

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2757
TO BE ANSWERED ON 19.12.2024

Conservation of forest

2757. SHRI GOLLA BABURAO:

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

- (a) whether Government is implementing schemes for protection of forests and wildlife;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (d) whether any new policies, programmes, or initiatives have been launched in recent years for forest and wildlife conservation, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a) to (d) Yes. There are legal frameworks for the protection and management of forest and wildlife resources of the country which include, Indian Forest Act 1927, Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam 1980, Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 and the State Forest Acts, Tree Preservation Acts and Rules, etc.,. Protection and management of forest and wildlife is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations. The State Governments /UT Administrations take appropriate actions to protect forests and wildlife resources under the provisions made under these Acts/ Rules.

As per the existing provisions of Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980, State Governments and Union Territory Administrations are required to ensure that, least number of trees are felled for developmental projects whilst prescribing necessary compensatory plantation as per the cases to address environmental concerns.

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has formulated a National Action Plan on Forest Fire-2018, which provides comprehensive measures to prevent forest fires, to improve the resilience of the forests against fire hazards, besides prescribing measures such as capacity building of communities in prevention and control of forest fire. The Ministry has issued advisories to all States/UTs for better management of situations arising out of human-animal conflicts. The advisories recommend various measures that may be adopted by States / UTs to prevent and manage such conflicts. These include coordinated interdepartmental action, identification of conflict hot spots, and adherence to Standard Operating Procedures, establishment of rapid response teams, provision of adequate funds for payment of ex-gratia relief to affected persons in case of human death and injury, etc.,.

In consonance with the National Forest Policy 1988, emphasizing the local community based approach, the concept of Joint Forest Management was launched and Joint Forest

Management Committees (JFMCs) were formed in States/UTs. Local Communities are involved through Joint Forest Management Committees in the management of forests and in various forestry activities. Further, for the management of the Protected Areas, Eco Development Committees (EDCs) are also formed to ensure people participation in wildlife protection and conservation.

The Ministry supports the targeted efforts of the States/ UTs in the conservation and protection of forests and wildlife, through its ongoing Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSSs) such as Forest Fire Prevention and Management, Green India Mission, Nagar Van Yojana, Development of Wildlife Habitat (DWH), Project Elephant and Tiger, as well as through the CAMPA funds, Scheme on Mangrove initiative for Shoreline Habitats and Tangible Incomes (MISHTI), etc.. The Ministry sanctions the scheme-specific activities through the Annual Plan of Operations submitted by States/ UTs for the respective financial years.

The Ministry has released Indian Forest Management Standard as a part of National Working Plan Code – 2023. This standard is a basis for monitoring of sustainable forest management in terms of a broad framework comprising criteria, indicators and verifiers which provides the platform for Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme to address the challenges of small scale timber producers.

The Forest Survey of India (FSI), Dehradun, an organization under the Ministry has been carrying out the assessment of forest cover of the country, biennially since 1987, and the findings are published in India State of Forest Report (ISFR). As per latest ISFR 2021, the total forest cover of the country is 7,13,789 square kilometres which is 21.71% of the geographical area of the country. The trend for the last three ISFRs shows an increase in forest cover of the country. The forest cover increased by 1,540 square kilometres between ISFR 2019 and ISFR 2021 assessment reports.

The *Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam* campaign launched by the Hon'ble Prime Minister on 5th June, 2024 draws a parallel between the nurturing of nature by Mother Earth, and the nurturing of human lives by our mothers. It aims to underline this relation by voluntary planting of trees as a mark of love, respect and honour for mothers and by pledging to protect trees and mother earth by all citizens.
