

[9 July, 2004]

RAJYA SABHA

Dependency on rain water for irrigation

†88. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that around 70 per cent of agriculture in the country is dependent on monsoon and non-monsoon rains for irrigation;

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that agro-industry has also become uncertain and non-profitable as a result of uncertain availability of rain-water;

(c) if not, the reaction of Government thereto; and

(d) the time bound plan of Government to get rid of this uncertainty?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) It is a fact that time distribution and quantity of rainfall affect agricultural production and thereby the agro-based industries.

(c) and (d) The Government of India has accorded priority to the holistic and sustainable development of rainfed areas through watershed development approach. The Planning Commission in its Working Group Report for Tenth Five Year Plan has suggested a perspective plan for developing 88.5 million hectares of rainfed/wasteland at a cost of Rs. 72,750 crores over a period of 20 years starting from the Tenth Plan.

The Ministry of Agriculture, under the National Watershed Development Programme for the Rainfed Areas (NWDPA), has targeted to cover 2 million ha. of rainfed area at an estimated cost of Rs. 1000 crores during the Tenth Plan. Besides this, the Department of Land Resources, Ministry of Rural Development are implementing Integrated Wasteland Development Programme (IWDP), Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP) and Desert Development Programme (DDP) for the development of wastelands/degraded lands. These schemes include components like in-situ moisture conservation and construction of rain water harvesting structures for irrigation, etc.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.