

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:587

ANSWERED ON:06.05.2005

MAPPING WASTELAND

Owaisi Shri Asaduddin;Patel Shri Jivabhai Ambalal

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Integrated Wasteland Development Project (IWDP) has been helpful in decreasing the wasteland in the country;
- (b) if so, the number of projects under IWDP sanctioned from 2000-01 to 2004-05 and new projects proposed to be sanctioned during the 10th Five Year Plan to reduce the wasteland in the country;
- (c) the estimated time projected by the Government to develop all wasteland in the country;
- (d) whether the Government has decided to distribute unused wasteland to the landless people for multiple usage;
- (e) if so, the details thereof;
- (f) whether States have fully utilised funds allocated under wasteland development programme; (g) if so, the details thereof, State-wise during the last three years; (h) whether the Government propose to devise any programme and enable cultivation of Palm trees in such wastelands; and (i) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH)

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

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) to

(i) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 587 DUE FOR ANSWER ON 6th MAY. 2005.

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) 692 projects have been sanctioned under IWDP during the period from 2000-01 to 2004-05. IWDP is a demand driven programme, and the number of projects to be sanctioned during the remaining period of the 10th Five Year Plan depends on the fund allocation for the programme and the proposals received from the States. Treatment of wastelands under IWDP will certainly reduce the wasteland in the country.

(c) As per the 'Wastelands Atlas of India, 2000' brought out by the Department of Land Resources in collaboration with the National Remote Sensing Agency (NRSA), Hyderabad, the total extent of Wastelands/Degraded lands in the country is 638.5 lakh hectares. Out of which 369.85 lakh hectares is treatable non-forest wastelands. DoLR has sanctioned an area of 61.96 lakh hectares for implementation of IWDP projects since 1.4.1995 under the Guidelines for Watershed Development and Hariyali leaving balance area of 307.89 lakh hectares (369.85 lakh hectares - 61.96 lakh hectares) for treatment. On an average, an area of about 10 lakh hectares are sanctioned for taking up new projects every year. As such the estimated time required for treatment of all treatable wastelands in the country under IWDP will be approximately 30 years.

(d)&(e) So far, an area of 147.47 lakh acres of Government wastelands has been distributed amongst the landless rural poor. State-wise details are given in

Annexure-I

(f)&(g) IWDP is a demand driven programme and no State-wise allocation of funds is made. The details of funds released (State-wise) under the Programme during the last three years (2002-03 to 2004-05) are given in Annexure-II. Watershed development projects under IWDP are implemented over a period of 5 years and funds are released in five instalments on project to project basis. First instalment is released at the time of sanction of a project and each subsequent instalment is released after utilisation of more than 50% funds of the last instalment released. The total sum utilized is calculated after the completion of the projects. However, the release procedures ensure utilisation of funds released to the States for the projects under the Programme.

(h)&(i) This Department has no programme for cultivation of Palm trees under IWDP, as such. However, under IWDP, each and every activity is decided by the Project Implementing Agencies (PIAs) in consultation with the local people living in and around the watershed areas in accordance with the guidelines. There is no restriction to take up cultivation of Palm trees in the watersheds

subject to acceptability by the local people and the suitability of the soil condition.