



Editorial

CONVERTING BARREN AND WASTE LANDS INTO PRODUCTIVE LAND

Agriculture in India has taken the path of transformation by greening the barren and waste lands with agricultural crops in the recent past. In fact, many state governments have adopted this method as an alternative way of agricultural expansion in the country. These kinds of initiatives are helpful in ensuring the nutritional security of the 18 percent of world human population and 15 percent of world livestock population confined to India in a relatively small land area (2.4 percent of world). As per the government of India statistics, a sizeable portion of land area (96.4 million hectare i.e. 29.3 of the total geographical area) in India is under the process of desertification/degradation in 2020. Under these circumstances judicious utilization of 69 million hectare land, categorised under uncultivated, barren, and fallow lands, for growing agricultural crops is of immense importance. Already, states like Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar have converted nearly 0.85 million hectare of degraded lands for productive use in the recent past.

Though wastelands are not generally used for cultivation because of many reasons not all the seemingly wastelands are wastelands in the real sense. For example, marshlands generally known for their rich biodiversity may act as buffer between mainland and huge water-body. Hence, extra care is required with equal participation of agricultural technology developers and cultivators in the conversion of degraded,

barren and wastelands into productive land. It has to be done taking into cognizance the demographic concerns and livelihood of people settled in respective areas. In addition to natural factors, poor land management is also a major determinant of soil degradation. For example, water mismanagement has given rise to soil salinity in several areas and has also depleted water table.

The current issue of *Harit Dhara* includes articles related to greening of barren and waste lands for a better land based livelihood in rural India, utilizing microbial diversity as innovative agricultural technology, nature friendly weed management, and management of problem soils. I am sure that the issue will be interesting and useful to the readers.

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