

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1632

ANSWERED ON:16.12.2013

DECLINE IN FOREST COVER

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

- (a) whether the Government has taken a note that environment activists have voiced concerns over the fast depleting green cover in the Himalayas and demanded steps to protect it from both ecological and tourism point of view;
- (b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto; and
- (c) the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

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

(a), (b) & (c) As per India State of Forest Report 2011, forest area in the Country including that in the Himalayas, as compared to the forest cover assessment made in 2009 there is a net decline to the tune of 367 square kilometers. Following initiatives have been taken by the Ministry to expand the forest and tree cover in the country:

(i) The Ministry of Environment and Forests is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme of National Afforestation Programme (NAP) for regeneration of degraded forests and adjoining areas in the country.

The Scheme is implemented through a decentralized mechanism of State Forest Development Agency (SFDA) at State level, Forest Development (FDA) at Forest Division level and Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMCs) at Village levels. As on 31.03.2012, 800 FDA projects have been approved in 28 States in the country to treat an area of 18.86 lakh hectares since inception of the Scheme in 2002.

(ii) The Ministry releases funds under the Intensification of Forest Management Scheme (IFMS), for strengthening of forest protection such as infrastructure, fire protection, demarcation of forest boundaries, construction of facilities for frontline staff and communication etc.

(iii) Under the National Action Plan on Climate Change announced by the Central Government, a National Mission for a green India has been mooted. The objectives include qualitative improvement of forest cover/ ecosystems and creating new forest cover through eco-restoration/afforestation.

(iv) Under the award of 13th Finance Commission, a grant of Rs. 5000 crores has been allocated as "Forest Grants" to the States/UTs on the basis of their forest cover in the State in relation to the national average.

(v) Afforestation activities are also undertaken under various Externally Aided Projects.