

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
RURAL DEVELOPMENT  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:653  
ANSWERED ON:02.12.1999  
WASTELAND  
SURESH CHANDEL

**Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether the Government have made any estimate as regard to the total wasteland of the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the total land out of it made cultivable so far, State-wise; and
- (c) the names of the proposals regarding making the wasteland into cultivable are cleared or under consideration of the Union Government alongwith the action taken thereon so far and the latest position in this regard, State-wise?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI A. RAJA)

(a) & (b) As per the report of National Remote Sensing Agency (NRSA), Hyderabad on Area Statistics of Land Use/Land Cove generated using remote sensing techniques on 1:250,000 scale of mapping, the total extent of wastelands (described by NRSA as problem lands) in the country is 75.5 Mha. The State-wise details are at Annexure-I.

The Department of Land Resources (the erstwhile Dept. of Wastelands Development) in the Ministry of Rural Development has the mandate to develop wastelands in non-forest areas aimed at checking land degradation, putting wastelands in the country to sustainable use and increasing bio-mass availability, specially fuel- wood and fodder. Wastelands are degraded lands which are currently under-utilized and are deteriorating for lack of appropriate water and soil management or on account of natural causes. Therefore, agricultural operations are generally not possible on such land at the first stage of development. The Dept. of Land Resources has the mandate to develop wastelands rather than to convert wastelands into cultivable lands. It is implementing a major scheme viz. Integrated Wastelands Development Project (IWDP) for development of non-forest wastelands on watershed basis. However the details of such degraded lands brought under cultivation through some of the Central Sector / Centrally sponsored Sector Schemes of the Ministry of Agriculture (Dept. of Agriculture & Cooperation) in the country upto 31.3.1999 are given, State-wise at Annexure - II.

(c) The state-wise details of the projects cleared by the Dept. of Land Resources under Integrated Wastelands Development Project Scheme (IWDP), till the end of March 1999 are given at Annexure-III.