

# DEGRADATION OF LAND COST INDIA ₹3 L CR: REPORT

**Malavika Vyawahare**

malavika.vyawahare@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** India has incurred a loss equivalent to 2.54% of the GDP for 2014-15 or around ₹3 lakh crore due to land degradation, a draft report sponsored by the ministry of environment and conducted by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) said.

“We have done a study assessing the economic impact of desertification, land degradation and drought on GDP,” JV Sharma, director, Forestry & Biodiversity Division at TERI, said. “We have taken 2014-15 financial year into consideration, the economic impact (of degradation) is 2.54% of GDP.”

The estimated loss would be around ₹3 lakh crore at 2014-15 prices.

“About 1.41% GDP loss is due to forest degradation. Of this, 40% is due to forest degradation and 60% due to forest diversion. That is the economic value of the loss of ecosystem services,” added Sharma.

About 30% of India’s geographic area is undergoing degradation, according to the Desertification and Land Degradation Atlas of India of the Space Applications Centre of ISRO, which surveyed the terrain between 2003-05 and 2011-13.

The report is almost final but has to be officially released by the ministry, according to a senior environment ministry official. “The degradation happens because of population pressure on natural resources,” Jigmet Takpa, a senior official at the environment ministry said. “There are so many ministries involved in tackling the problem, like earth sciences, rural development, panchayati raj. We are only the focal point for coordination for achievement of United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification targets,” he said.

India has committed to land degradation neutrality, which is a Sustainable Development Goal, by 2030.

 **We have taken 2014-15 financial year into consideration and the economic impact (of land degradation) is 2.54% of GDP (during same period)**

JV SHARMA, director, Forestry & Biodiversity Division at TERI