

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4116

ANSWERED ON:30.04.2012

CONSERVATION OF FORESTS

Acharia Shri Basudeb;Angadi Shri Suresh Chanabasappa;Deka Shri Ramen;Maharaj Shri Satpal;Pandurang Shri Munde Gopinathrao;Sampath Shri Anirudhan;Shivanagouda Shri Shivaramagouda;Tandon Annu

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

- (a) whether the Government has taken note of "State of Forest Report, 2011" released recently;
- (b) if so, the salient features of the Report and the follow-up action taken thereon;
- (c) the present status of the forest cover in the country, State-wise;
- (d) whether the national forest cover is on the decline in several States in the country;
- (e) if so, the corrective action taken to arrest decline in forest cover; and
- (f) the steps taken / being taken by the Government to conserve the forest cover and further afforestation in the country?

**Answer**

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

(a)&(b) Yes, Sir. The latest India State of Forest Report, 2011 (ISFR, 2011) was released by the Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests on 7th February, 2012. The salient features of above report are as follows:- Forest and tree cover of the country is 78.29 million hectare, which is 23.81% of the geographical area. This includes

2.76% of tree cover.

The forest and tree cover would work out to 25.22% after exclusion of 183135 km<sup>2</sup> above the altitude 4000 m from the total geographical area of the country as these areas do not support tree growth.

In the hill and tribal districts of the country, a decrease in forest cover of 548 km<sup>2</sup> and 679 km<sup>2</sup> respectively has been reported as compared to the previous assessment.

The north eastern States of the India account for one-fourth of the country's forest cover. There is a net decline of 549 km<sup>2</sup> in forest cover as compared to the previous assessment.

Mangrove cover has increased by 23.34 km<sup>2</sup> during the same period.

The total growing stock of India's forest and tree outside forests is estimated as 6047.15 million cum which comprises 4498.73 million cum inside the forests and 1548.42 million cum outside the forests.

The total bamboo bearing area in the country is estimated to be 13.96 million hectare.

The total carbon stock in the country's forests is estimated to the 6663 million tones.

(c) The details of forest cover in the country, State-wise as per India State of Forest Report, 2011 is given in Annexure I.

(d) Yes, Sir. As per India State of Forest Report 2011, 13 States / UTs have shown decrease in forest cover to the extent of 867 km<sup>2</sup> in the States such as Andhra Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram etc. 15 States have registered aggregate increase of 500 km<sup>2</sup> in their forest cover with Punjab leading with increase of 100 km<sup>2</sup>. Effectively there is net decline of forest cover to the tune of only 367 km<sup>2</sup>. The names of States where there is decline in forest cover along with the reasons for decline in forest cover is given in Annexure II.

(e)&(f) The following initiatives have been taken by the Government to arrest decline and conserve the forest cover and further afforestation in the country:

(i) The Ministry of Environment and Forests is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme of National Afforestation Programme (NAP) for regeneration of degraded forests and adjoining areas in the country. The Scheme is implemented through a decentralized mechanism of State Forest Development Agency (SFDA) at State level, Forest Development Agency (FDA) at Forest Division level and Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMCs) at Village levels. As on 31-03.2012, 800 FDA projects have been approved in 28 States in the country to treat an area of 18.86 lakh hectares since inception of the Scheme in 2002.

(ii) The Ministry release funds under the Intensification of Forest Management Scheme (IIFMS), for strengthening of forest protection such as infrastructure, fire protection, demarcation of forest boundaries, construction of facilities for frontline staff and communication which has contributed towards increase in the forest cover.

(iii) Under the National Action Plan on Climate Change announced by the Central Government, a National Mission for a 'Green India'

has been mooted in which quality to improve the degraded forests along with afforestation including agro-forestry are major objectives.

(iv) Under the award of 13th Finance Commission, a grant of Rs.5000 crores has been allocated as "Forest Grants" to the states on the basis of their forest cover in the State in relation to the national average for a period of five years commencing from 2010-11. It has been further weighted by the quality of the forests in each state as measured by density.

(v) Afforestation activities are undertaken under various External Aided Projects in 12 States.