

Dependence of agriculture on rains

*145. SHRI PARVEZ HASHMI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that over two-thirds of the agricultural land is still dependent on rains;

(b) whether it is also a fact that developed countries depend very little on rains; and

(c) if so, the action Government has taken to provide infrastructural support in the recent past to get rid of the dependence on rains?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) As per available estimates (2009-10), net irrigated area (63.25 million ha) is about 35% of total arable land (182.5 million ha).

(b) No. As per International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage, barring few countries like Israel, Japan, Netherlands and New Zealand, rest of developed countries have lesser percentage of area under irrigation, compared to India. Percentage of irrigated area to that of arable and permanent crop area (APC) in developed countries ranges from 4% to 100%, whereas in India, the same is about 35%. However, since most developed countries have temperate climate and rainfall is more or less uniform and well distributed, these countries witness less droughts compared to India.

(c) Irrigation is one of six components for development of rural infrastructure under 'Bharat Nirman'. Creation of irrigation potential under Bharat Nirman is met through completion of ongoing Major and Medium Irrigation (MMI) projects, Extension, Renovation and Modernization (ERM) of MMI projects and surface and ground water Minor Irrigation (MI) projects. Emphasis is also accorded to Repair, Renovation and Restoration (RRR) of water bodies. During the period 2005-06 to 2010-11, about 10.7 million ha additional irrigation potential has been created thereby enhancing net irrigated area to about 63 million ha.

To ensure effective utilization of available surface and sub-surface water resources in agriculture, National Mission on Micro Irrigation was launched to minimize water requirement and for extending availability of water over longer durations. Ministries of Agriculture and Rural Development are also implementing watershed development programmes under which water harvesting structures are taken up to provide live saving irrigation to crops. Besides, under all major development programmes of Ministry of Agriculture, viz., Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY), National Food Security Mission (NFSM), National Horticulture Mission (NHM), Macro Management of Agriculture (MMA) etc., construction of farm ponds and other means of water harvesting are encouraged to provide protective irrigation to farm lands.