

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:575

ANSWERED ON:05.05.2010

FOREST FIRE

Ahir Shri Hansraj Gangaram;Shankar Alias Kushal Tiwari Shri Bhisma

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

- (a) whether the forest fire destroys forest wealth including wildlife in various parts of the country including Uttarakhand;
- (b) if so, the details of loss incurred as a result thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has conducted any study to assess the extent of loss caused due to forest fire during each of the last three years and the current year, State-wise and year-wise;
- (d) whether the Government has formulated any action plan to effectively control the forest fire during the summer months;
- (e) if so, the details thereof; and
- (f) the success achieved by the Government in controlling forest fire in various parts of the country?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH)

(a) to (f) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement referred to in reply to parts (a) to (f) of the Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 575 due for reply on 5.5.2010 regarding Forest Fire.

(a) Though the forest-fires occur in various parts of the country including Uttarakhand, such fires are 'surface-fires' only and do not cause extensive damage to the trees and wildlife in the forests.

(b) As reported by various State/Union Territory Governments about 80,580 ha. of the forest area was affected by forest-fires during the year 2009-10. Loss in terms of value of the ground flora and fauna of the affected forests is difficult to quantify, however, loss of young plantations in certain States is reported to be of around Rs 1,51,20,000/- during the year 2008-09 and Rs. 18,02,373/- during 2009-10.

(c) The Union Government has not conducted a study to assess the extent of loss caused due to forest-fires State-wise for the last three years and the current year.

(d)&(e) The State Governments prepare their Action Plans for effective prevention and control of forest-fires every year. Fire-sensitive areas are identified where special measures are taken before the onset of fire season. These include clearing and maintenance of fire-lines, controlled burning of hazardous material, launch of awareness campaigns and mobilization of the local people and members of the Joint Forest Management Committees. During the fire season high alertness is maintained by setting up of control rooms, pooling of vehicles and water tanks for rapid response, engagement of fire-watchers and setting up special patrolling squads and watch towers. In addition to traditional means of information flow and response actions, use of advanced technology such as satellite based fire-detection and auto-transmission of information to forest field staff is also used. Post-fire surveys and analysis helps in improving fire-prevention and control strategy for the coming seasons.

The Central Government under its Centrally Sponsored Scheme 'Intensification of Forest Management' provides financial assistance to the State Forest Departments for their 'Forest Fire Control and Management Action Plans'.

In addition, sensitisation of the State Forest Departments about the latest advancements in the field forest-fires prevention and control is done periodically by way of organizing seminar and workshops. One such National Workshop on Forest Fire was conducted during November 2007 at New Delhi in which various advancements in technology for quick detection of forest-fires, immediate dissemination of information, improve methods of forest-fire control, were highlighted and shared with the participants from all over the country.

(f) As a result of initiatives mentioned above, there has been significant improvement in the effectiveness of forest fire prevention and control. Quick flow of information and fast mobilization of teams for control have helped in reduction of loss due to forest fire incidents.