

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1016**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 13.02.2025

**Desertification in the country**

1016. SHRI DEREK O' BRIEN:

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

- (a) whether Government is aware of the regions of the country that are in the process of desertification;
- (b) if so, the details of such regions, State-wise;
- (c) whether any steps are being taken by Government to slow down the process of rapid desertification;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether any progress has been made by Government in the reclamation of land that has been degraded by the process of desertification; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE  
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a) to (f) As per Desertification and Land Degradation Atlas of India (2021) published by the Space Applications Centre (ISRO), an area of 97.85 mha (29.77%) of the total geographic area is under degradation. The details are given in **Annexure-A**.

The Government has undertaken a number of measures to combat land degradation and desertification in the country. These are as follows:

(i) Desertification and Land Degradation Atlas of India is published by the Space Applications Centre (SAC), Indian Space Research Organisation, Ahmedabad, which provides the state-wise extent of land degradation and desertification in India. The Atlas serves as an important tool in planning and implementation of schemes aimed at restoration of land. An online portal has also been developed with the help of Space Application Centre (SAC), Ahmedabad for correlation of degraded land with the processes causing degradation.

(ii) A Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Land Management (CoE-SLM) has been set up at the Indian Council for Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE), Dehradun to engage and enable parties at international, national and local levels in addressing land degradation related issues with an ultimate goal of achieving land

degradation neutrality (LDN). It also aims at enhanced South- South Cooperation, knowledge sharing, promotion of best practices, sharing of India's experiences with cost-effective and sustainable land management strategies and developing ideas for transformative projects and programs and capacity building.

(iii) ICFRE – Arid Forest Research Institute (ICFRE-AFRI), Jodhpur, carries out scientific research in forestry to develop technologies aimed at increasing vegetative cover and conserving biodiversity in the hot arid and semi-arid regions of India.

(iv) At the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties (COP), 2015 in Paris, India joined the voluntary Bonn Challenge pledge to bring under restoration 13 million hectares (mha) of degraded and deforested land by the year 2020, and additional 8 mha by 2030. This was further increased to 26 mha, during the COP 14 to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in 2019. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) - India, has been assigned for reporting India's progress on achieving Bonn Challenge target.

In addition to these, the Ministry has been taking several initiatives through various afforestation related schemes implemented by the ministry and other ministries which aim at increasing and improving forest and tree cover and thereby combating desertification. The Ministry supports the States/UTs for various afforestation activities through Centrally Sponsored Scheme for conservation, development and promotion of forests under its major schemes namely, National Mission for a Green India (GIM) and Forest Fire Protection & Management Scheme (FFPM). Further the Compensatory Afforestation fund under the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) contributes to afforestation and consequently combatting desertification. In addition to these, State Governments also implement various schemes for tree plantation/afforestation and addressing land degradation. Combatting desertification and land degradation is a dynamic process as the interplay between environmental conditions, human activities, and the impacts of land degradation can constantly change and thus requires regular monitoring and evolution of relevant adaptation and mitigation strategies.

\*\*\*\*\*

Annexure referred to in reply of part (a) of the Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 1016 regarding 'Desertification in the country' raised by Shri Derek O' Brien due for reply on 13.02.2025

**State wise Status of Desertification and Land Degradation**

Sr No	State/UT	Total Area under Desertification * (in Ha)
1	Andhra Pradesh	2378042
2	Arunachal Pradesh	200683
3	Assam	834530
4	Bihar	746586
5	Chhattisgarh	2306531
6	Delhi	91543
7	Goa	194877
8	Gujarat	10248057
9	Haryana	364154
10	Himachal Pradesh	2400300
11	Jammu & Kashmir	1129503
12	Jharkhand	5482260
13	Karnataka	6959847
14	Kerala	422299
15	Ladakh	7111968
16	Madhya Pradesh	3859735
17	Maharashtra	14306029
18	Manipur	612566
19	Meghalaya	557576
20	Mizoram	275827
21	Nagaland	828943
22	Odisha	5359014
23	Punjab	167989
24	Rajasthan	21237669
25	Sikkim	84610
26	Tamil Nadu	1599981
27	Telangana	3638508
28	Tripura	447378
29	Uttar Pradesh	1549608
30	Uttarakhand	673894
31	West Bengal	1784345
<b>32</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>97854851</b>

*\*Data for 2018-19 as per Desertification and Land Degradation Atlas of India (2021) published by the Space Applications Centre (ISRO)*

\*\*\*\*\*