

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:186

ANSWERED ON:19.11.2001

RELAXATION OF PROVISIONS UNDER FOREST (CONSERVATION) ACT, 1980

KUMUDINI PATNAIK

**Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:**

(a) whether there is any proposal to relax the provision under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 to permit construction of rehabilitation colonies for the oustees of Government irrigation or other projects, settlement of lands of adivasis who are occupying lands for their homestead for the last many decades and electrical connections, etc.;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government propose to delegate powers to the Central Chief Conservators posted in every State instead of concentrating it with the Ministry and enhancement of powers to extend assignment of larger extent of forest lands than provided for at present; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

**Answer**

MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R.BAALU)

(a) and (b) No, Sir. Under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, no forest land is normally diverted for any non site specific activity like construction of residential or dwelling houses including construction of rehabilitation colonies for the oustees of Government irrigation or other projects. However, there is a provision for regularising such pre-1980 encroachments in respect of which the State Governments had already taken a decision prior to the enactment of the Act to regularise the encroachments, based on certain eligibility criteria fixed at that point of time, but could not implement their decision either wholly or partially before the enactment of the Forest (Conservation) Act.

Regarding other developmental projects including electrical connections, etc., every proposal is considered on merit and in case the diversion is necessary and unavoidable, permission is accorded with suitable conditions having due regard to environmental security of the area.

(c) and (d) No, Sir. Diversion of forest land for non-forestry purposes needs to be done with utmost caution, keeping in view the impact of such activities on the ecology and environmental, which requires expert and dispassionate scrutiny.

There are six Regional Offices of the Ministry at Chandigarh (North Zone), Bhopal (West Zone), Bangalore (South Zone) Bhubaneswar (East Zone), Shillong (North-East Zone) and Lucknow (Central Zone) and not in every State.