

TWENTY EIGHTH REPORT

STANDING COMMITTEE ON

URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(2002)

(THIRTEENTH LOK SABHA)

MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(DEPARTMENT OF LAND RESOURCES)

DEMANDS FOR GRANTS
(2001-2002)

*[Action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the
Twenty Second Report of the Standing Committee on Urban and Rural
Development (Thirteenth Lok Sabha)]*

Presented to Lok Sabha on 13.3.2002

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 14.3.2002

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

March, 2002/Phalguna, 1923 (Saka)

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**COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (2002)**

Shri Anant Gangaram Geete - Chairman

MEMBERS

LOK SABHA

2. Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar
3. Shri Ranen Barman
4. Shri Padmanava Behera
5. Shri Jaswant Singh Bishnoi
6. Shri Haribhai Chaudhary
7. Shri Shriram Chauhan
8. Shri Shamsheer Singh Dullo
9. Shrimati Hema Gamang
10. Shri G. Putta Swamy Gowda
11. Shri Basavanagoud Kolor
12. Shri Shrichand Kriplani
13. Shri Bir Singh Mahato
14. Shri Savshibhai Makwana
15. Dr. Laxminarayanan Pandey
16. Shri Sukhdeo Paswan
17. Shri Chandresh Patel
18. Shri Laxmanrao Patil
19. Prof. (Shrimati) A.K. Premajam
20. Shri Rajesh Ranjan
21. Shri Gutha Sukender Reddy
22. Shri Pyare Lal Sankhwar
23. Shri Nikhilananda Sar
24. Shri Maheshwar Singh
25. Shri D.C. Srikantappa
26. Shri V.M. Sudheeran
27. Shri Chinmayanand Swami
28. Shri Ravi Prakash Verma
29. Shri D. Venugopal
30. Shri Dinesh Chandra Yadav

RAJYA SABHA

31. Shri S. Agniraj
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33. Shri N.R. Dasari
34. Ven'ble Dhammaviriyo
35. Shri H.K. Javare Gowda
36. Shri Maurice Kujur
37. Shri Faqir Chand Mullana
38. Shri Onward L. Nongtdu
39. Shri A. Vijaya Raghavan
40. Shri Nabam Rebia
41. Shri Solipeta Ramachandra Reddy
42. Shri Man Mohan Samal

43. Shri Devi Prasad Singh
44. Shri Prakanta Warisa
45. Vacant

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri S.C. Rastogi - Joint Secretary
2. Shri K. Chakraborty - Deputy Secretary
3. Shrimati Sudesh Luthra - Under Secretary

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Urban and Rural Development (2002) having been authorised by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present the Twenty-eighth Report on the action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Twenty second Report of the Standing Committee on Urban and Rural Development (Thirteenth Lok Sabha) on Demand for Grants (2001-2002) of the Ministry of Rural Development (Department of Land Resources).

2. The Twenty-second Report was presented to Lok Sabha on 20th April, 2001. The replies of the Government to all the recommendations contained in the Report were received on 31st August, 2001.

3. The replies of the Government were examined and the Report was considered and adopted by the Committee at their sitting held on 27th February, 2002.

4. An analysis of the action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Twenty-second Report of the Committee (Thirteenth Lok Sabha) is given in Appendix III.

NEW DELHI;
11 March, 2002
20 Phalguna, 1923 (Saka)

ANANT GANGARAM GEETE,
Chairman,
Standing Committee on Urban
and Rural Development

CHAPTER I

REPORT

This Report of the Committee on Urban and Rural Development (2002) deals with the action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in their Twenty Second Report on Demand for Grants for the year (2001-2002) of the Department of Land Resources (Ministry of Rural Development), which was presented to Lok Sabha on 20th April, 2001.

2. Action taken notes have been received from the Government in respect of all the 17 recommendations which have been categorised as follows:

- | | | |
|-------|--|--|
| (i) | Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government | 2.6, 2.10, 2.20, 2.24, 3.22, 3.39, 3.47, 3.53 and 3.61 |
| (ii) | Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of Government's replies | 3.27 and 3.58 |
| (iii) | Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee: | 2.11, 2.13, 2.17, 2.29 and 3.15 |
| (iv) | Recommendations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited | 3.52 |

3. The Committee desire that final replies in respect of the recommendations for which only interim replies have been given by the Government should be furnished to the Committee within three months of the presentation of the Report.

