

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO: 988**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 15.12.2022

**Environmental Impact of the Great Nicobar Island Development Project**

988. SMT. VANDANA CHAVAN:

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

- (a) whether Government has conducted a study on the environmental impact of the recently cleared Great Nicobar Island Development project;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) the area of land included in the reserves that have been stripped of their protected status to make way for the project;
- (d) the number of trees that will be felled and the impact of the same on the island and also the coral reefs in the area; and
- (e) the impact on the indigenous tribal population that reside on the island?

**ANSWER**

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

(a) to (e) Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report along with Environmental Management Plan (EMP) is a prime requirement for the grant of prior environmental clearance for the projects and/or activities listed in the Schedule of EIA Notification, 2006. Regarding Great Nicobar Island Development project, a detailed EIA/EMP report was submitted along with application for seeking prior Environmental Clearance (EC) and Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Clearance.

The Central Government vide letter dated 27.10.2022 has accorded the In-principle/Stage-1 approval for diversion of 130.75 sq km forest land for sustainable development in Great Nicobar Island in which compensatory afforestation for planting 1:10 trees in lieu of 8.19 lakh trees removed in the project area will be carried out. Adequate mitigation measures have been proposed to compensate the impact on flora and fauna. Further, more than 50% i.e. 65.99 sq km of the area proposed for diversion is the area for green development where no tree felling is envisaged. No major coral reef exists within the work area of the project. However, scattered coral reefs are available at the peninsular part of the Galathea Bay.

The project activities envisage no disturbance to Shompen tribe and their habitations and for the protection and safety of the tribal settlements there is provision for geo-fencing cum surveillance towers. Further, Department of Tribal Welfare (DTW) is the agency that oversees the protection and safety of the community as per the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Protection of Aboriginal Tribes) Regulation, 1956. In addition, the project proponent is mandated to constitute a monitoring committee for ensuring the welfare and other issues related to Shompen and Nicobarese.

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