

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2586
TO BE ANSWERED ON 23.03.2023

Ecological survey of the Indian Himalayan region

2586. SMT. VANDANA CHAVAN:

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

- (a) whether Government has conducted an ecological survey of the 13 States present in the Indian Himalayan region to determine the eco-sensitive zones in this region and their respective carrying capacities;
- (b) if so, the details of the survey, including all such zones identified;
- (c) if not, the reasons therefore and
- (d) whether Government plans to undertake such a survey given the rising ecological stress faced by the region?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (d) In order to manage and conserve biodiversity across the Protected Areas, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change notifies Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZs) around the Protected Areas. As part of wildlife conservation strategy, in the year 2002, it was decided that an area around each Protected Areas, requires to be notified as Eco-Sensitive Zone for creating a buffer as further protection around Protected Areas (PAs). The very purpose of declaring ESZ is to create some kind of "Shock Absorber" for the specialized Ecosystem, such as protected areas or other natural sites, to act as transition zone from areas of high protection to areas involving lesser protection. Besides, in order to protect the biodiversity in areas having ecological significance, Ministry also notifies Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESA), which has unique biological resources, which require special attention for their conservation.

Survey and identification of ESZs are conducted by the respective State Governments for consideration of the Central Government for declaration of the ESZs in respective States around National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries as per the guidelines formulated by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC). On the basis of proposals and recommendations of the State Government, Ministry notifies the ESZs under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. Section '3' of the ESZ Notification provides the Guidelines for preparation of the Zonal Master Plan (ZMP) by the respective State Government and mandates preparation of the Tourism Master Plan forming part of Zonal Master Plan on the basis of the Carrying Capacity study of the concerned ESZ. In so far as the 13 States of Indian Himalayan Region are concerned, 2 ESAs and 92 ESZs have been already notified.
