

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1314
TO BE ANSWERED ON 14.12.2023

Degrading Soil Health

1314 SHRI KUMAR KETKAR:
SHRI DIGVIJAYA SINGH:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is aware that a significant portion of the soil in India is considered degraded;
- (b) the policies, schemes or other measures Government has taken for prevention and remedy of this issue;
- (c) whether the Government has taken any steps towards mitigating the effects of open cast mining and promoting appropriate waste disposal in regions affected by soil degradation;
- (d) if so, the details thereof, if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (e) the steps Government has taken towards promotion of integrated watershed management in regions affected by soil degradation?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)

- (a) & (b)** The mapping (2018-2019) of degraded lands in India by the Space Applications Centre (ISRO) reveals that an area of 97.85 mha (29.77%) of the total geographic area is under degradation.

The various schemes / initiatives and programmes of Ministry and the National Forest Policy, 1988 addresses the issue of land degradation such as National Mission for a Green India (GIM), Forest Fire Protection & Management Scheme (FFPM), Afforestation activities in the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA), has been used to increase forest cover across the country. State Governments also implement various schemes for tree plantation/afforestation.

The Department of Land Resources, Ministry of Rural Development implements Watershed Development Component under Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (WDC-PMKSY) for the development of rainfed and degraded lands in the country. The activities undertaken, inter alia, include

ridge area treatment, drainage line treatment, soil and moisture conservation, rainwater harvesting, nursery raising, pasture development, livelihoods for asset-less persons etc. WDC-PMKSY, through these interventions, seeks to ensure sustainable development through improved natural resource management and better resilience of farmers to climate change.

- (c) & (d)** Before commencement of mining, it is mandatory for all mines to obtain Environmental Clearance (EC) from MoEF&CC for which, a detailed Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) is carried out and accordingly a comprehensive Environment Management Plan (EMP) with all safeguards is prepared. While granting mining operation in forests, this Ministry stipulates various terms and conditions including appropriate mitigation measures like Compensatory Afforestation, payment of Net Present Value, Soil and Moisture Conservation Plan, Wildlife Management plan, safety zone management, reclamation plan, etc under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 on case to case basis.

- (e)** The Ministry of Rural Development also implements watershed development approach for rainfed/degraded lands and adopt a ‘decentralized State level planning and projectised execution’ structure.
