

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:531

ANSWERED ON:28.07.2010

DEVELOPMENTAL WORK IN TRIBAL AREAS

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

- (a) whether construction of roads, irrigation projects and other development work in tribal and backward areas are not being carried out due to Forest Conservation Act, 1980;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to give relaxation under Forest Conservation Act in these areas;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) if not, the reasons therefor and the manner in which the works will be carried out in these areas?

**Answer**

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

(a)&(b) The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 is an Act which is regulatory in nature and not prohibitory. It envisages prior approval of the Central Government for use of forest lands for non- forest purposes irrespective of whether forests are found in tribal or backward areas. So far, about 18,890 proposals involving 5,19,877 ha of forest land and pertaining to irrigation, road, dispensary/hospitals, drinking water, hydel, Thermal, railways, schools, (excluding mining, encroachments), etc., have been accorded approval during the period from 25.10.1980 to 30.06.2010.

(c)to(e) The Ministry of Environment & Forests had given general approval under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for diversion of forest land for certain Welfare projects such as schools, dispensaries / hospitals, electric / telecommunication lines, drinking water, water / rain water harvesting structures, minor irrigation canals, non-conventional sources of energy, skill up-gradation / vocational training centre, power sub-stations, communication posts, and police establishments in sensitive areas (identified by the Ministry of Home Affairs) having forest area not exceeding one hectare in each case. In addition, to facilitate the expeditious processing of proposals under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, the Central Government has delegated powers to the six regional offices of the Ministry located at Chandigarh, Lucknow, Bhubaneswar, Shillong, Bhopal, and Bangalore to process the proposals involving forest land up to 40 ha.