4. The Committee will now deal with action taken by the Government on some of these recommendations in the succeeding paragraphs.

**A. Allocation to the North Eastern States
Recommendation (Para No.2.11)**

5. The Committee had recommended as under:

“In view of the earlier recommendation made by the Committee in their 12th Report, the Committee would like that the final decision in respect of 100% grant to all the schemes/programmes being implemented in North Eastern States should be made without any further delay.

The Committee note that a very laudable initiative has been taken by the Government to provide 10% of the total allocation to North Eastern States. However, they find that there is absolutely no planning on the part of the Government to make best possible use of the outlay. The Committee deplore the casual attitude of the Government while planning and asking for outlay from the Ministry of Finance for different schemes.”

6. The Government have replied as below:

“Despite major part of budget being covered by DPAP, DDP and EAS schemes (Rs.675 crore) which are not being implemented in North Eastern States including Sikkim the Department has released Rs.32.4828 lakh for these States out of the remaining budget outlay of Rs.225 crore which is more than 10% of the amount excluding budget of DPAP, DDP and EAS.”

7. The Committee have repeatedly been recommending that all the schemes being implemented in North Eastern States be treated 100% Centrally Sponsored. Instead of taking a decision in this regard, the Government have furnished a vague reply stating that 10% of the total allocation in respect of the schemes applicable to North Eastern States are exclusively earmarked for such States. The Committee find that both the issues are entirely different. Some of the schemes are not being implemented properly due to the fact that the State Governments specifically of North Eastern States are not able to contribute their specific allocation. Thus, earmarking specific outlay to North Eastern States would not be sufficient. In view of this, they would like to reiterate their earlier recommendation and hope that the final decision in this regard is taken at the earliest. Further the Committee note that the later part of the recommendation i.e. the observation relating to meaningful utilisation of 10% of outlay earmarked for North-Eastern States has not been addressed by the Government. The Committee would like the categorical reply stating the steps taken by the Government in this regard.

B. Unification of all schemes/programmes of Watershed Development
Recommendation (Para No.2.13)

8. The Committee had noted as below:

“The Committee has been repeatedly recommending that all the schemes/programmes for the development of wastelands run by different Ministries/Departments must be brought under one umbrella. The similar recommendation had also been made by the high level Committee on Wastelands Development under the chairmanship of Shri Mohan Dharia. The need for a single national initiative has been expressed by the Government to Parliament at the level of Union Finance Minister. In spite of this, not only has no final decision been taken by the Government in this regard, there is little on record to suggest that this matter is being given the priority it deserves. The Integrated Wastelands Development Programme is not an integrated programme notwithstanding its name and the Department of Land Resources is not in charge of all land resources notwithstanding its designation. Running numerous schemes through numerous Departments with a single objective is not a right way of developing wastelands in an integrated manner. The Committee expect the Government to act on this recommendation within the coming year given that this Committee has been recommending it for at least four years and Government have declared themselves to have accepted this approach in principle. The Committee note that the aforesaid schemes suffer due to various bottlenecks like continuous insecurity of availability of funds at grass-root level, the feeble horizontal linkages amongst various agencies and the limitation of planning at the district level, and improper maintenance after completion of projects at the cost of sustainability. The Committee feel that different agencies and different approaches in handling the schemes have sidetracked the above issues and led to confusion. The Committee, therefore, reiterate once again the urgent need for bringing under one umbrella all schemes and programmes relating to watershed, wastelands development being implemented by the Government, that is the Department of Land Resources in the Ministry of Rural Development. The Committee

expect the Government to act on this recommendation within the cost of fiscal year 2001-2002.”

9. The Government have replied as below:

“Department of Land Resources has prepared a Discussion Paper on Land Resources Management for coordination of activities in respect of Watershed Development and Soil Conservation and submitted to Cabinet Secretary for the consideration of the Committee of Secretaries (CoS). The matter is still under consideration.

