

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:68
ANSWERED ON:08.07.2009
MELTING OF HIMALAYAN GLACIERS
Kalmadi Shri Suresh;Thakor Shri Jagdish

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

- (a) whether the Himalayan glaciers including Gangotri glacier are melting and receding at a fast pace;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor including its likely impact on environment and human beings;
- (c) whether the National Mission of Sustaining the Himalayan Eco-system has undertaken any study in this regard; and
- (d) if so, the main observations and recommendations made by the Mission and the action taken by the Government thereon?

Answer

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

(a) & (b) The studies conducted by the Geological Survey of India indicate that the glaciers of Himalaya including Gangotri glacier are receding at varying rates in different regions. As per their record, Gangotri glacier has receded at the rate of 18.80 metres per year during the period 1935-1996-The studies taken up by the Department of Science & Technology reveal that Gangotri glacier is receding at the rate of 17.15 metre/year during the period 1971-2004. Another study estimated a retreat of 12.10 metre during the year 2004-05.

As per the Geological Survey of India, recession of glaciers is a natural cyclic process and the majority of Himalayan glaciers are passing through a phase of recession. The likely impacts include changes in the river hydrology, increased debris production and siltation of rivers in downstream regions.

- (c) The National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Eco - system is yet to be finalised.
- (d) Does not arise in view of the reply to part (c) above.