

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3171
ANSWERED ON:09.12.2009
ENCROACHMENT IN FOREST AREAS
Panda Shri Prabodh

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

- (a) whether a large portion of the forest area has been encroached throughout the country endangering the habitats of the wild life;
- (b) if so, the details thereof including the area of forest land encroached, State-wise;
- (c) whether the Government has drawn any plan to reclaim the encroached area; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

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

(a) & (b) No Sir. It is not a fact that very large area of the forest under encroachment. Only 17,94,879 hectare of forest land is reported to the under encroachment which constitutes only 2.32% of the total forest area of the country. The details of the forest area encroached are given in Annexure.

(c) & (d) Protection and management of forest areas is primarily the responsibility of concerned State/UT Governments. The Ministry of Environment & Forests provides funds to the State Governments for infrastructure development like development of Forests Chowkis and other miscellaneous works related to eviction operations. Also, Ministry of Environment & Forests (MoEF) has issued guidelines to State/UT Governments to get the encroached land evicted from ineligible encroachers. The MoEF vide letter dated 21.12.2004 had requested the State/UT Governments to exclude tribals/forest dwellers, other than ineligible encroachers, from eviction drives till the claims are settled. With the coming into force of the Schedule Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 and Rules thereof, State/UT Governments have to implement the provisions of the said Act. Accordingly such encroachment cases have to be examined as per the said Act.