10. The Committee had repeatedly been recommending in their respective reports to bring all the schemes/programmes for the development of wastelands run by different Ministries/Departments under one umbrella. In spite of that, the final decision in this regard has not been taken so far. The Committee feel that the matter is not being given the priority it deserves. They reiterate their earlier recommendations and hope that the final decision in this regard will be taken without any further delay.

**C. The findings of Mid-Term Appraisal of 9th Plan
Recommendation (Para No.2.17)**

11. The Committee had noted as below:

“The Committee are concerned that the findings of Mid Term Appraisal of 9th Plan by the Planning Commission are not in consonance with the Government’s assessment and that little attempt is being made to reconcile the conflicting assessments. According to the Mid Term Appraisal, there has been no increase in “Net Sown Area” notwithstanding the efforts and large investments made to reclaim wastelands. This view has been accepted by the Ministry of Rural Development who have pointed out that out of 142 million hectares of Net Sown Area, 100 million hectares are rainfed and, therefore, the stagnation in the Net Sown Area is to be (attributed to) accepted by the vagaries of monsoon. Further, the Committee note that the country has been experiencing an uninterrupted run of good monsoons for the past several years, and, as such, the Ministry’s argument is not convincing. There must be some deep rooted malaise which need to be addressed seriously. The Committee are disturbed to note that instead of addressing this seriously, the Ministry of Rural Development have tried to shift the responsibility to other Ministries involved in the development of wastelands. They are not convinced by the arguments advanced by the Secretary during the course of the oral evidence before the Committee. In view of this, the Committee urge the Government to take the findings of Mid Term Appraisal seriously, and also to analyse the extent of the problem of treated land getting reconverted into degraded land. Further, the Government should have a fool proof mechanism for ensuring that the programmes are really implemented and not merely reflected on papers.”

12. The Government have replied as below:

“As earlier submitted in the written reply, the treatment under the IWDP, DPAP and DDP Programme is likely to improve the productivity of the treated land rather than converting wastelands into cultivable land. Land degradation is a dynamic process and the above programme envisages checking the same. In order to ensure implementation of the programmes, the monitoring system is being strengthened. In addition to the present system under which Quarterly/Monthly Progress Reports are received or Area Officers, Programme Officers, Independent Evaluators visit the project area, a supplementary mechanism of monitoring by attaching district level institutions such as KVKs, Agriculture Universities/Colleges, NGOs etc. is being put into implementation shortly. The officers from the institutions will also report back about the progress/quality of the projects.”

13. The Committee feel that this reply of the Government is very unconvincing. Even when pointed out by the Planning Commission in the Mid Term Appraisal and the Standing Committee in their earlier recommendation, the Government are not ready to accept that the various initiatives taken under the respective schemes launched for the development of wastelands should result in increase of net sown areas in the country. Further disturbing is the fact that instead of addressing the issue and ensuring that the results in this regard are noticed palpably on the ground, the Government have tried to justify their position on the flimsy ground that IWDP, DDP and DPAP have no significant role in converting wastelands into cultivable land. In this regard, the Committee may like to refer to the documents of the Ministry of Rural Development. The relevant extracts are as below :-

The broad objectives of IWDP are:

- (i) Development of wastelands based as village/micro watershed plan.
xxx xxx xxx xxx xxx
(refer page 104 Annual Report 2000-2001)

The objectives of IWDP are:

- (ii) Demonstration of micro planning methodology for preparation of village level action plan and implementation of wasteland development programme.
- (iii) Checking land degradation.
(refer page 18 performance budget 2001-2002)

The Strategy of IWDP is

xxx Ridge to valley concept of treatment of wastelands/degraded lands. Adjacent non-forest wastelands falling within the watershed to be treated simultaneously.
(refer page 19 performance budget 2001-2002)

As could be seen from the relevant extracts quoted above, the objectives of the various schemes of the Department of Land Resources meant for wastelands development, are not only to prevent the degradation of land but also to treat the wastelands. Keeping in view the said position, the various efforts should lead to an increase of net sown area. The Committee, in view of the aforesaid position, would like to reiterate their earlier recommendation and would like categorical reply of the Government in this regard.

