

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
TRIBAL AFFAIRS  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3667

ANSWERED ON:14.12.2012

FOREST DWELLING TRIBES

Ajay Kumar SHRI ;Kora Shri Madhu ;Lal Shri Kirodi ;Ram Shri Purnmasi

**Will the Minister of TRIBAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:**

- (a) the number of forest dwellers in the country, State/VT-wise including Bihar and Jharkhand;
- (b) whether the Government has any programme for the welfare and protection of rights of these forest dwellers;
- (c) if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether the Government has taken note of the exploitation of the rights of these tribals across the country;
- (e) if so, the details thereof along with the remedial measures taken by the Government to protect their rights including on natural resources and to provide insurance facilities to them; and
- (f) the funds sanctioned, released and utilised by the State Governments under various welfare themes for the forest dwellers during each of the last three years and the current year?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS (SMT. RANEE NARAH)

(a): Demographic details in respect of the people residing in the forest areas in the country are maintained by the respective State Governments / Union Territory Administrations.

(b) to (c): The schemes/ programmes implemented by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs are meant for the socio-economic development of all the Scheduled Tribes in the country, including those living in the forest areas. This Ministry is implementing a programme for development of forest villages since 2005-06 for integrated development of forest villages with a view to raise the Human Development Index (HDI) of the inhabitants of the Forest Villages and for provision of basic facilities and services in 2,474 forest villages/ habitations spread over 12 States. Under the programme, funds are released out of Special Central Assistance to Tribal Sub-Plan for infrastructure work relating to basic services and facilities viz. approach roads, healthcare, primary education, minor irrigation, rainwater harvesting, drinking water, sanitation, community halls, etc. for development of Forest Villages.

(d) to (e) : The Union Government took note of the fact that the forest dwellers had been precluded from asserting their genuine claims to forest resources which traditionally belonged to them. The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 was enacted to recognize and vest the forest rights and occupation in forest land in forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other Traditional Forest Dwellers who have been residing in such forests for generations but whose rights could not be recorded. This Act not only recognizes the right to hold and live in the forest land under the individual or common occupation for habitation or for self-cultivation for livelihood but also grants several other rights to ensure their control over forest resources which inter alia include right of ownership, access to collect, use, and dispose of minor forest produce; community rights such as nistar; habitat rights for primitive tribal groups and pre-agricultural communities; right to protect, regenerate or conserve or manage any community forest resource which they have been traditionally protecting and conserving for sustainable use.

Appropriate changes in the Rules have been brought about on 06.09.2012 and guidelines have been issued on 12.07.2012 to ease out the problems and hindrances encountered in the implementation of the Act, and to provide unencumbered access to rights already conferred by the Act.

(f): The funds allocated to the State Governments and utilization reported by them during the last three years and the current year under the development of forest villages programme is at Annexure.