

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

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2594
TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 16th DECEMBER, 2025

DECLINE IN FERTILE LAND

2594. DR. GANAPATHY RAJKUMAR P:

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

- (a) whether the Union Government is aware of the fact that in the recent past, fertile land is being decreasing due to Indiscriminate acquisition of farm land for various purposes/uses for urbanization, industrialization & Infrastructure Development, particularly for expansion of national highways across the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof?
- (c) whether the Union Government will take immediate necessary action to curtail the use of fertile land for various infrastructural activities in future so as to protect our agriculture and farmers which is back bone of our economy and to prevent food shortage/famine in future;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
कृषि एवं किसान कल्याण राज्य मंत्री (SHRI RAMNATH THAKUR)

(a) & (b): As per the latest report on 'Land Use Statistics-at a Glance 2023-24', the Gross Cropped Area has expanded significantly, rising from 201.3 million hectares in 2013-14 to 217.8 million hectares in 2023-24 and the Net Area Sown has remained relatively stable, standing at 138.99 million hectares in 2023-24. The Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare does not centrally maintain data on agricultural land acquired for various purposes.

(c) to (e) : Land and agriculture are the state subjects, as per Entry No. 18 of List II (State List) of the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India. Both the Central and State Governments undertake land acquisition for industrial projects and infrastructure development. However, the Central Government has enacted the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation & Resettlement (RFCTLARR) Act, 2013, which came into force on 01.01.2014. Under this act, land can be acquired for public purposes. Section 10 of the Act explicitly restricts the acquisition of multi-crop irrigated land, unless in exceptional cases where no alternative land is available. In such cases, an equivalent area of culturable wasteland shall be developed for agricultural purposes or an amount equivalent to the value of the land acquired shall be deposited with the appropriate Government for investment in agriculture for enhancing food-security. The Act also, strongly discourages such conversions unless absolutely necessary. Wherever agricultural land is acquired, compensatory mechanisms, including monetary compensation, rehabilitation and resettlement benefits, and in some cases, land for land compensation, are provided to mitigate the impact on farmers.

Department of Land Resources is implementing Watershed Development Component of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (WDC-PMKSY) which primarily focuses on development rainfed/ degraded lands. 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. The measures taken under WDC-PMKSY supplements the effort of the Government to increase the area under cultivation. This scheme has been approved by the Government on 15th December, 2021.

Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has developed several technological measures to increase the area under cultivation. This includes location specific bio-engineering to check soil erosion due to run-off of rainwater, sand dune stabilization and shelter belt technology to check wind erosion and reclamation technology for problem soils in the country. ICAR has also developed the gypsum technology package, consisting of land levelling, bunding, flushing, removal of excess water, good quality irrigation water, application of amendments, selection of crops and efficient nutrient management. ICAR also recommends several agronomic measures to improve the degraded soils and bringing them under crop cultivation, soil test based balanced and integrated nutrient management through conjunctive use of both inorganic and organic sources (manner, biofertilizers etc.) of plant nutrient and location specific soil & water conservation measures for preventing deterioration of soil health and fertility.
