

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:237

ANSWERED ON:09.12.2014

AFFORESTATION OF WASTELANDS

Giluwa Shri Laxman;Singh Shri Kirti Vardhan

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

- (a) the details of the afforestation efforts made under the National Afforestation Programme (NAP) including plantation of various species of trees, State-wise;
- (b) the total area of wasteland brought under afforestation in the country, State-wise;
- (c) the percentage of wasteland yet to be covered in the various States;
- (d) the funds allocated and utilised during each of the last three years and the current year, State-wise; and
- (e) the challenges before the Government in this regard along with the steps being taken to overcome the said challenges?

Answer

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

(a), (b), (c), (d) and (e) : A statement has been laid on the Table of the House.

Statement referred to in reply to parts (a), (b), (c), (d) and (e) of Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 237 due for reply on 09.12.2014 by Shri Kirti Vardhan Singh and Shri Laxman Giluwa regarding Afforestation of Wastelands.

(a) The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF& CC) is implementing the National Afforestation Programme (NAP) scheme which is a 100% centrally sponsored scheme for eco-restoration of degraded forests in the country through people's participation. The scheme is implemented through a decentralized set up of State Forest Development Agency (SFDA) at the state level, Forest Development Agency (FDA) at the forest division level and the Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMCs) at the village level. The state wise details of the funds released and the approved area for treatment in the last three years and current year under NAP is given in the Annexure-I. The various species of trees to be planted are selected by the members of JFMCs on the basis of the local utility and suitability to ecological conditions, in consultation with the Forest Department.

(b) to (d) The Department of Land Resources (DoLR), Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) being the concerned Department for wasteland development has brought out Wastelands Atlas of India, 2011 in collaboration with National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC), Hyderabad, according to which the extent of wastelands in the country including barren/desert lands is 467021.16 sq. km. The State/UT wise details are given at Annexure-II. DoLR has been implementing an area development programme namely Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) since 2009-10 for development of rainfed/degraded areas. IWMP is a modified programme of erstwhile Integrated Wastelands Development Programme (IWDP), Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP) and Desert Development Programme (DDP) of MoRD. The major activities taken up under IWMP inter alia include ridge area treatment, drainage line treatment, soil and moisture conservation, rain water harvesting, nursery raising, afforestation, horticulture, pasture development, livelihoods for asset less persons. The details of State wise area sanctioned under IWMP so far are given at Annexure-III. Under IWMP, no fund allocation is made by the Department and the Central funds are released in lump-sum to States on the basis of Annual Action Plan furnished by the States. Accordingly, the details of funds released and utilized for the last three years and current year under IWMP are given in Annexure-IV.

(e) The challenges in afforestation of degraded forest areas/wastelands development include (i) Non availability of adequate funds (ii) erratic weather conditions (iii) high incidence of fire (iv) heavy biotic pressure especially high grazing incidence (v) invasion by alien species (vi) soil erosion (vii) rocky area (viii) inadequate staff at field level (ix) lack of involvement of local people. To overcome these challenges, following steps have been taken : (i) Green India Mission (GIM) has been launched to hasten and upscale restocking of degraded forest areas and tree planting in non-forest areas (ii) implementation of GIM and IWMP on landscape/watershed basis with cross sectoral approach to saturate the entire area simultaneously (iii) Watershed Associations (WAs) and JFMCs have been actively involved in the implementation of IWMP and NAP respectively (iv) intensive soil and moisture conservation activities under NAP, GIM, IWMP and MGNREGA (v) selection of locally occurring hardy species for plantation (vi) monitoring of forest fire through satellite and passing real time information to frontline staff (vii) cattle breed improvement programmes by Animal Husbandry Department (viii) control of invasive alien species as a component under Intensification of Forest Management Scheme. States Forest Departments have also been directed to fulfil the vacant posts of field staff.