

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:93
ANSWERED ON:05.08.2013
MAINTAINING OF FOREST AREA
Agarwal Shri Rajendra;Mohan Shri P. C.

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

- (a) whether the Government has taken a note that hundreds of acres of forests per day are diverted to various activities in the country;
- (b) if so, the details, thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has been planning to maintain the forest cover area;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether a number of States have been affected in a bigger scale due to deforestation;
- (f) if so, the details thereof, State-wise; and
- (g) the steps taken/ being taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

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

(a) to (g) Use of forest land for non-forest purpose requires prior approval of Central Government under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. During the period from the day the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 came into force (i.e. 25th October 1980) till 30th July 2013, Central Government accorded approval to 23,407 proposals involving diversion of 11,68,838 hectares of forest land. State-wise details of the same are annexed.

To mitigate impact of diversion of forest land for non-forest purpose on the overall forest area in the country, Central Government while according approvals under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for diversion of forest land for non-forest purpose stipulates a condition that non-forest area equal in extent to the forest land being diverted shall be transferred and mutated in favour of the State Forest Department and notified as Reserved Forests/ Protected Forests for creation of compensatory afforestation from the funds to be realised from the user agency. In case of Central Government /Central Government Undertaking Projects, and projects located in States having area of forest land more than fifty percent of their geographical area, where non-availability of suitable non-forest land is certified by the Chief Secretary, compensatory afforestation may be raised over the degraded forest land twice in extent to the area of forest land diverted for non-forest purpose.

Central Government while according approvals under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 also stipulates other conditions to mitigate impact of diversion of forest land for non-forest purpose. Important among them are -realization of Net Present Value of diverted forest land from the user agency for execution of various activities for conservation and development of forests, implementation of wildlife conservation plan, catchment area treatment plan etc. from funds realised from the user agency.