

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:365

ANSWERED ON:18.08.2003

LAND DEGRADATION

NAWAL KISHORE RAI;SUSHIL KUMAR INDORA

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether quality of agricultural land is gradually being eroded in the country;
- (b) if so, the total estimated area of such land at present and the percentage it constitutes of the total existing land;
- (c) whether the agriculture production on the said land is declining;
- (d) if so, the facts and details thereof;
- (e) whether the Government have formulated any scheme to develop the said degraded land; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI RAJNATH SINGH)

(a) to (f): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (f) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.365 DUE FOR REPLY ON 18TH AUGUST, 2003.

(a)&(b): Yes, Sir. The soil formation and denudation is a natural process occurring simultaneously to maintain the equilibrium in ecosystem. Due to over exploitation, unscientific use of natural resources and other reasons, the land denudation is more than natural formation. As per available estimate, over 5300 million tonnes of soil is lost every year through water erosion, resulting in a loss of around 8 million tonnes of plant nutrients annually. Out of geographical area of 328.73 million ha., about 173.64 million ha. (52.8%) is estimated to be under various degrees of land degradation in the country.

(c)&(d): The average productivity is lowered by 5 to more than 50% due to land degradation depending upon its intensity as compared to average yield of normal land.

(e)&(f): The Working Group on Watershed Development, Rainfed Farming and Natural Resources Management for Tenth Five Year Plan, constituted by Planning Commission, has suggested a perspective plan for development of 88.5 million ha. in 20 years through Watershed Development Programmes.

Government is implementing various programmes for treatment/development of degraded lands namely, (i) National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas (NWDPPRA), (ii) Soil Conservation for Enhancing Productivity of Degraded Lands in the Catchments of River Valley Project and Flood Prone River (RVP&FPR), (iii) Reclamation of Alkali Soil (RAS), (iv) Watershed Development Project in Shifting Cultivation Areas (WDPSCA), (v) Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP), (vi) Desert Development Programme (DDP), (vii) Integrated Wasteland Development Programme (IWDP), (viii) Reclamation of Waterlogged Area (RWLA), (ix) Integrated Afforestation & Eco-Development Project Scheme (IAEPS), (x) National Project on Development & Use of Biofertilizer (NPD&UB), (xi) National Project on Organic Farming (NPOF) etc. through different Ministries in the country.