

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:538
ANSWERED ON:22.05.2006
ENCROACHMENT OF FOREST LAND
Gamang Shri Giridhar;Khaire Shri Chandrakant Bhaurao

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

- (a) whether there has been an alarming increase in the cases of encroachment on forest land in the country;
- (b) if so, the details of area/percentage of encroached forest land as on date, State-wise;
- (c) whether certain laws permit the usage of forest land for other purposes;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether the existing laws are required to be amended to check the encroachment;
- (f) if so, the details thereof and the steps initiated in this regard so far;
- (g) the total area cleared by the Government for non-forestry purposes during the last three years and the current year, State-wise; and
- (h) the steps proposed/taken to maintain the ratio of forest and ecological balance?

Answer

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

(a), (b), (c),(d),(e),(f),(g) and (h).

A statement is laid on the table of the House.

Statement referred to in reply to parts (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g) and (h) of the Lok Sabha Starred Question No.538 due for reply on 22.5.2006 regarding Encroachment of Forest Land.

(a)&(b) No report indicating alarming increase in the cases of encroachment on forest land in the country has been received. However, there are reported cases of encroachment in States. The details are given in Annexure A.

(c)&(d) Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 provides for diversion of forest land for non-forestry purposes, with the prior approval of competent authority.

(e)&(f) The provisions in the existing laws are sufficient to check the encroachments.

(g) State-wise statements showing details of areas cleared by the Ministry for non forestry purposes under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, during the last three years & the current year are placed at Annexure B & C, respectively.

(h) National Forest Policy-1988 stipulates that 33% of the geographical area should be under forest and tree cover. As per the State of Forest Report 2003, 23.68% of the geographical area of country has forest and tree cover. Government has taken number of initiatives to achieve this goal as indicated below:

1. Legal measures for protection of forest areas such as Indian Forest Act, 1927, Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 & Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986 and the rules, guidelines thereof.
2. Management measures like working of forests according to approved Working Plans, Working Schemes.
3. Financial measures like providing assistance to the States/Union Territories under Centrally Sponsored Schemes.
4. Other measures like creation of Protected Areas, Substitution of Wood etc.
5. Guidelines for rationalizing of felling and transit regulations for tree species grown on non-forest private lands to promote large scale afforestation in non-forest areas.

6. Involvement of local people in protection, conservation and management of forest areas through Joint Forest Management initiative.