

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3396

ANSWERED ON:18.03.2013

PLANTATION PROJECTS

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

- (a) whether the Government had involved private sector in plantation activities to achieve 33 percent forest cover by 2012;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) if not, the percentage of target achieved by the end of 2012 and the reasons for not achieving the target?

Answer

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

(a) to (c) The National Forest Policy, 1988 aims to have a minimum of one-third of the total land area of the country under forest or tree cover. As per the India State of Forest Report 2011, the total forest and tree cover in the country is 78.29 million ha. which is 23.81% of the total geographical area of the country. To achieve the goal of 33% of geographical area of the country under forest or tree cover, afforestation activity is taken up under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes such as National Afforestation Programme (NAP), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP), 13th Finance Commission under different State Plan/ Non-Plan schemes including Externally- Aided Projects etc. National Afforestation Programme (NAP) of the Ministry of Environment & Forests is 100% Centrally Sponsored Scheme for afforestation and tree plantation and eco-restoration of degraded forest and adjoining areas in the country through people's participation.

There is no involvement of private sector in the implementation of NAP. However, the Central Government has also issued guidelines to encourage participation of Industrial houses, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and Forest Departments in order to rehabilitate /reforest the degraded forests in the country. The guidelines inter-alia stipulate that there must be a tri-partite agreement between the industrial house, an acceptable NGO of repute and the local Forest Department. The agreement must have the commitment of the industrial house to bear the cost of the scheme and of the NGO to faithfully implement the scheme under the supervision and direction of the Forest Department. Further, under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, there is a mandatory provision of Compensatory Afforestation in lieu of diversion of forest land against any developmental project. The Private industries provide funds to the Government for carrying out compensatory afforestation. Some of the major challenges in achieving this target are limited availability of land for afforestation, inadequate financial resources, heavy biotic pressure etc.