

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

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1507
TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 7TH DECEMBER, 2021

BARREN LAND

1507. SHRI RAHUL KASWAN:

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

- (a) whether it is a fact that agricultural land in the country is rapidly becoming barren;
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether there is any proposal of the Government to provide land and farming knowledge to the farmers, so that the agricultural land could be saved from becoming barren in the future; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
कृषि एवं किसान कल्याण मंत्री (SHRI NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR)

(a) & (b): As per the Land Use Statistics 2018-19 (latest available), the agricultural land in the country was 181.06 Million Hectare for the year 2017-18 and 180.89 Million hectare for the year 2018-19.

(c) & (d): As per the Seventh Schedule of Constitution of India, land comes under the purview of State Governments. The Government of India supplements the efforts of States through appropriate policy measures and budgetary support.

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 developmental 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. Acquisition of irrigated, multi-cropped agricultural land for non-agricultural uses may be kept to the minimum and avoided, to the extent possible.

A Centrally Sponsored Scheme 'Support to State Extension Programs for Extension Reforms' popularly known as ATMA Scheme is under implementation since 2005. Presently, Scheme is being implemented in 691 districts of 28 states & 5 UTs in the country. The scheme promotes decentralized farmer-friendly extension system in the country. The objectives of the Scheme is to support State Government's efforts and to make available latest agricultural technologies and good agricultural practices in different thematic areas of agriculture and allied areas to farmers through different extension activities viz; Farmers Training, Demonstrations, Exposure Visits, Kisan Mela, Mobilization of Farmers Groups and organizing Farm Schools etc.

Besides, Soil Health Card Scheme was introduced in the year 2014-15 to optimize usage of nutrients. Soil Health Card Scheme is being implemented to assist all State Governments to evaluate fertility in all farm holdings across the country and issue soil health cards to farmers. Soil health cards provide information to farmers on nutrient status of their soil along with recommendation on appropriate dosage of nutrients to be applied for improving soil health and its fertility.

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) of Government of India set up 727 Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) in the Country with the mandate of Technology Assessment and Demonstration for its Application and Capacity Development. As part of their mandate, the KVKs are conducting training programmes, demonstrating technologies on farmers' fields and creating awareness with objective of farming knowledge to the farmers. During 2020-21, the KVKs trained 15.76 lakh farmers, conducted 2.16 lakh demonstrations and organized 6.60 lakh frontline extension activities for awareness creation among 397.61 lakh farmers on improved agriculture technologies. Also, 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. ICAR also imparts training, to educate farmers on all these aspects.
