GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT OF LAND RESOURCES

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 4173
TO BE ANSWERED ON **19.08.2025**

Conversion of Wasteland into Fertile Land

4173. Shri Naveen Jindal:

Will the Minister of ***RURAL DEVELOPMENT*** be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the wasteland has been successfully converted into fertile agricultural land in rural area since 2020, State and year-wise:

(b) the details of the initiatives taken by the Government to convert wasteland in rural areas into arable land for agriculture;

(c) the details of the skill development programs are in place to train rural communities in wasteland restoration techniques;

(d) the details of the steps taken by the Government to identify and map wasteland in rural India using satellite technology and remote sensing;

(e) whether there are any new scientific or technological innovations being explored for large-scale wasteland reclamation, if so, the details thereof; and

(f) whether any financial or technical support is available for farmers and rural communities to transform wasteland into productive agricultural land under Government scheme, if so, the details of the beneficiaries covered under the aforementioned scheme, since 2020, year-wise ?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(Dr. CHANDRA SEKHAR PEMMASANI)

(a), (b) & (f): As per the Seventh Schedule of Constitution of India, 'land' falls under the purview of State Government and, therefore, it is for the State Governments to take suitable steps for converting wasteland into fertile agricultural land. However, Government of India supplements the efforts of State Governments through various programmes.

The Department of Land Resources (DoLR) is implementing Watershed Development Component of the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (WDC-PMKSY) for development of rainfed / degraded areas. The activities undertaken in the scheme, inter alia, include ridge area treatment, drainage line treatment, soil and moisture conservation, rainwater harvesting, nursery raising, pasture development, livelihoods for asset-less persons etc.

Under WDC-PMKSY 1.0 (projects sanctioned between 2009-10 to 2014-15), DoLR supported implementation of 6382 watershed projects covering an area of 29.59 million hectare in 27 States and UTs of J&K and Ladakh and Central share of Rs. 19,926.67 crore was released to the States/UTs. Between 2014-15 to 2021-22, about 7.64 lakh water harvesting structures were created / rejuvenated, an additional area of about 16.40 lakh ha was brought under protective irrigation and 36.34 Lakh farmers were benefitted. In addition to this, 3.36 lakh ha of culturable wasteland has been treated from 2018-19 to 2021-22. The period of WDC-PMKSY 1.0 projects got over in March, 2022.

On 15th December 2021, Government of India approved continuation of programme as WDC-PMKSY 2.0 for the period 2021-22 to 2025-26. Under WDC-PMKSY 2.0, DoLR has sanctioned 1220 watershed development projects covering an area of 52.95 lakh ha to 28 States and UTs of J&K and Ladakh at a total cost of Rs.12972.85 crore (Central share: Rs.8487.96 crore). The cost norms for watershed projects are Rs.22,000/ ha for plain areas, Rs.28,000/ha for hilly / difficult areas and upto Rs.28000/ha for Left Wing Extremism Affected /Integrated Action Plan Districts. So far, Central share of Rs.5152 crore has been released to the States/ UTs.

Under WDC-PMKSY 2.0, from 2022-23 to 2024-25 about 1.35 lakh water harvesting structures have been created / rejuvenated, an additional area of about 1.90 lakh ha has been brought under protective irrigation, 6.76 lakh hectare of degraded /rainfed area has been developed and 13.42 lakh farmers have benefitted.

Further, about 1.18 Lakh SHGs have been formed in the watershed project areas and supported with revolving funds of around Rs.523 crore.

(c) Trainings on Natural Resource Management techniques and adoption of improvised Production Systems are held for watershed communities at regular intervals.

(d) The Department of Land Resources in collaboration with the National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC) has brought out the 'Wasteland Atlas- 2019' with robust geospatial information. The Atlas aims at articulation of the spatial change of different wasteland categories that happened between 2008-09 and 2015-16 in the country, at 1:50,000 scale.

(e) The Department is promoting use of Geographical Information System (GIS) & Remote Sensing (RS) technologies in planning, execution and monitoring of watershed development projects under WDC-PMKSY 2.0. Further, Land Resource Inventerization (LRI) based watershed management is being practiced in selected project areas on pilot basis.

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