

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3994

ANSWERED ON:15.12.2009

WASTE LANDS

Swaraj Smt. Sushma

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether large tracts of agricultural land are on the verge of becoming waste lands as per the State of Environment Report, 2009; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto alongwith the remedial measures being taken in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS)

(a) & (b): No, Madam. As per available data reported in Wastelands Atlas of India (2005) of Ministry of Rural Development, Department of Land Resources, Government of India, the area under wastelands has decreased from 63.85 million ha. in 2000 to 55.27 million ha in 2003. The wastelands is defined as 'degraded lands which can be brought under vegetable cover with reasonable effort, and which is currently under - utilized and or land which is deteriorating for lack of appropriate water and soil management or on account of natural causes'.

As per State of Environment Report India - 2009 of Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India and as per the study conducted by National Bureau of Soil Survey and Land Use Planning (NBSS&LUP), Nagpur, of Indian Council of Agricultural - Research (ICAR), out of a total geographical area of 328.73 million ha. about 146.82 million ha. (45%) is subjected to various kinds of land degradation across the country. The category-wise extent of various kinds of the land degradation are:-

S.No. Type of Land Degradation Extent of Area in million ha.

1 Water Erosion 93.68

2 Wind Erosion 9.48

3 Water logging 14.30

4 Salinity alkalinity 5.95

5 Soil Acidity 16.03

6 Complex problem 7.38

Total Degraded area 146.82

Government of India is implementing various Programmes/Schemes namely, National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas (NWDPR), Soil Conservation in the Catechments of River Valley Project and Flood Prone River (RVP & FPR), Reclamation and Development of Alkali & Acid Soils (RADAS), Watershed Development Project in Shifting Cultivation Areas (WDPSCA) and Integrated Watershed Management Project (IWMP) for development of the degraded lands including wastelands across the country. Parts of such developed lands are brought under cultivation to maintain balance in different types of land uses.