The Committee are informed by the Ministry that the monitoring system is being strengthened in order to ensure implementation of the programme. The Committee should be kept informed about the results achieved as a result of the strengthening of the monitoring system.

**D. The cost of development of wastelands per hectare
Recommendation (Para No.2.29)**

14. The Committee had noted as below:

“While noting that the cost of development of wasteland is being revised from Rs.4,000 per hectare to Rs.6,000 per hectare, the Committee urge that the norms should uniformly be applicable to all the schemes being implemented by the Department in this regard. Besides, the Government should also revise the projections for requirement of outlay made for the development of wastelands so as to have a realistic assessment of the outlay required in this regard and to make proper planning for this purpose. While

revising the requirements of funds, the Government should also take into account future rise in cost.”

15. The Government have replied as below:

“The meeting of the EFC (Expenditure Finance Committee) for enhancing the cost norms for Rs.4,000/- per hectare to Rs.6,000/- per hectare has already been held. The EFC has accepted the proposal of the Department of Land Resources for increasing the cost norm to Rs.6,000/- per hectare. Further, action is being taken for getting the approval of the competent authority for issuing the orders.”

16. The Committee find that the Government have not responded to the specific issues as raised in their earlier recommendation which are as below :-

- (i) the norms regarding cost of development of wastelands should uniformly be applicable to all the schemes being implemented by the Department;**
- (ii) the Government should revise the projections for requirement of the outlay made for the development of wastelands; and**
- (iii) while revising the requirement of funds, the Government should also take into account future rise in the cost.**

The Committee reiterate their earlier recommendation and desire detailed point-wise reply of the Government to the above mentioned issues.

E. Implementation of IWDP

Recommendation (Para No.3.15)

17. The Committee had noted as below:

“After going through the replies furnished by the Government the following observations are made regarding the implementation of one of the flagship scheme of the Department of Land Resources:

- (i) a cut of Rs.93 crore was imposed by the Planning Commission at RE stage during 2000-01.
- (ii) while furnishing the data regarding outlay during 2000-01 and 2001-02, it has been clarified by the Government that the outlay includes funds for the on-going schemes of watershed development in view of watershed component of EAS being transferred to the Department of Land Resources. However, while indicating the physical achievement, the same clarification has not been made.
- (iii) the outlay under IWDP is reduced to make available more funds for DDP and DPAP.
- (iv) the targets under IWDP are reduced to commensurate with the reduced outlay.
- (v) the outlay during 2001-02 under the watershed component of EAS has been reduced from Rs.350 crore to Rs.200 crore.
- (vi) sufficient new projects are not being received from the States and also the DRDAs could not give full attention to the project formulation.
- (vii) although the targets were achieved during 8th Plan there is slippage of targets during the first three years of 9th Plan.

The Committee note that the Government do not appear to be serious about the implementation of one of the oldest and most important programme of the Department of Land Resources. Adequate allocation is not being made for the programme. The Committee are constrained to note that the allocation under one of the important scheme of the Department is being reduced to increase the allocation for the other schemes of

the Department. Thus the over-all outlay of the Department remaining stagnant with minor adjustments being made here and there. The Committee further note with concern that watershed component of EAS was given more importance and hence more outlay when it was under Ministry of Rural Development. However, while merging the same with IWDP, the outlay has been reduced. In view of this, the Committee feel that it is high time the Government should give serious attention towards IWDP. Not only the allocation should be enhanced, but it should be ensured that whatever is allocated at BE stage is not reduced at RE stage and there is meaningful utilisation of resources. The Committee further urge the Government to hand over the implementation of IWDP to PRIs in view of the self explained incompetence of DRDAs. Besides the Committee urge the Government that whatever data is furnished to them in connection with the examination of Demands for Grants, it should be able to give a clear picture of the implementation of the various programmes and should be easily comparable to help in arriving at some meaningful conclusion. This para may be read in conjunction with para 2.6 of the Report.”

