

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2644
ANSWERED ON:10.12.2012
DESTRUCTION OF FORESTS
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Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the vast forest areas in Himalayan Region have been destroyed during the last two years;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the States which have suffered maximum loss of forest areas as per the report prepared by the Forest Survey of India, Dehradun with the help of remote sensing technology; and
- (d) the steps taken/being taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

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

(a) & (b) No, Sir. As per the physiographic zones given in India State of Forest Report-2011, the Himalayan region can be divided broadly into Western and Eastern Himalayas.

Western Himalayas:- These comprise of all districts of Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir (all districts), Uttarakhand (11 out of 13 districts), Punjab (3 out of 17 districts)

Eastern Himalayas:-Arunachal Pradesh (10 out of 12 districts), Sikkim (all 4 districts) and West Bengal (1 out of 17 districts)

Of these Himalayan States only Arunachal Pradesh has reported a decline of 74 Square km. (as per the India State of Forest Report-2011) in forest cover as compared to the last assessment i.e. India State of Forest Report-2009.

(c) The details of States showing a decline in forest cover is given in the Annexure-I.

(d) 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 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 announced by the Central Government, 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 undertaken under various External Aided Projects in Haryana, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Orissa, Himachal Pradesh, Tripura, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Sikkim and Rajasthan.