

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3126
ANSWERED ON:09.12.2009
CONSTRUCTION WORK IN FOREST AREAS
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Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has issued any directions for undertaking construction-work in forests and tribal areas;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the security benefits for the tribals and forest- dwellers thereunder; and
- (d) the measures put in place to ensure that the targeted beneficiaries get the said benefits?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH)

(a) to (d): Any non-forest use of forest land including construction work is generally not permitted as per provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. In case of any such activity to be undertaken including construction work, the user agency applies to the State Government and the State Government before granting such permission has to obtain prior approval of the Central Government.

However, Central Government has granted general approval under section-2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for certain activities, to be carried out by the Government Departments, involving up to 1.00 ha of forest land. These activities include Schools, Dispensaries/Hospitals, Electrical and Telecommunication Lines, Drinking Water, Water/Rain Water Harvesting Structures, Minor Irrigation Canal, Non Conventional Sources of Energy, Skill up Gradation/Vocational Training Center, Power Sub-stations, Communication Posts; and Police establishments like Police Stations / Outposts / Border Outposts / Watch Towers in sensitive area (identified by Ministry of Home Affairs). The Ministry has also granted general approval under section-2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act 1980 for underground laying of optical fibre cables, underground laying of telephone lines and underground laying of drinking water supply pipelines involving not more than 1.00 ha of forest land. These activities are also permitted under the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006.

These diversions of forest land are regularly monitored for their intended purposes by the State/UT Governments and the Central Government through the Forest Department and the Regional offices of the Ministry respectively.