18. The Government have replied as below:

“Observations of the Committee are quite pertinent and have been noted by the Department. It may be appreciated that within the given financial limitations of the Government, the DoLR has tried to get enhanced allocations for integrated Wastelands Development Programme (IWDP). There has been consistent increase in the allocation and release of funds under IWDP (excluding the EAS component) right from the day this scheme has come to this Department as can be seen from the table below:

Year wise	Central Allocation (Rs. in crores)	<u>8th Five Year Plan</u>
		Funds Released (Rs. in crores)
1992-93	16.83	16.83
1993-94	40.72	44.49
1994-95	49.20	53.04
1995-96	49.50	51.00
1996-97	50.50	50.80
Total	206.75	216.16

Year wise	Central Allocation (Rs. in crores)	<u>9th Five Year Plan</u>
		Funds Released (Rs. in crores)
1997-98	50.00	53.95
1998-99	62.10	62.00
1999-2000	82.00	83.07
2000-2001	130.00	129.78
2001-2002	210.00	26.43

For ensuing greater role for the Panchayati Raj Institutions in the Watershed Development Programmes, the Guidelines for Watershed Development have already been revised envisaging a greater role for Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). The revised guidelines envisage that PRIs will be the Project Implementing Agencies and other Departments/NGOs will be selected as PIA only when the PRI is not in a position

to take over this responsibility. At the village level, the Gram Panchayat shall be fully involved in the implementation of the programme, specially community organisation and training programmes. It may use its administrative authority and financial resources to support and encourage the formation of SHGs/UGs, the operation and maintenance of the assets created during project period and the common property resources such as pasture lands, fisheries tanks, plantations on village common lands, etc. The Gram Panchayats may also ensure that funds from other developmental programmes of MoRD are used to supplement and complement the Watershed Development Programmes. The Gram Panchayat shall be empowered to review and discuss the progress of watershed development programme in its meetings. The watershed action plan should have the approval of Gram Sabha and it should be a part of annual action plan of Gram Sabha. The Secretary, Watershed Committee shall provide all information in respect of action plan, funds earmarked for various activities, details of expenditure progress of works and further plan of action to the Gram Panchayat/Gram Sabha.”

19. The Committee regret to note that all the issues raised by them in their recommendation made in para 3.15 above have not been addressed specifically in the action taken reply furnished by the Government. The Committee would therefore, like point-wise detailed replies of the Government to the issues raised at Sl. No. (ii), (iv), (v), (vi) and (vii) of the above recommendation.

**F. District-wise information about the updation of land records
Recommendation (Para No.3.52)**

20. The Committee had noted as below:

“The Committee are concerned to find that the Government have not maintained the district-wise information regarding the coverage of the Strengthening of Revenue Administration and Updating of Land Records Scheme (SRA & ULR) In the absence of the said information, it is really difficult to assess the impact of the programme. The Committee therefore, strongly recommend the Government to procure the information regarding districts/States where the land records have been updated so far and furnish the same to the Committee.”

21. The Government have replied as below:

“States/UTs have been requested to furnish the district wise information about the updation of land records in their States. As soon as the information is received, the same will be furnished to the Committee.”

22. The Committee note the reply of the Government that States/UTs have been requested to furnish the district-wise information about the updation of land records in their States. The Committee hope that the district-wise information might have been received by now. They would like to be apprised of the position.

**ANALYSIS OF THE ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE
RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE TWENTY SECOND REPORT
OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(13TH LOK SABHA)**

I.	Total number of recommendations	17
II.	Recommendations that have been accepted by the Government (Para Nos.2.6, 2.10, 2.20, 2.24, 3.22, 3.39, 3.47, 3.53 and 3.61)	9
	Percentage to the total recommendations	(52.94%)
III.	Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies (Para Nos. 3.27 and 3.58)	2
	Percentage to the total recommendations	(11.77%)
IV.	Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee (Para Nos. 2.11, 2.13, 2.17, 2.29 and 3.15)	5
	Percentage to the total recommendations	(29.41%)
V.	Recommendations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited (Para Nos. 3.52)	1
	Percentage to the total recommendations	(5.88%)