

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2602
ANSWERED ON:06.02.2014
BARREN LAND
Nagar Shri Surendra Singh;Sule Supriya

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether cultivable land in the country is shrinking year after year;
- (b) if so, the details thereof during each of the last three years and the current year;
- (c) the steps taken by the Government to check such decreasing trend;
- (d) whether the Government for conversion of barren lands into cultivable lands;
- (e) if so, the details thereof; and
- (f) if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI LAL CHAND KATARIA)

(a) & (b): Yes, Madam. As per information of Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture, cultivable land has marginally decreased from 182.44 million hectare (2007-08) to 182.32 million hectare (2010-11) as per available estimate (2013) across the country. The year wise details are as under:

Year	Cultivable land in million hectare
2007-08	182.44
2008-09	182.46
2009-10	182.18
2010-11	182.32

(c) With a view to prevent soil erosion, land degradation and also to maintain balance in various type of land uses, Government of India, Ministry of Agriculture was implementing various programmes, namely; National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas (NWDPPRA), Soil Conservation in the Catchments of River Valley Project and Flood Prone River (RVP& FPR), Reclamation and Development of Alkali and Acid Soils (RADAS) and Watershed Development Project in Shifting Cultivation Areas (WDPSCA) across the country. Parts of degraded lands developed under these programmes are put to cultivation, leading to net sown area remaining largely unchanged (141 million hectare) in last two decades. As per decision of Planning Commission, these programmes are closed from 01.04.2013.

(d) to (f): According to the definition of land uses, barren land includes all lands covered by mountains, deserts etc which cannot be brought under cultivation except at an exorbitant costs. As such, there is no comprehensive scheme/ programme for conversion 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. 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.