

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:134

ANSWERED ON:25.07.2017

Forest Land

Antony Shri Anto ;Rathod Shri Dipsinh Shankarsinh

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

- (a) the total area of forest land in the country, State-wise;
- (b) the increase/decrease registered in the area of forest land during each of the last five years along with the reasons for the same State-wise;
- (c) whether forest land is being encroached in large scale in various parts of the country including Kerala; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the corrective steps taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(DR. HARSH VARDHAN):

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

Statement referred to in reply to part (a) to (d) of Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 134 by Shri D.S. Rathod and Shri Anto Antony due for reply on 25.07.2017.

(a) & (b) Forest Survey of India, Dehradun a subordinate organization under Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change carries out the assessment of forest cover of the country biennially and the findings are published in India State of Forest Report. As per the latest report i.e. India State of Forest Report 2015, the total forest cover of the country is 7,01,673 square kilometers which is 21.34% of the total geographical area of the country. There is a net increase of 3775 square kilometers in the forest cover of the country as compared with forest cover as per India State of Forest Report-2013. Further, the tree cover outside forest in the country is estimated to be 92,572 square kilometers which is 2.82% of the total geographical area of the country. The total forest and tree cover outside forest in the country as per India State of Forest Report-2015 is 7,94,245 square kilometers which is 24.16% of the geographical area of the country. The detailed list showing forest cover and change in forest cover States/UTs wise is given in Annexure I. The name of the States/UTs showing increase/decrease in the forest cover alongwith reasons are given in Annexure- II and Annexure-III.

(c) & (d) As per the information received from the State/UTs Forest Department, the total forest area under encroachment including Kerala is 1372351.53 hectare. The State/UT-wise details are given in Annexure IV. Protection and Management of Forests is primarily the responsibility of the concerned State/UT Forest Department. Various actions to remove encroachment are taken as per the provisions under various acts such as Indian Forest Act, 1927, Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and various rules made under these and State specific acts and rules.

To prevent fresh encroachments, various measures are taken by State Forest Departments, such as survey and demarcation of forest areas, construction of boundary pillars and check posts, use of modern technology (that includes wireless network, remote sensing, Geographical Information System, Global Positioning System), improved mobility to the field staff by providing vehicles for patrolling, etc. Local communities are also encouraged and involved in conservation, protection and management of forests through Joint Forest Management Committees/Village level committees.
