

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:649
ANSWERED ON:28.07.2010
MELTING OF GLACIERS
Singh Shri Radha Mohan

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

- (a) whether a scientific study has revealed that 16% of Himalayan Glacier in Gouri Ganga region and 13% in Alakhnanda region in Uttarakhand have receded;
- (b) if so, the main findings of the said study and the reaction of the Government thereto;
- (c) whether the Government has assessed the impact of receding Glaciers on the Himalayan inhabitants and Himalayan ecology;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the action plan formulated/being formulated to save the Glaciers of the Himalayan region?

Answer

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

(a) to (e) Geological Survey of India (GSI) has studied Milam, Poting, Shankalpa Glaciers in Gauri Ganga Basin and Dunagiri, Chaurabari, Bhagirathi Kharak Glaciers in Alakananda basin. All these Glaciers are showing consistent but variable recession. The rate of recession for these Glaciers is Milam Glacier 16.97 meters/year; Poting Glacier 05.1 meters/year; Shankalpa Glacier 06.8 meters/year; Dunagiri Glacier 03.0 meters/year; Chaurabari Glacier 11.0 meters/year; Bhagirathi Karak Glacier 16.7 meters/year. Further, the study conducted by the Space Application Centre (SAC) revealed that out of 32 glaciers of Goriganga valley 20 glaciers (66%) have receded between 1990 and 2005 and showing reduction in their area extent by 3.99%.

As per the GSI, recession of Glaciers is a natural cyclic process and the majority of the Himalayan Glaciers are passing through a phase of recession. The likely impact includes change in the river hydrology, increased debris production and siltation of river in downstream regions.

The National Action Plan on Climate Change which was launched in June 2008, includes a National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Eco-system (NMSHE) amongst its 8 national missions. A new research centre on Himalayan Glaciology has been established at Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology, Dehradun. The mandate of the NMHSE and the Centre includes the issues and concerns of Himalayan glaciers.

The Government has developed Guidelines and best practices for Sustaining Himalayan Eco-system (G-SHE), which has been shared with all State Governments in the Himalayan Region.