

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:2  
ANSWERED ON:05.08.2013  
UTTARAKHAND DISASTER  
Krishnaswamy Shri M.

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

- (a) whether the recent calamity in Uttarakhand has been termed by some environmentalists as a man-made disaster;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and
- (c) the precautionary steps taken and proposed to be taken by the Government to prevent /minimise losses due to such disasters in future?

**Answer**

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

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

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 2 DUE FOR REPLY ON 05.08.2013 RAISED BY SHRI M. KRISHNASSWAMY REGARDING 'UTTARAKHAND DISASTER'.

(a) & (b) The State of Uttarakhand experienced abnormally high rainfall between 15th and 17th June, 2013 that resulted in a number of landslides, cloudbursts and flood events throughout the State. As per information provided by Indian Meteorological Department, rainfall in Uttarakhand during the period 1st June – 18th June, 2013 was 385.1 mm against normal level of 71.3 mm, which was in excess by 440%. Heavy precipitation augmented the river discharge and almost all the major rivers crossed the danger level. This caused severe damage to life and property in different parts of the State. Some environmentalists have asserted that the damage has been exacerbated on account of undertaking various development activities in the State without paying due attention to environmental concerns.

(c) As regards the precautionary steps to address the environmental concerns, the environment and forest clearances for various developmental projects, including those in the State of Uttarakhand, are granted after following statutory procedures. The Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006 as amended from time to time, prescribes the procedure to be adopted for the grant of prior environment clearance (EC) in respect of developmental projects or activities stated in the Schedule to the Notification. Similarly, the diversion of forest land for non forest activities is only allowed as per the provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and the rules framed thereunder.

In addition to the regular environment regulatory regime, the Ministry of Environment & Forests has notified vide S.O. No.2930(E) dated 18th December, 2012, the entire watershed of about 100 kilometres stretch of the river Bhagirathi from Gaumukh to Uttarkashi covering an area of 4,179. 59 square kilometres as Eco-sensitive Zone thereby inter-alia prohibiting and regulating certain activities within the Zone.