

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3276**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 13.03.2020

**Land Degradation Neutrality**

3276: SHRI SUMEDHANAND SARASWATI,  
SHRI DEVJI M. PATEL:

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware that agriculture production has been affected in various States including Rajasthan due to desertification;
- (b) if so, the details thereof along with the efforts being made by the Government to check desertification; and
- (c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to achieve land degradation neutrality by the year 2030 as per the commitment laid down in United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification?

**ANSWER**

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

(a) and (b) As per the Desertification and Land Degradation Atlas of India, prepared by the Space Applications Centre for the period 2011-2013, 29.32 % of the Total Geographical Area of the country i.e. 96.4 million hectares is undergoing the process of degradation. The area under desertification is 82.64 million hectares including Rajasthan. It is therefore an issue of increasing concern for agricultural productivity in the country.

Various steps have been taken by the Government of India to address the impact of desertification on agricultural productivity. Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare has taken up various programmes like the National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture which includes interventions such as the Soil Health Card, Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojna, Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North-Eastern Region, Rain Fed Area Development, National Agro-Forestry policy and the sub-Mission on Agro-Forestry, National Bamboo Mission, Prime Minister Krishi Sinchai Yojna- Per Drop More Crop (PMKSY).

The Integrated Watershed Management Programme (of the Watershed Management Division of the Ministry of Rural Development) was amalgamated as a Watershed Development Component of PMKSY in 2015-16 and an area of about 20.5 million hectares has been developed under

completed and ongoing projects. Upto October 2019 an amount of Rs 17751.75 crore has been released to States as Central share for implementation of Watershed Development Project. Between 2014-15 to 2019-20, total 6,08,384 water harvesting structures were created/rejuvenated, an additional area of 13,47,527 hectares has been brought under protective irrigation, and 27,25,587 farmers have been benefitted during the said period. Under afforestation/horticultural activities 92,000 hectares degraded and rain-fed lands have been covered during 2018-19 and 2019-20 (upto second quarter).

Department of Land Resources, Ministry of Rural Development is contemplating to initiate a new programme under which it is proposed to sanction new projects covering 5 million ha/year from 2020-21 to 2023-24. It is also proposed to complete 577 ongoing projects which have life span upto 2021-22 subject to approval of the Government for continuation of the existing scheme beyond March, 2020.

Studies have also been carried out under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research to combat desertification on various issues such as assessment of status of desertification in India's Arid Regions through satellite remote sensing and identification of field-based indicators; checking soil erosion, sand movement and control wind erosion through sand dune stabilisation, shelter-belt plantation and soil and water conservation; rehabilitation of mine spoil areas; methodology for reclaiming degraded land due to water logging and salinity-alkalinity etc.

(c) India has committed to achieve land degradation neutrality status by 2030. At the recently concluded 14<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of Parties of United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification held in India in September, 2019, India has raised its ambition to restore degraded land from 21 mha to 26 mha by 2030.

National Afforestation & Eco Development Board (NAEB), Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme "National Afforestation Programme (NAP)" for regeneration of degraded forests and adjoining areas through people's participation. The scheme implemented through a decentralized mechanism of State Forest Development Agency (SFDA) at State level, Forest Development agency (FDA) at Forest Division level and Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMCs) at Village level. The scheme is demand driven and afforestation area is sanctioned on the basis of past performance, potential degraded forest land available for eco-restoration and availability of budget. An amount of Rs, 3874.02 Crore has been released to the States to treat an area of 21.95 lakh hectares since inception of this programme in 2000-02 till 2018-19.

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