated any policy to make the said land fertile;
- (c) if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether any Committee from Gujarat has made some recommendations in this regard;
- (e) if so, whether the Union Government proposes to implement the said recommendations; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof ?

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 land located in isolated blocks or within cultivated holdings. As per Land Use Statistics at a Glance, April 2013, published by Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Ministry of Agriculture, barren and unculturable land is 17.05 million hectare in the country.

(b) & (c) As barren land cannot be brought under cultivation except at an exorbitant cost, there is no comprehensive scheme/ programme for development of 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 Programmes (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, for development of rainfed/ degraded areas including wastelands. 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) The Department of Land Resources has not received recommendations from any Committee from Gujarat for development of barren land. However, a Working Group of Sub-Committee of the National Development Council on 'Agriculture and related issues on dry land/ rainfed farming systems including regeneration of degraded/ wasteland, watershed development programme' was constituted by the Planning Commission in December, 2005 under the Chairmanship of Chief Minister, Gujarat. This report of working group submitted in 2006-07, had made certain recommendations on development of rainfed/ degraded land including wasteland on watershed basis. These recommendations were considered while formulating Common Guidelines for Watershed Development Projects-2008. The IWMP is being implemented as per the Common Guidelines for Watershed Development Projects -2008 (revised edition-2011).