

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2593
TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 05TH AUGUST, 2025

DECLINE IN THE ACREAGE OF AGRICULTURAL LAND

2593. SMT. HARSIMRAT KAUR BADAL:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE कृषि एवं किसान कल्याण मंत्री be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government acknowledges the ongoing decline in the acreage of land employed for agriculture across several States in the country particularly Punjab;
- (b) the details of Factors identified by the Government as contributing to this reduction, such as urbanization, land fragmentation and lack of effective land consolidation policies;
- (c) the details of specific steps that the Government have taken to prevent further diversion of agriculture land for non agricultural purposes and the way by which these measures are effective in reversing the trend; and
- (d) the details of the steps that the Government intends to adopt to prevent misuse of rural agriculture land in the name of drastic urbanization?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

कृषि एवं किसान कल्याण राज्य मंत्री (SHRI RAMNATH THAKUR)

(a) & (b): As per the latest report on 'Land Use Statistics-at a Glance 2023-24', despite marginal decline in cultivable/agricultural land, the Net Sown Area has remained relatively stable over the years. Further, the Gross Cropped Area has expanded significantly, rising from 201.3 million hectares in 2013-14 to 217.8 million hectares in 2023-24. Implementation of various government initiatives and technological advancements have contributed to a continuous rise in cropping intensity. Cropping intensity increased from 142.5% in 2013-14 to 156.8% in 2023-24, reflecting a positive shift toward multiple cropping practices, highlighting farmers' enhanced ability to cultivate the same land more than once annually. Additionally, food grain production has risen

significantly, from 246.42 million tonnes in 2013-14 to 353.96 million tonnes in 2024-25 (third advanced estimates). Horticulture production has also increased from 280.70 million tonnes in 2013-14 to 367.72 million tonnes in 2024-25 (second advanced estimates).

(c) & (d): Land and agriculture are the state subjects, as per Entry No. 18 of List II (State List) of the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India, land falls under the jurisdiction of State Governments, which are responsible for taking appropriate measures to increase the area under cultivation and prevent the diversion of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes. However, the Government of India supports these efforts through policy initiatives and budgetary assistance.

Department of Land Resources is implementing Watershed Development Component of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (WDC-PMKSY) which primarily focuses on development rainfed/ degraded lands. The activities undertaken in the scheme, inter alia, include ridge area treatment, drainage line treatment, soil and moisture conservation, rainwater harvesting, nursery raising, pasture development, livelihoods for asset-less persons etc. The measures taken under WDC-PMKSY supplements the effort of the Government to increase the area under cultivation. This scheme has been approved by the Government on 15th December, 2021.

Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has developed several technological measures to increase the area under cultivation. This includes location specific bio-engineering to check soil erosion due to run-off of rainwater, sand dune stabilization and shelter belt technology to check wind erosion and reclamation technology for problem soils in the country. ICAR has also developed the gypsum technology package, consisting of land levelling, bunding, flushing, removal of excess water, good quality irrigation water, application of amendments, selection of crops and efficient nutrient management. ICAR also recommends several agronomic measures to improve the degraded soils and bringing them under crop cultivation, soil test based balanced and integrated nutrient management through conjunctive use of both inorganic and organic sources (manner, biofertilizers etc.) of plant nutrient and location specific soil & water conservation measures for preventing deterioration of soil health and fertility.

The Central Government has enacted the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation & Resettlement (RFCLARR) Act, 2013, which came into force on 01.01.2014. Under this act, land can be acquired for public purposes. Section 10 of the Act explicitly restricts the acquisition of multi-crop irrigated land, unless in exceptional cases where no alternative land is available. In such cases, equivalent wasteland must be developed for agriculture. Data on conversion of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes is maintained at the State level, as land is a State subject under the Constitution. However, the RFCLARR Act, 2013, strongly discourages such conversions unless absolutely necessary. Wherever agricultural land is acquired, compensatory mechanisms, including monetary compensation, rehabilitation and resettlement benefits, and in some cases, land for land compensation, are provided to mitigate the impact on farmers.
