

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2543

ANSWERED ON:16.08.2004

IMPACT OF FOREST ACT, 1980 ON DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES

Lal Chandra Shri

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

- (a) whether certain developmental activities are coming to halt in tribal areas of the country due to implementation of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the action taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

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

(a) to (c) Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 is a regulatory Act, not prohibitory. The Act provides for judicious non-forestry use of forest land irrespective of the area being tribal or non-tribal. Since 1980, permission for diversion of forest land for non-forestry purposes under the Act has been granted in respect of more than 11,000 developmental projects. As far as the tribal areas are concerned, the Central Government is committed for the development of the tribal villages at par with revenue villages and, therefore, has issued Guidelines on 18th September 1990, for conversion of forest villages into revenue villages under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. So far, 384 forest villages involving forest area of about 34024 hectare have been converted into revenue villages in respect of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. About 85% population of these forest villages is tribal. Further, one time clearance under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 has been granted in respect of projects like underground drinking water supply, electricity, telephone lines etc. in tribal areas. In respect of big projects, Guidelines have been issued on 20-10-2003 under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, to set aside 5% project cost for development of indigenous skills of tribals, providing of basic amenities and services like education, health and sports facilities etc.