

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3211
TO BE ANSWERED ON 12.07.2019

Desertification

3211. Shri Sushil Kumar Singh:

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

- (a) whether the Government has convened a meeting in New Delhi to combat desertification, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether most parts of the country particularly Bihar has undergone desertification due to various reasons including excessive use of underground water and excessive removal of sand from the riverbeds, and if so, the details hereof;
- (c) whether the Government has formulated any stringent laws to prevent exploitation of natural resources and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether the Government has gathered State/UT-wise details of the persons engaged in exploitation of natural resources during the last three years and the current year; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof and the action taken against such persons engaged in exploitation of natural resources in violation of existing laws?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI BABUL SUPRIYO)

- (a) Yes Sir. The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change celebrated the World Day to Combat Desertification on 17th June 2019 in Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi commemorating the 25th year of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). This Ministry also announced the hosting of fourteenth session of Conference of Parties (CoP 14) to UNCCD from 29th August to 13th September 2019 in Delhi, India.
- (b) Desertification and Land Degradation Atlas of India, an outcome of the study undertaken by Space Applications Centre, Ahmedabad and sponsored by Ministry of Environment, Forest and climate Change was published in June 2016,. As per the study

the most significant processes of desertification/ land degradation in the country are due to water erosion, vegetation degradation and wind erosion. However, the analysis with respect to total geographical area of the individual states show that Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Delhi, Gujarat and Goa are showing more than 50% area under desertification/land degradation, whereas states with less than 10% area under desertification/land degradation are Kerala, Assam, Mizoram, Haryana, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Arunachal Pradesh.

(c) to (e) The Ministry of Jal Shakti has circulated a Model Bill to all the States/Union Territories(UT) to enable them to enact suitable ground water legislation for regulation of its development which includes provision of rain water harvesting. So far 15 States/UTs have adopted the aforesaid legislation on the lines of the Model Bill including Bihar. Central Ground Water Authority has issued directives to Chief Secretaries of all states as well as Administrators of all UTs to take measures to promote/adopt artificial recharge to ground water through rain water harvesting. It also grants No Objection Certificate for Ground water extraction to industries, infrastructure units and mining projects in feasible areas with mandatory condition for conservation, augmentation and efficient use of ground water.

To ensure environmental stability and to offset the losses caused to environment due to mining, including in the forest area, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change had issued Environment Impact Assessment Notification (EIA), 2006, as amended from time to time under the Environment Protection Act 1986. The EIA notification ensures that all the mining projects shall obtain prior environmental clearance before carrying out mining activities.

As the complaints related to exploitation of natural resources are being monitored by the concerned States/UTs, therefore, Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change does not maintain any centralized data in this regard.
