

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2336  
ANSWERED ON:24.11.2010  
EXPLOITATION OF COAL IN DEGRADED FORESTS  
Pakkirappa Shri S.

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

- (a) whether the Government has decided to allow coal exploitation in degraded forest lands of the country;
- (b) if so, whether the Government has analyzed the impact of deforestation of forest areas, since 60 per cent of the total forest lands are degraded forests; and
- (c) if so, the details of actions proposed by the Government to protect forests in the country, in case of coal exploitation in degraded forest land?

**Answer**

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

- (a) Recently the Ministry of Environment & Forests (MoEF) jointly with the Ministry of Coal classified various coal blocks of 9 coalfields as category 'A' (No-Go areas) and Category 'B' (Go areas) by overlaying the forest cover map on the coal blocks boundaries with the aim that the classification of forest lands into 'go' and 'no-go' areas will create awareness and help the State Governments to prepare projects for the forest areas falling in category 'B' (go areas) as it would enable expeditious environment and forest clearances to projects. However, it may be noted that this categorization does not pre-judge the decision to be taken by the MoEF on the basis of the advice rendered by the Forest Advisory Committee (FAC), a statutory body of independent experts and MoEF officials set up under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.
- (b) So far, no such study has been conducted for analysis of the impact of deforestation of forest areas on environment, ecology and inhabitants as a result of mining activities.
- (c) The mining activities including coal in forest area is permitted stipulating certain general mitigative measures such as compensatory afforestation, phased reclamation of mined area, safety zone with afforestation and fencing and other site specific measures to reduce the adverse impact of mining on environment, ecology and inhabitants.