

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

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2590
TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 11th AUGUST, 2023

DECLINING PER CAPITA WATER AVAILABILITY FOR IRRIGATION

2590. SHRIMATI SANGEETA YADAV :

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the country has witnessed a continued decline in its per capita water availability for irrigation;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether it is also a fact that the continuing agriculture export of crops like rice and sugarcane is a matter of concern as it involves phenomenal amount of water export;
- (d) if so, the steps taken by Government to reduce water-guzzling activities that are being outsourced for production to other developing countries by developed countries; and
- (e) if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

(SHRI NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR)

(a) & (b) : The average annual water availability of any region or country is largely dependent upon hydro meteorological and geological factors. One of the factors for reduction in water availability per capita is the increase in population. The average annual per capita water availability in the years 2001, 2011 and 2021 was assessed as 1816, 1545 and 1486 cubic meters respectively.

(c) to (e): The Government has been promoting non water intensive crops. The Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare (DA&FW) is implementing Per Drop More Crop (PDMC) scheme in the Country which focuses on enhancing water use efficiency at farm level through Micro Irrigation namely Drip and Sprinkler Irrigation Systems. The scheme emphasises on promoting micro irrigation in water scarce, water stressed and critical ground water blocks/districts to conserve water and get extended coverage in terms of area and time period for life saving irrigation. Focus is also being given to promote micro irrigation in water intensive/guzzling crops to minimise water requirement. This Department is also implementing Crop Diversification Programme (CDP) in original Green Revolution States viz. Punjab, Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh to divert the area of water guzzling paddy crop to alternate crops like pulses, oilseeds, coarse cereals, nutri cereals, cotton and agro forestry.

Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) is working on development of high yielding varieties under drought/less water conditions and location specific production and protection technologies including package of practices for irrigation, water conservation in

paddy and sugarcane for enhancing productivity of these crops in the country. Various agro-techniques like skip furrow irrigation, alternate furrow irrigation and trash mulching in the inter-row spaces have been developed and disseminated to save irrigation water use in sugarcane production system. Similarly, development and dissemination of improved package of practices for reducing water usage in paddy crop is being carried out. Rice growing methods such as System of Rice Intensification, Alternate Wetting & Drying and aerobic system and Direct Seeded Rice (DSR) are recommended in water scarce area.

Besides, National Water Mission of the Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation launched 'Sahi-Fasal' campaign to nudge farmers in the water stressed areas to grow water non-intensive crops. The campaign aims at creating awareness among farmers on appropriate crops, micro-irrigation, soil moisture. The Central Ground Water Board has prepared management plans under National Aquifer Mapping Studies for the entire country. The recommendations in the management plans includes crop diversification, crop rotation, using water saving techniques.
