

# CONVERSION OF BARREN LAND INTO ARABLE LAND

Relevant for: Geography | Topic: Distribution of key natural resources - Land Resources incl. Land conservation in world & India

Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare

## Conversion of Barren Land into Arable Land

Posted On: 20 MAR 2020 4:20PM by PIB Delhi

As per the Desertification and Land Degradation Atlas of India, prepared by the Space Applications Centre for the period [2011-2013](#), [96.4](#) million hectares i.e. 29.32% of the Total Geographical Area of the country is undergoing the process of desertification/land degradation. Approximately 6.35% of land in Uttar Pradesh is undergoing desertification/degradation.

As per the Special Report on Climate Change & Land of Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change released in August, 2019, land use change, land-use intensification and climate change have contributed to desertification and land degradation. The report highlights that climate change, including increases in frequency and intensity of extremes, has adversely impacted food security and terrestrial ecosystems as well as contributed to desertification and land degradation in many regions.

In order to reclaim and develop barren lands, Indian Council for Agricultural Research (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 (CAZRI), 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 through National Innovations on Climate Resilient Agriculture (NICRA) demonstrated Climate resilient technologies namely drought tolerant short duration varieties, crop diversification, integrated farming systems, soil and water conservation measures etc. in 151 most vulnerable districts in the country to minimize vulnerability against climate change. Agricultural Contingent Plans for 651 districts have also been prepared to cope up with any climate adversities.

National Afforestation & Eco Development Board (NAEB) Division of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change is implementing the "National Afforestation Programme (NAP)" for ecological restoration of degraded forest areas under which an area of over 2 million ha has been approved for afforestation at a cost of Rs.3874 crore.

Various other schemes like Green India Mission, fund accumulated under Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA), Nagar Van Yojana etc. also help in checking degradation and restoration of forest landscape. MoEF&CC also promote tree outside forests realizing that the country has a huge potential for increasing its Trees Outside Forest (TOF) area primarily through expansion of agroforestry, optimum use of wastelands and vacant lands.

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).

India has also committed to achieve land degradation neutrality status by 2030. In addition, at the recently concluded 14th 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.

This information was given in a written reply by the Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Shri Narendra Singh Tomar in Rajya Sabha today.

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**APS/PK/BA**

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