

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:244

ANSWERED ON:14.03.2011

ENCROACHMENTS OF FOREST AREAS

Bwiswmuthiary Shri Sansuma Khunggur;Premajibhai Dr. Solanki Kiritbhai

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

- (a) the total area of forest land encroached upon in the country, State-wise;
- (b) whether the Union Government has urged the State Governments to remove all types of encroachments from forest areas;
- (c) If so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the status of action taken by the State Governments in this regard, State-wise?

**Answer**

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

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

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (d) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 244 BY DR. KIRIT PREMJBHAI SOLANKI AND SHRI SANSUMA KHUNGGUR BWISWMUTHIARY REGARDING "ENCROACHMENTS OF FOREST AREAS" DUE FOR REPLY ON 14.03.2011.

(a) As per information collected from the 16 States/Union territories, about 8.34 lakhs hectare of forestland has been encroached upon by the people living in and around such forest lands. However, about 3.58 lakhs hectare of Forest land has been regularized by granting title deeds in favour of tribals and other traditional forest dwellers under the provision of the Scheduled tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act 2006. The State –wise details are given in annexure.

(b) & (c) The protection of forest areas is primarily the responsibility of the concerned State /Union Territory Governments under the relevant provisions of various Central/State Acts, Rules, Regulation etc. However, this Ministry provides financial assistance to the State Forest Departments under a Centrally Sponsored Scheme 'Intensification of Forest Management' to strengthen their forest protection machinery by way of infrastructure development, use of modern technology, improved mobility by way of deployment of new field vehicles improved communication and providing arms ammunition to the front-line forestry force. This infrastructural support provided to all State/UT Governments help them in creation of boundary pillars, demarcation of forest areas and boundary clearances which are keys in inhibiting forest encroachment. Apart from this improved mobility and better communication equip the forest officials/ staff in checking the forest encroachment more effectively.

On the issue of settlement of claims over forest lands and eviction of ineligible encroachers from forest lands, the State/ UT Governments, as an interim measures, have been requested to not resort to eviction of tribal people and forest dwellers other than ineligible encroachers. Apart from this the provision of section of 4(5) of Traditional Forest Dwellers (recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 says " save as otherwise provided, no member of a Forest Dwelling Scheduled Tribe or Other Traditional Forest Dwellers shall be evicted or removed from forests land under his occupation till the recognition and verification procedure is complete".

(d) There are various efforts made by the State/UT Governments right from the policy of regularization of encroachments to physical eviction of encroachments, which varies from the State to State. These include demarcation of forest boundaries, erection of boundary pillars, delegation of powers of Collectors to Divisional Forest officers (DFOs) under Public Premises and Land Recovery Act, constitution of special eviction squads with the help of Police and Revenue departments, and expediting the cases of forest encroachments under trials in various Courts, etc.