

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO: 1801**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 17.03.2022

**Forest cover in the country**

1801. SHRI RAJMANI PATEL:

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

- (a) the reasons that the current forest cover is only 24.62 per cent, against the target of 33 per cent by 2022 as per the NITI Aayog's Strategy for New India @ 75 Report, 2019;
- (b) whether it is a fact that the official method of identification and definition of forest land includes agroforestry entities like orchards, bamboo and palm fields, and other tree crops; and
- (c) if so, the rationale therefor, including justification on how this is claimed to be an accurate and scientific assessment of quantifying forest land and carbon stocks?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE  
(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)

- (a) The National Forest Policy 1988 envisages to have a minimum of one-third of the total land area of the country under forest or tree cover. Continuous efforts are being made to achieve the goals as envisaged in the National Forest Policy and over the years the Forest and Tree cover of the country has been showing a positive trend. This increase may be attributed to plantation/ afforestation activities, better conservation and protection measures, natural regeneration and enhancement of existing forests.
- (b) As per India State of Forest Report, Forest cover is defined as: "All lands, more than one hectare in area, with a tree canopy density of more than 10 percent irrespective of ownership and legal status. Such lands may not necessarily be a recorded forest area. It also includes orchards, bamboo and Palm."
- (c) As per decision 19/Conference of Parties (CP) 9-Kyoto Protocol, the forest can be defined by any country depending upon the capacities and capabilities of the country as follows:-  
Forest- Forest is defined structurally on the basis of
  - Crown cover percentage: Tree crown cover- 10 to 30% (India 10%)

- Minimum area of stand: area between 0.05 and 1 hectare (India 1.0 hectare) and
- Minimum height of trees: Potential to reach a minimum height at maturity in situ of 2 to 5 m (India 2m)

India's definition of forest has been taken on the basis of above three criteria only and very well accepted by United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for their reporting/communications.

\*\*\*\*\*