

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EARTH SCIENCES
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1308
ANSWERED ON 14/12/2023

ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN ENVIRONMENT DUE TO EXCESSIVE HUMAN
INTERFERENCE

1308. SHRI R. GIRIRAJAN:
DR. KANIMOZHI NVN SOMU:

Will the Minister of **EARTH SCIENCES** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has set up a research team or committee of scientists to conduct research and data analysis on the changes that happened in the recent years in Geology, Geomorphology, Ecology and Environment;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the works carried out in the last five years, year-wise and subject-wise;
- (c) whether the Central Government has any plans to study the changes occurring in Western Ghats and Eastern Ghats in Tamil Nadu due to excessive human interference, environmental pollution and bio-degradation; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the funds allocated for the same?

ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF EARTH SCIENCES
(SHRI KIREN RIJIJU)

- (a) to (d) The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), Government of India, formed the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP) on March 4, 2010, chaired by Prof. Madhav Gadgil. This panel assessed the ecological status of the Western Ghats and suggested areas for Western Ghats Ecologically Sensitive Area (WG-ESA). Due to objections from states and stakeholders, a High Level Working Group (HLWG) led by Dr. K. Kasturirangan was constituted on August 17, 2012. The HLWG recommended 37% of the Western Ghats as an Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA).

The HLWG proposed specific activities not to be permitted within the ESA, including no new mining of major minerals, quarrying, or sand mining. It suggested phasing out mining within five years or upon lease expiry, no new thermal power plants, and limitations on certain construction and industrial projects categorized as having a significant environmental impact.

The MoEF&CC is executing various conservation schemes, including National Afforestation Programme, Wildlife Habitat Development, Forest Fire Prevention, Project Tiger, and National Mission for a Green India in the Western Ghats and other states including Eastern Ghats. Funds under Compensatory Afforestation Management and Planning Authority are also being utilized for conservation of forest and wildlife.
