

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE
RAJYA SABHA
QUESTION NO 04.12.2009
ANSWERED ON**

DECREASE IN CULTIVABLE LAND DUE TO CONVERSION FOR OTHER PURPOSES .

234

Shri N. Balaganga

Will the Minister of COALCOAL AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :-

- (a) whether Government is aware of the fact that the extent of cultivable land is decreasing every year due to its conversion for other purposes affecting thereby production of foodgrains;
- (b) if so, the action on part of Government to look into the grave concern endangering the food security of the country; and
- (c) whether Central Government advises States to protect the cultivable land which are being utilized for other than agricultural purposes?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION)

(SHRI K.V. THOMAS)

(a) to (c): A statement is laid on the table of the House.

STATEMENT IN RESPECT OF PARTS (a) TO (c) OF RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 234 FOR 04/12/2009

(a): Yes, Sir. The cultivable land has marginally decreased from 182.88 million ha. of 2004-05 to 182.71 million ha. in 2006-07 leading to average annual decrease in cultivable land by 0.057 million ha. The Net Sown Area has also marginally decreased from 141.07 million ha. of 2004-05 to 140.30 million ha. in 2006-07. During the same period, land under non-agricultural purposes has increased from 24.93 million ha. to 25.19 million ha. Despite the decrease in the extent of cultivable land foodgrain production has increased from 198.36 Million Tonnes in 2004-05 to 230.78 Million Tonnes in 2007-08.

(b) & (c): As per the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India, Land falls under the purview of the State Governments and, therefore, it is for the State Governments to bring suitable Act/Legislation to protect use of agricultural land for non agricultural purposes. With a view to prevent the use of agriculture land for non-agricultural purposes and sustaining food security of the country, the National Policy for Farmers 2007 has recommended that prime farmland must be conserved for agriculture except under exceptional circumstances, provided that the agencies that are provided with agricultural land for non-agricultural projects should compensate for treatment and full development of equivalent degraded / wastelands elsewhere. Further, the commitment under the existing re-settlement policy of the Central / State Governments would be fulfilled in letter and spirit. For non-agricultural purposes, as far as possible, land with low biological potential for farming would be earmarked and allocated. State Governments have been advised to earmark lands with low biological potential such as uncultivable land, land affected by salinity, acidity, etc., for non- agricultural development activities, including industrial and construction activities.

In addition, the National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy, 2007 formulated by Ministry of Rural Development, Department of Land Resources came into effect on 31.10.2007. The policy provides that only the minimum area of land commensurate with the purpose of a project may be acquired. Also, as far as possible, projects may be set up on wasteland, degraded land or un- irrigated land. Acquisition of agricultural land for non-agricultural use in the projects may be kept to the minimum; multi-cropped land may be avoided to the extent possible for such purposes and acquisition of irrigated land, if unavoidable, may be kept to the minimum. The Policy has been sent to the States/UTs for implementation.

Contd...2/-

- 2 -

Government of India is conscious of the need for taking measures to ensure food security of our country. With a view to prevent land degradation and to bring additional land under cultivation as well as increasing the productivity of the existing land under agriculture, Government of India is implementing various schemes/programmes namely, National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas (NWDPR), Soil Conservation for Enhancing the Productivity of Degraded Lands in the Catchments of River Valley Project and Flood Prone River (RVP & FPR), Reclamation and Development of Alkali & Acid Soils (RADAS), Watershed Development Project in Shifting Cultivation Areas (WDPSCA), Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) etc. in the country. Three major initiatives namely, National Food Security Mission (NFSM), National Horticulture Mission (NHM) and Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) have been launched to enhance productivity of agricultural land and sustaining food security across the country.