

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3418
ANSWERED ON:29.07.2009
REGENERATION OF DEGRADED FOREST AREA
Sethi Shri Arjun Charan

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

- (a) whether around 55 per cent of the total forest area in the country is degraded and is not suitable for plantation;
- (b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;
- (c) the area of the degraded forests which have been regenerated during the last three years and the current year; and
- (d) the steps taken to plant and protect the forest areas of the country?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH)

(a) & (b): Separate assessment of degraded forest area and area not suitable for plantation has not been undertaken by the Ministry of Environment and Forests. As per study of Forest Survey of India (FSI), about 1,83,135 sq. km. area in the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Sikkim and Uttarakhand have been found above 4000 meter altitude where climatic and edaphic conditions limit tree growth and is not available for tree planting.

(c): The Ministry of Environment and Forests is implementing National Afforestation Programme (NAP) Scheme for regeneration of degraded forests and adjoining areas in the country through a two-tier decentralized mechanism of Forest Development Agency (FDA) at forest division level and Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMCs) at village level. The approved project area for treatment during last three years and current year (as on 22.07.2009) are 6,66,496 ha. and 26,634 ha. respectively.

(d): In addition to part(c), the following steps have been taken for Afforestation/Tree Planting and Protection:

(i) Two new Eco- Task Force (ETF) Battalions have been operationalised by the Ministry for eco-restoration of degraded areas in Assam, in addition to supporting the existing four ETF battalions in the country.

(ii) A new scheme for afforestation involving Panchayati Raj Institution, Gram/ Panchayat Van Yojana has been mooted by the Ministry.

(iii) Tree planting is a permissible activity under a number of schemes of other Ministries of Government of India, notably Ministry of Rural Development and Ministry of Agriculture.

(iv) To boost up afforestation and related activities, the convergence guidelines of National Rural Employment Guarantee Act and NAP have been issued jointly by Ministry of Environment & Forests and Ministry of Rural Development.

(v) Under the National Action Plan on Climate Change announced by the Government, a National Mission for a 'Green India' has been mooted as one of the eight missions to inter alia help counter the effects of climate change through forestation programmes.

(vi) A new state plan scheme, namely, Additional Central Assistance for Accelerated Programme of Restoration and Regeneration of Forest Cover, has been introduced in the Union Budget of 2009-10 with an allocation of Rs.500.00 crores.

(vii) Protection and management of forest areas is the primary responsibility of State/UT Governments. Under the Centrally Sponsored Integrated Forest Protection Scheme (now renamed as Intensification of Forest Management Scheme), financial assistance is made available for forest fire control and management, strengthening of infrastructure, preparation of working plans and other protection related measures.

(viii) In addition, State/UTs Governments also take up Afforestation/Tree Planting and protection measures under the respective schemes of the State/UT Plan etc.