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**13.00 hrs.**

**Title: Need to allocate more funds for wasteland development.**

**DR. V. SAROJA (RASIPURAM):** Hon. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I wish to draw the attention of this august House to a reply to a Starred Question given on the 24<sup>th</sup> July, 2001.

According to the reply, 6,38,518.31 square kilometres of wasteland is available in India. It is given to understand that the hon. Prime Minister of India is going to convene a meeting of the National Development Council on the 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 2002. I urge upon the Government to focus the attention on this important issue.

Yesterday, a delegation met the hon. Prime Minister of India and requested him to allocate land for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and the landless poor and underprivileged from this wasteland that is available. May I request the Government, through you, to allocate more funds for wasteland development for all the States. A state-wise report has been given and more funds need to be allocated in the Tenth Five-Year Plan. The Planning Commission also has to have a critical evaluation. All the Chief Ministers of India have to be informed about the availability of wasteland and the action plan has to be discussed in the National Development Council.

In Tamil Nadu, for wasteland development, we are having a target of 20 lakh hectares per year. I would like the Government to allot more funds for this.