

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:128

ANSWERED ON:25.02.2009

DENUATION OF FORESTS

Sai Shri Nand Kumar;Tripathy Shri Braja Kishore

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

- (a) the details of actual forest cover against the targets fixed during the last three years and the current year, State-wise;
- (b) whether large-scale deforestation has taken place in the country;
- (c) if so, the details of the area where denudation of forests has taken place during the last three years, State-wise alongwith the reasons therefor; and
- (d) the steps taken by the Government to check further denudation of forest area in the country;
- (e) whether the Government proposes to launch a new initiative involving local-level institutions and private sector to expand forest cover in the country, especially in the rural areas; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof including the efforts made by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS(SHRI S.REGUPATHY)

(a) to (f) A Statement has been laid on the Table of the House.

Statement referred to in para (a) to (f) of Starred Question No. 128 by Shri Nand Kumar Sai and Shri Braja Kishore Tripathy to be answered on 25.02.2009.

(a) The national goal is to have a minimum of one-third of the total land area of the country under forest or tree cover with hills and mountainous regions maintaining two-third of the area under such cover. The data on forest cover for the last three years is not yet available. The assessment of forest cover is made on biennial basis by the Forest Survey of India, Dehradun. The results of the last assessment have been published in the State of Forest Report, 2005. As per this report, the State-wise details of forest cover are given at Annexure-I.

(b)&(c) No Sir, there are no such reports of any large scale deforestation in the country during the last three years. However, as per the assessments made in the year 2001, 2003 and 2005, the forest cover has more or less stabilized in the country. The forest cover as per these assessments is given below:

Assessment Year	2001	2003	2005
Forest Cover (in km ²)	653,898	677,816	677,088

As can be seen the forest cover increased by 23,919 km² between 2001 and 2003 assessments, and marginally decreased by 728 km² between 2003 and 2005 assessments. The States where reduction in the forest cover has been reported along with the reasons thereof are given at Annexure-II.

(d) The Ministry provides financial assistance to the States and UT Governments under the Integrated Forest Protection Scheme for strengthening their forest protection machinery by way of improving infrastructure, mobility, communication, and for prevention and control of forest fire. In addition, under the National Afforestation Programme, treatment of degraded forest area is undertaken by assisting natural regeneration and taking up plantation activities with the involvement of Joint Forest Management Committees.

(e)&(f) The Ministry has issued guidelines for participation of private sector through involvement of NGOs and Forest Departments in afforestation and rehabilitation of degraded forests. Further, with a view to expanding forest cover in the country, the Ministry has mooted a new scheme for afforestation on non-forest lands with involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions.