

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3895
TO BE ANSWERED ON 02.04.2018

Eco-sensitive zones in the country

3895. SHRIMATI VANDANA CHAVAN

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

- (a) whether Government has formulated a new policy for fast track reduction of ecosensitive zones around national parks and sanctuaries;
- (b) the number of applications cleared to reduce eco-sensitive zones around national parks in the country in 2016-17 and the current year;
- (c) whether it is a fact that public has demanded protection of eco-sensitive zones and water bodies in areas adjacent to national parks; and
- (d) the steps proposed by Government to reverse the dilution of policies affecting eco-sensitive zones around the country?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

(DR. MAHESH SHARMA)

- (a) to (d) No Sir, Government has not formulated any new policy to fast track reduction of Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZs) around Protected Areas. As per the National Wild Life Action Plan (2002-2016) adopted by the Indian Board for Wild Life (IBWL) in its XXIst meeting held on 21st January 2002, it was emphasized that “All identified areas around Protected Areas and wildlife corridors to be declared as ecologically fragile under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.” The purpose of declaring Eco-sensitive Zones is to create some kind of “Shock Absorber” for the specialized Ecosystem and to ensure sustainable development taking into consideration the needs and aspirations of the local people. As per the provisions of the Notifications declaring Eco Sensitive Zones, conservation and rejuvenation plans of all natural water bodies are to be prepared by the States.

In view of the directions of Hon’ble Supreme Court in the absence of a notified Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) an area upto the extent of 10 km around a Protected Area is considered by default as an ESZ. In order to achieve sustainable development, conservation of wildlife and Biodiversity in and around the protected areas Government of India has been streamlining restrictions by notifying appropriate area as Eco-Sensitive Zone in consultation with State Governments.

Based upon the proposals received from the State Governments, the Gazette Notifications declaring Eco-sensitive Zones around the protected areas are published by Government of India under the provisions of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. The proposals received from the State Governments are sent to the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) for assessing the extent of ESZ, Biodiversity and Wildlife Corridor value, and prohibited/regulated activities in the ESZ. Geospatial technologies are also used to ascertain the extent of ESZ. To ensure a justifiable ESZ the proposals sent by the State Governments and the recommendations of WII are examined in the Ministry and also by an Expert Committee before a final notification is issued. During 2016-17, 58 draft notifications and 44 final notifications were issued, whereas in 2017-18, 49 draft notifications and 86 final notifications were issued.
