

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:421

ANSWERED ON:23.12.2014

FERTILITY OF SOIL

Chauhan Shri Devusinh Jesingbhai

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has conducted any study/survey to identify the extent of loss of fertility of soil/damage to agricultural land across the country including coastal areas;
- (b) if so, the details and the outcome thereof;
- (c) the details of cultivable area affected due to salinity in the country including coastal areas during each of the last three years and the current year, State-wise;
- (d) whether the Government has launched several programmes for reclamation and development of such land; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof along with the funds allocated/utilised for the purpose and the success achieved thereunder during the said period?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI RADHA MOHAN SINGH)

(a) to (e) : A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT IN RESPECT OF PARTS (a) TO (e) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 421 TO BE ANSWERED ON 23/12/2014 REGARDING "FERTILITY OF SOIL"

(a) & (b): Yes, Madam. Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has compiled soil-test data of available Nitrogen (N), Phosphorus (P) and Potash (K) status from different soil testing laboratories located in 19 states. The soils of about 59% area were found low, 36% were medium and 5% were high in available N. Similarly, soils of about 49, 45 and 6 percent area were low, medium and high in available P, respectively and soils of around 9, 39 and 52 % area were low, medium and high in available, K respectively.

The assessment made under All India Coordinated Research Project on 'Micro and Secondary Nutrients and Pollutant Elements in Soils and Plants' revealed that nearly 24.7, 43.0, 12.1, 5.5, 5.4 and 18.3 % samples were deficient in Sulphur, Zinc, Iron, Manganese, Copper and Boron, respectively across the country.

Recently (in 2013), geo-referenced soil fertility maps of 173 districts covering 20 states in the country have been prepared. Majority of districts are deficient in N but medium to high in available K. In general, northern, southern and eastern districts except Odisha are medium to high in available P whereas western districts are low to medium in available P except Gujarat. These geo-referenced maps are useful for monitoring and evaluation of soil fertility as well as for making fertilizer recommendations to ensure balanced fertilization and effective distribution of fertilizers in the country.

In general, the coastal areas, are poor in fertility and subjected to salinity stress.

Besides, the Council conducted scientific soil survey for assessing the extent and nature of land degradation across the country. As per the latest estimates (NAAS, 2010) based on harmonized database, around 120.4 million ha of total geographical area of the country is affected by various kinds of land degradation comprising of water erosion (82.6 million ha), wind erosion (12.0 million ha), chemical degradation (24.7 million ha) and physical degradation (1.0 million ha). Out of total degraded area, 104.2 million ha is arable land.

(c) As per the latest report, the salt affected area in the country is around 6.73 million hectare including coastal salinity (1.24 million hectare). The state-wise details are given in Annexure I. This kind of survey is not conducted on yearly basis.

(d) & (e): The Government implemented a Centrally Sponsored Scheme 'Reclamation and Development of Alkali and Acid Soils (RADAS)' through Macro Management of Agriculture (MMA) Scheme in seven states. Since inception upto March, 2013 almost 9.0 lakh ha area has been developed with an expenditure of Rs. 193.73 crore. This programme has been discontinued from April, 2013 due to closure of MMA. Recently, a National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) was launched in April, 2014 with a component of Reclamation of Problem soils (viz., saline, alkali and acid soils). The cost norms under this programme for reclamation of salt affected soils is 50% of cost to the limit of Rs. 50000 per ha.

