

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**LOK SABHA**  
**STARRED QUESTION NO. 418\***  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 23.03.2018

**Forest Cover**

\*418. SHRI RAJENDRA AGRAWAL:

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

- (a) whether India's forest cover has registered an increase as per the latest India State of Forest Report and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the increase in forest cover is mainly due to the fact that the survey records plantations as forests which contribute little to ecological sustainability and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether despite the increase in forest cover, the capacity of such forest cover to absorb carbon dioxide has significantly reduced; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

**MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

**(DR. HARSH VARDHAN)**

(a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

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**Statement referred to in reply to part (a) to (d) of Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 418 by Shri Rajendra Agrawal due for reply on 23.03.2018 regarding 'Forest Cover'.**

- (a) Yes, Sir. Forest Survey of India, Dehradun, a subordinate organization under Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, carries out the assessment of forest cover of the country biennially and the findings are published in India State of Forest Report (ISFR). As per the latest report i.e. ISFR- 2017, the total forest and tree cover of the country is 8,02,088 square kilometers which is 24.39% of the total geographical area of the country. It shows an increase of 8021 square kilometers over the figure as per the India State of Forest Report 2015 (updated). The increase in forest cover is 6,778 square kilometer and increase in tree cover is 1,243 square kilometer compared to ISFR 2015.
- (b) Definition of 'forest cover' used in ISFR 2017 is "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". As per the definition of 'forest cover' adopted in the ISFR, plantations both on forest land and non forest land having crown density of 10% or above would be classified as forest cover. The changes in forest cover reported in ISFR 2017 are attributable to both increases within and outside forest land. Beside increase in forest cover, significant improvements in canopy cover have also been observed as very dense forest has increased by 9,525 square kilometer compared to previous report.
- (c) & (d) The carbon stock in forest as per the latest ISFR 2017 is estimated to be 7,082 million tones which is an increase of 38 million tons as compared to the carbon stock reported in ISFR-2015. Hence, the capacity of absorbing CO<sub>2</sub> has gone up with increase in forest cover.

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