

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:101
ANSWERED ON:24.07.2006
FOREST LAND TO ST
Athawale Shri Ramdas;Jogi Shri Ajit

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

- (a) whether the Planning Commission has recommended to change the forest land into revenue land and to vest the right of forest land and forest products in the tribals;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Ministry of Environment and Forests has taken any action on the said recommendation of the Planning Commission;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) if not, the reasons therefor;
- (f) whether the Government has assessed the approximate population of the tribals; and
- (g) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

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

(a) to (e) Planning Commission has not made any such specific recommendation to the Ministry of Environment and Forests. However, the Ministry has issued guidelines in 1990 for conversion of forest villages into revenue villages, for regularization of eligible encroachments and for settlement of disputed claims on forest land. The Scheduled Tribes (Recognition of Forest Rights) Bill, 2005 has also been introduced in the Lok Sabha by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs on 13.12.2005 for vesting the rights over forest land and forest produce in forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes. The Ministry of Environment and Forests has, so far, granted permission for conversion of 511 forest villages into revenue villages, which include 315 forest villages of Madhya Pradesh, 73 of Maharashtra, 112 of Gujarat and 11 forest villages of Uttaranchal. Pre -1980 eligible encroachments over 3.67 lakh hectares of forest land in 8 States/Union Territories have also been regularized. However, further regularization of encroachments and conversion of forest villages could not be done due to imposition of restriction by the Hon'ble Supreme Court.

(f) & (g) As per the official census report of 2001, the population of Scheduled Tribes in the country is 8.4 crores.