

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:231

ANSWERED ON:09.12.2014

FOREST COVER

Chaudhary Shri P.P.;Tumane Shri Krupal Balaji

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

- (a) the extent of forest cover in the country with respect to the total geographical area and the extent of decrease/increase registered in this regard, State/UT-wise;
- (b) whether the Government has conducted any study/research on the degradation and loss of forest cover in the country and if so, the details and the outcome thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has any mechanism/proposes to set up a Central Database Centre to monitor the change in forest area/cover in the country and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) the comprehensive measures/programmes implemented by the Government for conservation of forest area and expansion of forest cover in the country; and
- (e) whether the Government has received any external assistance for the said purpose and if so, the details thereof and the utilisation of such funds during each of the last three years and the current year, State/UT-wise?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR)

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

Statement referred to in reply to part (a) to (e) of Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 231 by Shri P.P. Chaudhary and Shri Krupal Balaji Tumane due for reply on 09.12.2014.

(a) As per India State of Forest Report-2013, the total forest cover in the country is 697,898 square kilometers which is 21.23% of the total geographical area of the country. There is a net increase of 5871 square kilometers in the forest cover of the country as compared with India State of Forest Report-2011. The detailed list showing increase/decrease in forest cover State/UTs wise is given in Annexure-I

(b) The Forest Survey of India has been carrying out assessment of forest cover on biennial basis since 1987 and India State of Forest Report-2013 is the latest in the series released by it. As per India State of Forest Report -2013, forest cover in different density classes is as follows:-

| Class | Area in square kilometer | Percentage of geographical Area |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Forest Cover | | |
| Very Dense Forest | 83,502 | 2.54 |
| Moderate Dense Forest | 318,745 | 9.70 |
| Open Forest | 295,651 | 8.99 |
| Total Forest Cover | 697,898 | 21.23 |
| Scrub | 41,383 | 1.26 |
| Non Forest | 2,547,982 | 77.51 |
| Total Geographical Area | 3,287,263 | 100 |

The very Dense Forest has increased by 31 square kilometers, Moderately Dense Forest has decreased by 1,991 square kilometers, Open Forest has increased by 7,831 square kilometers and Scrub has decreased by 793 square kilometers as compared to India State of Forest Report- 2011.

(c) There are two units in Forest Survey of India namely National Forest Data Management Centre (NFDMC) which carries out Forest cover assessment at country level using Satellite Data procured from National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC), Hyderabad on biennial basis and Forest Inventory Unit (FIU) which carries out inventory work in forest areas for estimation of growing stock and also carries out assessment of Trees Outside Forests (TOF).

(d) Afforestation in the country is taken up under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes such as National Afforestation Programme

(NAP), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP), National Bamboo Mission (NBM) and under Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA), 13th Finance Commission Grant, different State Plan/ Non- Plan Schemes including externally aided projects. National Afforestation Programme (NAP) of the Ministry of Environment & Forests is a 100% Centrally Sponsored Scheme for afforestation and tree plantation and eco-restoration of degraded forests and adjoining areas in the country. The Scheme is being implemented through a decentralized mechanism of State Forest Development Agency (SFDA) at State level, Forest Development Agency (FDA) at Forest Division level and Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMCs) at Village levels. As on 26.11.2014, 800 FDA projects have been approved in 29 States in the country to treat an area of 20.97 lakh hectares under the National Afforestation Programme scheme since inception of the scheme in 2002. An amount of Rs. 3486.93 crores has been released till 02.12.2014 under National Afforestation Programme scheme since its inception.

Besides National Afforestation Programme, various steps taken to expand forest cover in the country includes:-

XIIIth Finance Commission has recommended Rs. 5000 crore for five years starting from 2010-11 for conservation and development of forests, out of which Rs. 3984.23 crore has been released to 29 States as on 30.09.2014.

Tree planting is also an approved activity under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) and other schemes of Central and State Governments.

The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change is implementing the "National Mission for a Green India", one of the Missions under National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) aims to increase forest and tree cover by 5 million hectares as well as increasing the quality of the existing forest cover in another 5 million hectares, environmental amelioration through climate change mitigation, forest based livelihood of local communities and also to improve ecosystem services such as carbon sequestration, bio-diversity and hydrological services. The mission envisages participation of variety of stakeholders in achieving the objectives.

(e) Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA) and French Development Agency (AFD) have been assisting forestry projects in 12 States of India. Afforestation is one of the components in these projects. The amount disbursed by Japan International Co-operation Agency and French Development Agency to the States and utilized by them during the last three years and the current year is given in Annexure-II.