

Title: Need for special economic package for backward areas of Western Rajasthan.

COL. SONA RAM CHOUDHARY (BARMER): Sir, I wish to draw the attention of the Government through you that Western Rajasthan reels under severe drought conditions for an average of eight years out of every ten years since there is scanty rain in that region.

Irrigation facilities are not available in most of the areas. At some places where underground water or shallow wells are available, the water level is shrinking rapidly. As a result, crores of rupees spent on water supply schemes are going waste as most of such schemes have become defunct.

As per the national record, about 34 per cent Indian population is below poverty line. Compared to it, in drought prone districts of Western Rajasthan, 55 per cent are below poverty line. I would like to bring out that Government is doing everything for hilly areas and North-Eastern region by giving special concessions but adequate attention is not given to backward/desert areas of Western Rajasthan.

It is further mentioned that in response to one of my supplementary questions on the floor of this august House of Parliament on 3rd June, 1998, the hon. Prime Minister, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee had said:

"The question raised by the Member pertains to the area which is most neglected and is a kingdom of Thar Desert. I agree that concessions are given to hilly areas and North-Eastern region and similar concessions are not given to desert areas of Western Rajasthan. The Member's suggestion is very good. We will definitely consider it and do the needful."

Though a period of eight months has lapsed, no consideration for package for backward/desert areas of Western Rajasthan has been given. I request the Government through you to give the time by which this package will be announced.