

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:6329
ANSWERED ON:06.05.2013
AMENDMENT IN INDIAN FOREST ACT
Vishwanath Shri Adagur H

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

- (a) whether the Government has planned to revisit the Indian Forest Act, 1927, to bring in more benign legal regime for settlements between local tribal communities and Government;
- (b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the amendments likely to be proposed and the extent to which proposed amendments help in reducing encroachment degradation etc. in the country;
- (c) whether the Government has constituted any Committee for this purpose; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the recommendations made by the Committee, if any?

Answer

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

(a) To (d) A Drafting Committee was constituted in 1989 to suggest amendments to Indian Forest Act, 1927. The proposed amendments and comments/ suggestions received thereafter were examined and reviewed through various Committees. Based on the recommendations, the draft amendments to the Indian Forest Act, 1927 were approved in the Ministry by the then Minister for Environment & Forests. Thereafter a Draft Note for Cabinet was moved by the Ministry of Environment & Forests to obtain the comments and views of various stakeholders. In the meantime the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forests Rights) Act, 2006 was enacted and therefore, an Examination Committee for re-examining the proposed amendments to Indian Forest Act, 1927 with respect to the provisions of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers

(Recognition of Forests Rights) Act, 2006 was constituted on 13.9.2007. However, a decision was taken in the Ministry to amend section 68 of the Indian Forest Act, 1927. Accordingly, a Bill "The Indian Forest (Amendment) Bill, 2012" was introduced in the Rajya Sabha on 15.02.2012, which seeks to amend Section 68 (Power to Compound Offences) of the Indian Forest Act, 1927 to enhance compounding limit for petty forest offences and to obtain and record the views of Gram Sabha in Schedule V areas, before compounding the offence, so as to ensure the transparency in the process and participation of people at Gram Sabha level.

The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 also known as Forest Rights Act, 2006 recognises and vests 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. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs is the nodal ministry for implementation of the Forest Rights Act, 2006.