

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3878
ANSWERED ON:17.12.2012
RECEDING OF GLACIERS
Lal Shri Kirodi

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

- (a) whether as per the report of the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change the Himalayan Glaciers are melting more rapidly in comparison to glaciers in any other part of the world and will become completely extinct by the year 2035;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the reaction of the Government thereto;
- (d) whether the Government has conducted any independent scientific study in regard to pace of melting of Himalayan glaciers and its immediate effect on the ecosystem;
- (e) if so, the outcome thereof; and
- (f) the remedial measures taken by the Government for resolving this problem?

Answer

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

(a) and (b) The Fourth Assessment Report of the Inter Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has stated that the Himalayan Glaciers are receding faster than in any part of the world and has projected the likelihood of their disappearance by 2035. However, IPCC has clarified subsequently that the conclusion contained in the Fourth Assessment Report was based on poorly substantiated estimates of recession. IPCC has further stated that clear and well established standards of evidence, required by the IPCC procedures were not applied properly in drafting the paragraph on the subject in question.

(c) to (e) Government of India has encouraged and supported discussions based on scientific findings on the relevant issues. The Ministry of Environment and Forests has conducted a scientific study and published a discussion paper titled "Himalayan Glaciers: A state-of-Art Review of Glacial Studies, Glacial Retreat and Climate Change" authored by Shri V.K. Raina, Ex. Deputy Director General, Geological Survey of India, which revealed that the recession of glaciers is a part of the natural cyclic process of changes in size and other attributes of the glaciers. These changes could be attributed to various reasons including global warming. No studies have been conducted on immediate impact of recession of glaciers on the ecosystem.

(f) The National Action Plan on Climate Change implemented by the Government includes the National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Eco-system amongst its eight national missions. This Mission seeks to understand whether and the extent to which the Himalayan glaciers are in recession and how the problem including the effects on ecosystem can be addressed. A research centre on Himalayan Glaciology has been established at Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology, Dehradun. Government has also prepared guidelines and best practices for sustaining Himalayan eco-system and has shared it with all State Governments in the Himalayan region.