

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:329

ANSWERED ON:17.12.2012

DIVERSION OF FORESTS

Pradhan Shri Nityananda;Yadav Shri Dharmendra

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

- (a) whether the Government has decided not to allow diversion of degraded forests land for commercial purposes in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the committee on allocation of natural resources has made certain recommendations including suggestions to seek permission of the Supreme Court to evolve guidelines for de-reservation of such forest land and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether the Government has accepted all the recommendations of the said Committee and if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) if not, the reasons therefor and the time by which all the recommendations are likely to be accepted and implemented by the Government?

**Answer**

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

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

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (e) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 329 BY SHRI DHARMENDRA YADAV AND SHRI NITYANANDA PRADHAN REGARDING 'DIVERSION OF FORESTS' DUE FOR REPLY ON 17.12.2012.

(a) to (b) Use of forest land for commercial and other non-forest purposes requires prior approval of Central Government under Section-2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.

(c) The Committee on Allocation of Natural Resources (CANR) made the following recommendations on Forests:

Reco. No.      Recommendation

49      The Committee recommends evolving a scheme for reform linked capacity building of state forest departments with a view to improving accessibility of information, improving the predictability and reducing the time taken for clearances.

50      The Committee suggests establishing an ab-initio classification of forest based on ecological value that would be open for discussion by various stakeholders with a view to improving the predictability of clearances for diversion of forest land. In this exercise, the Committee is aware that some parts of forest may become inviolate. Even this would be helpful in improving the predictability of clearances.

51      In the Committee's view, it is essential to ensure that all Form A/B submissions should be made available on the website of the Ministry of Environment and Forests and the respective state forest departments so that stakeholder comments can be received early in the process.

52 The Committee also suggests that all Minutes of the meetings of the SAGs should be made available on the website of the Ministry of Environment and Forests and the respective state forest departments to provide a sounder and more public basis for understanding and communicating the allocation decision.

53 The Committee recommends seeking the permission of the Supreme Court to evolve guidelines for de-reservation of such land urgently classified as forest, which is not and conceivably cannot be reclaimed as forest.

54 The Committee advises project-wise amounts paid under various mandates like NPV, compensatory afforestation, catchment area treatment, biodiversity conservation, etc., and evolve guidelines like NPV for other payments.

55 The Committee recommends suitably re-adjusting payments under NPV and above schemes. Forest land has value over and above the value of land itself. This re-adjustment should achieve comparability with guidelines of land valuation for other purposes, e.g. acquisition

(d) to (e) Recommendations Nos. 49, 50, 51, 52 and 55 have been accepted. The recommendation No. 54 has been accepted in the following amended formulation:

"The Committee advises project-wise amounts paid under various mandates like NPV, compensatory afforestation, catchment area treatment, biodiversity conservation, etc. to be published and to evolve guidelines like NPV for other payments."

The Ministry of Environment and Forests is taking appropriate measures to implement the accepted recommendations.

However, keeping in view that many areas which look barren are important/unique wildlife habitats and also keeping in view that with adequate and appropriate efforts and funds, any degraded area can be reclaimed to support vegetation, the recommendation No. 53 has not been accepted.