

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2206
ANSWERED ON:08.08.2005
METHODS FOR ESTIMATION OF FOREST COVER
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Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) the State-wise and overall percentage of covered and open forests in the country and the accuracy of the methodology for estimating the forest cover;
- (b) factors taken into account under the existing methodology;
- (c) whether a large area of dense forest having trees of medicinal utility and possessing great biodiversity has been lost during the last few years;
- (d) if so, the details thereof alongwith the reasons therefor; and
- (e) the steps being taken by the Government to increase the area under dense forest in the country?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA)

- (a) The State-wise and overall percentage of dense and open forests in the country is given in Annexure. The accuracy assessment of methodology for estimating the forest cover was done during 2001 assessment and was found to be 95.9%.
- (b) The methodology for the assessment of forest cover is based on digital interpretation of satellite data. The factors taken into account under the existing methodology are (i) period of data, (ii) cloud coverage, and (iii) quality of data.
- (c) & (d) No Sir. As per the State of Forest Report, 2003 (SFR, 2003), a biennial report published by Forest Survey of India, the real decrease in dense forest cover is assessed to be 4,605 Sq. km. only, whereas the decrease to the extent of 21,640 Sq. km. is due to interpretational corrections mostly in 1 to 25 ha. patches outside the recorded forests such as crops like cotton, sugarcane etc. which give reflectance similar to that of forest cover. But, at the same time, the open forest cover has increased by 29,040 Sq. km. over the previous assessment of SFR, 2001. However, no survey on medicinal values of trees or biodiversity has been done in this context.
- (e) The measures undertaken to increase the area under dense forest in the country are:
 - (i) Legal measures like Indian Forest Act, 1927, Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, Forest Conservation Act, 1980 and Environmental Protection Act, 1986 and the rules, guidelines thereof.
 - (ii) Management measures like working of forests according to approved Working Plans, Forest Development Agencies and Joint Forest Management.
 - (iii) Financial measures like providing assistance to the States/Union Territories under centrally sponsored schemes and externally aided projects.
 - (iv) Afforestation programmes undertaken by the State Governments/ UT Administrations from their own resources as well as with financial assistance from Government of India.
 - (v) A network of protected areas has been established.

ANNEXURE - I

ANNEXURE IN RESPECT OF PART (a) OF LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2206 FOR 08/08/2005 REGARDING METHODS FOR ESTIMATION OF FOREST COVER

State/UT Dense Forest Open Forest
Cover Cover
(Percentage (Percentage
of Geographic of Geographic
area) area)

Andhra Pradesh	8.9	7.3
Arunachal Pradesh	63.9	17.3
Assam	16.6	18.9
Bihar	3.2	2.7
Chhattisgarh	28.8	12.6
Delhi	3.5	8.0
Goa	33.9	24.3
Gujarat	3.3	4.4
Haryana	1.2	2.2
Himachal Pradesh	16.1	9.7
Jammu & Kashmir	4.7	4.9
Jharkhand	14.7	13.8
Karnataka	11.7	7.3
Kerala	24.8	15.3
Madhya Pradesh	13.6	11.2
Maharashtra	9.2	6.0
Manipur	29.3	47.8
Meghalaya	29.0	46.1
Mizoram	35.5	51.9
Nagaland	34.4	47.7
Orissa	18.1	13.0
Punjab	1.5	1.7
Rajasthan	1.3	3.3
Sikkim	33.3	12.7
Tamil Nadu	9.2	8.2
Tripura	48.2	29.0
Uttar Pradesh	2.5	3.4
Uttaranchal	34.5	11.3
West Bengal	6.8	7.1
A & N Islands	76.2	8.2
Chandigarh	7.9	5.3
Dadra & N. Haveli	29.5	16.3
Daman & Diu	1.9	5.5
Lakshdweep	37.5	34.4
Pondicherry	3.5	4.8

Total 11.88 8.76