

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

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 4335
TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 19TH AUGUST, 2025
ACQUISITION OF FERTILE AGRICULTURAL LAND

4335. SHRI VIJAYAKUMAR ALIAS VIJAY VASANTH

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

- (a) the data on the total area of agricultural and fertile land acquired across country for purposes such as urbanization, industrial projects, national highways and other infrastructure developments during the last five years;
- (b) whether any comprehensive studies have been conducted or commissioned on the long-term impact of the large-scale conversion of fertile land on national food security, rural employment, and agrarian sustainability, if so, the key findings and the policy recommendations thereof;
- (c) the details of specific environmental, social and economic criteria are used during land acquisition for infrastructure and industrial development to avoid or minimize the loss of prime agricultural land;
- (d) the data on the number of hectares of high-yielding or irrigated farmland that have been permanently converted to non-agricultural use since 2019, State-wise and project-wise; and
- (e) the details of measures being taken to ensure that land acquisition for national highways, industrial corridors or smart cities does not disproportionately affect farmers?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

कृषि एवं किसान कल्याण राज्यमंत्री (SHRI RAMNATH THAKUR)

(a) & (b): 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. Both the Central and State Governments undertake land acquisition for urbanization, industrial projects, national highways, and other infrastructure developments. The Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare does not centrally maintain data on agricultural land acquired for various purposes. As per the latest report on 'Land Use Statistics-at a Glance 2023-24', the Gross Cropped Area has expanded significantly, rising from 201.3 million hectares in 2013-14 to 217.8 million hectares in 2023-24 and the Net Area Sown has remained relatively stable, standing at 138.99 million hectares in 2023-24. Further, the Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare has not conducted or commissioned any comprehensive study specifically on the long-term impact of large-scale conversion of fertile land on national food security, rural employment, or agrarian sustainability.

(c): The Central Government has enacted the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation & Resettlement (RFCTLARR) 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, an equivalent area of culturable wasteland shall be developed for agricultural purposes or an amount equivalent to the value of the land acquired shall be deposited with the appropriate Government for investment in agriculture for enhancing food-security. The RFCTLARR 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.

As per Section 4(1) of the RFCTLARR Act, 2013, whenever the appropriate Government intends to acquire land for a public purpose, it shall consult the concerned Panchayat, Municipality, or Municipal Corporation at the village or ward level, in the affected area and conduct a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) in consultation with them. While undertaking the SIA, the study must consider impact on various components, including the livelihoods of affected families, public and community properties, assets and infrastructure, such as roads, public transport, drainage, sanitation, drinking water sources, cattle water sources, community ponds, grazing lands, plantations, and public utilities such as post offices, fair price shops, food storage godowns, electricity supply, healthcare facilities, schools and educational or training facilities, anganwadis, children's parks, places of worship, land for traditional tribal institutions, and burial or cremation grounds. As per Section 4(4) of the RFCTLARR Act, an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), if required under any other law for the time being in force, shall be carried out simultaneously with the Social Impact Assessment.

Under Section 5 of the Act, a public hearing must be conducted in the affected area, with adequate publicity, to record the views of affected families. These views are to be incorporated into the final Social Impact Assessment Report.

(d) & (e): 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.

Under RFCTLARR Act, 2013, 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 RFCTLARR 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.

The Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare does not maintain State-wise and project-wise data on high-yielding or irrigated farmland permanently converted to non-agricultural use.
