

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:187

ANSWERED ON:01.08.2011

ENCROACHMENT ON FOREST LAND

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

- (a) whether a large portion of forest land has been encroached upon in the Country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof State-Wise;
- (c) whether the Government has made any plan to free such land from encroachments;
- (d) if so, the details thereof alongwith the steps taken/being taken by the Government in this regard; and
- (e) the details of the matters pending in various court of Law pertaining to the encroachment on forest land in the Country?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATHI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN)

(a) & (b) As per information received from the 21 States/Union territories, about 10.70 lakhs hectare of forestland has been encroached upon by the people living in and around such forest lands. The State-wise details are given in annexure.

(c) & (d) 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 equipment are provided to the forest officials/ staff for 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".

Various State/UT Governments are making efforts 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.

(e) No such records regarding cases pending in courts pertaining to encroachment on forest land in the country are available in the Ministry.