

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

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.3717
TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 17TH MARCH, 2020

ARABLE LAND

3717. SHRI KHAGEN MURMU:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE कृषि एवं किसान कल्याण मंत्री be pleased to state:

- (a) whether in view of giving momentum to agriculture field the Government proposes to increase the existing arable land for the farmers of the country;
- (b) if so, the details of the area likely to be increased and the manner in which it will increase the existing arable land of the farmers in the country;
- (c) if so, the area proposed in this regard and the extent to which it is likely to benefit the farmers of the country; and
- (d) if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

कृषि एवं किसान कल्याण मंत्री (SHRI NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR)

(a) to (d): As per the Seventh Schedule of Constitution of India, land comes under the purview of State Governments and, therefore, it is for them to take suitable steps to increase the arable land for the farmers. However, Government of India supplements the efforts of States, through appropriate policy measures and budgetary support.

Department of Land Resources has sanctioned 8214 watershed development projects in 28 States (except Goa) [during the period 2009-10 to 2014-15] (now 27 States and 2 Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh) covering an area of about 39.07 million hectare under Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) principally for development of rainfed portions of net cultivated area and culturable wastelands. The IWMP was amalgamated in 2015-16 as the Watershed Development Component of the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (WDC-PMKSY). Government has not sanctioned any new watershed projects under WDC-PMKSY since 2015-16 and the focus is now on the completion of ongoing projects.

Government of India is implementing National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) with a view to prevent soil erosion, land degradation and also to maintain balance in various types of land uses across the country. Under this mission, all types of land including wasteland/barren land are developed with suitable need based soil and water conservation measures and parts of such degraded lands developed are put to agricultural practices.

In order to check decline in the arable area in the country, under the National Policy for Farmers – 2007 (NPF-2007), State Governments have been advised to earmark lands with low biological potential such as uncultivable land, land affected by salinity, acidity, etc., for non-agricultural development activities, including industrial and construction activities. National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy – 2007 (NRRP-2007) has also recommended that as far as possible, projects may be set up on waste land, degraded land or un-irrigated land and acquisition of irrigated, multi-cropped agricultural land for non-agricultural uses may be kept to the minimum and avoided, to the extent possible.

Apart from this, In order to reclaim and develop barren lands, ICAR through Indian Institute of Soil and Water Conservation (IISWC) has developed several location specific bio-engineering measures to check soil erosion due to run-off of rain water. Central Arid Zone Research Institute, Jodhpur has developed sand dune stabilization and shelter belt technology to check wind erosion. The Council through Central Soil Salinity Research Institute, Karnal and All India Coordinated Research Project (AICRP) on Salt Affected Soils has developed reclamation technology, sub-surface drainage, bio-drainage, agroforestry interventions and salt tolerant crop varieties to improve the productivity of saline, sodic and waterlogged soils in the country. The ICAR also imparts training, organises Front Line Demonstrations (FLDs) etc. to educate farmers on all these aspects.
