

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:564  
ANSWERED ON:08.07.2009  
UTILISATION OF FOREST LAND  
Sampath Shri Anirudhan

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

- (a) whether vast areas of the land under forest remain barren and unutilised in various States;
- (b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise; and
- (c) the measures taken for proper utilisation or the alternate re-plantation of such lands?

**Answer**

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

(a) & (b) No assessment of the lands under category of forests, which remain barren and unutilised in various states, has been carried out. However, the difference between the Recorded Forest Area of the country which is 769,626 km<sup>2</sup> and Forest Cover in the country which is 677,088 km<sup>2</sup>, as assessed by Forest Survey of India in its State of Forest Report, 2005 can be interpreted as barren or underutilized whose extent comes to 92,538 km<sup>2</sup>. However, this figure could be more since the forest cover assessments by Forest Survey of India capture tree cover in all the lands whether recorded as forest or non-forest. At the same time the barren or unutilised forest area will include lands under permanent snow/glaciers, rocks and deserts where trees cannot grow due to harsh climate and soil conditions. The State wise forest cover and recorded forest area are given in Annexure.

(c) The National Afforestation & Eco-development Board under this Ministry is implementing National Afforestation Programme Scheme through two-tier decentralized mechanism of Forest Development Agencies at forest division level and Joint Forest Management Committees at village level for regeneration of degraded forests and adjoining lands. 795 Forest Development Agency projects have been approved upto 31st March, 2009, at a total project cost of Rs.2675.26 crore to treat an area of 1.58 million ha. through 34717 Joint Forest Management Committees.