GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:48
ANSWERED ON:13.08.2012
DENSITY OF FORESTS
Ramasubbu Shri S.;Singh Shri Rakesh

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

(a) whether the Government has been conducting any regular study to assess the total forest cover and density in the country in each State;

(b) if so, the details of the techniques used for the purpose and the findings thereof during the last three years and the current year;

(c) whether the Government has any proposal to increase the forest cover as well as density and assess the trend through modern techniques like satellite mapping on regular basis; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

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

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

Statement referred to in reply to part (a) to (d) of LokSabha Starred Question No. 48 by ShriRakesh Singh: Shri S.S. Ramasubbu due for reply on 13.08.2012

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Forest Survey of India, Dehradun has been mapping and assessing the country's forest cover biennially using remote sensing technology. The assessment of forest cover of the entire country each carried out at an interval of two years by interpretation of satellite data. The process involves various steps, viz. image enhancement, registration, interpretation, ground truthing, validation by the States Forest Departments. The assessment in India State of Forest Report, 2011 is based on interpretation of IRS Resources-1 P6 LISS-III data pertaining to the period October, 2008- February, 2009. State wise forest cover as per India State of Forests Report, 2011 and 2009 are given in Annexure-I and Annexure-II respectively

(c)& (d) The Forest Survey of India was mandated to carry out forest cover mapping of the country in the year 1986 using modern techniques including interpretation of satellite imageries. Over the years there has been significant technological improvement in the mapping process with change in resolution and scale of mapping from 80 meter and 1:1 million in 1987 to 23.5 meter and 1:50,000 respectively as on date.

The following initiatives have been taken by the Government to expand forest cover 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 to the states under the Intensification of Forest Management Scheme (IFMS), for strengthening of forest protection such as infrastructure, fire protection, demarcation of forest boundaries, construction of facilities for frontline staff and communication which also contributed towards increase in the forest cover.

(iii) Under the National Action Plan on Climate Change, a National Mission for a 'Green India' has been mooted with major objectives to increase forests/ tree cover on 5 million ha.of forest/non-forest lands and also to improve the quality of the forest cover on another 5 million ha.

(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. It has been further weighted by the quality of the forests in each state as measured by density.

(v) Afforestation activities are also undertaken under various External Aided Projects in Haryana, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Orissa,

Himachal Pradesh, Tripura, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Sikkim and Rajasthan.