

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 5624
TO BE ANSWERED ON 26.07.2019

Dense Forests

5624. SHRI CHANDAN SINGH:

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

- (a) the total area of dense forests in the country during the year 2017-18, State/ UT-wise;
- (b) the definition of dense forests, as fixed by the Government;
- (c) whether the dense forests are constantly shrinking in the country and if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (d) whether any assessment regarding the requirement of area of dense forests towards keeping the climate healthy and clean has been made and if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether the Government has formulated a time bound action plan for fixing the required area of dense forests in each State; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI BABUL SUPRIYO)

- (a) Forest Survey of India, Dehradun, organization under the Ministry carries out the assessment of forest cover of the country biennially and findings are published in India State of Forest Report (ISFR). As per the latest ISFR 2017, the total area of dense forests in the country is 4,06,476 square kilometre. The State/UTs details of dense forest cover as per ISFR 2017 is given in **Annexure**.
- (b) The definition of the term “Forest cover” in the ISFR is as given below:

“All lands, more than 1 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.”

Of the above definition of forest cover, dense forests are those that have a canopy density of above 40%. The dense forests are further divided into Moderately Dense Forest (canopy density 40% to 70%) and Very Dense Forest (Canopy density >70%).

- (c) No, Sir. As per the latest ISFR 2017, there is an increase of 5104 square kilometre in dense forest cover of the country compared to the data published in ISFR 2015. The main reason for increase in forest cover including dense forests can be attributed to plantation and conservation activities both within and outside the Recorded Forest areas.
- (d) No, Sir. However, forests are necessary to keep the environment and climate of the country clean and healthy. Forests provide various environmental benefits and ecological services. Trees purify the polluted air by absorbing large amount pollutants like carbon dioxide, sulphur dioxide by their leaves and releasing oxygen. Trees produce a healthy environment by providing clean air, water and soil. Trees, especially broad leaves trap aerosols and small particles and acts as dust filters. Tree covers absorb rain water and allow the drained water to percolate into the soil thus maintaining ground water table and reduces runoff.
- (e) & (f) The Ministry has not formulated any action plan for fixing the required area of dense forests in each State. However, as per National Forest Policy 1988, the national goal should be to have a minimum of one-third of the total land area of the country under forest or tree cover. In the hills and in mountainous regions, the aim should be to maintain two-third of the area under such cover in order to prevent erosion and land degradation and to ensure the stability of the fragile eco-system.

Annexure

Annexure referred to reply in part (a) of the Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 5624 due for answer on 26.07.2019 regarding 'Dense Forests'

State/UTs details of dense forest cover as per ISFR 2017

(Area in square kilometre)

State	Geographic Area	Very Dense Forest (VDF)	Moderately Dense Forest (MDF)	Total Dense Forest
Andhra Pradesh	162968	1,957	14,051	16,011
Arunachal Pradesh	83743	20,721	30,955	51,676
Assam	78438	2,797	10,192	12,989
Bihar	94163	332	3,260	3,592
Chhattisgarh	135192	7,064	32,215	39,279
Delhi	1483	6.72	56.24	62.96
Goa	3702	538	576	1114
Gujarat	196244	378	5,200	5578
Haryana	44212	28	452	480
Himachal Pradesh	55673	3,110	6,705	9815
Jammu & Kashmir *	222236	4,075	8,579	12654
Jharkhand	79716	2,598	9686	12284
Karnataka	191791	4,502	20,444	24946
Kerala	38852	1,663	9,407	11070
Madhya Pradesh	308252	6,563	34,571	41134
Maharashtra	307713	8,736	20,652	29388
Manipur	22327	908	6,510	7418
Meghalaya	22429	453	9,386	9839
Mizoram	21081	131	5,861	5992
Nagaland	16579	1,279	4,587	5866
Odisha	155707	6,967	21,370	28337
Punjab	50362	8	806	814
Rajasthan	342239	78	4,340	4418
Sikkim	7096	1081	1,575	2656
Tamil Nadu	130060	3,672	10,979	14651
Telangana	112077	1,596	8,738	10334
Tripura	10486	656	5,246	5902
Uttar Pradesh	240928	2,617	4,069	6686
Uttarakhand	53483	4,969	12,884	17853
West Bengal	88752	2,994	4,147	7141
A&N Islands	8249	5,678	684	6362
Chandigarh	114	1.36	13.82	15.18
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	491	0	80	80
Daman & Diu	111	1.40	5.82	7.22
Lakshadweep	30	0	17.04	17.04
Puducherry	490	0	17.60	17.60
Grand Total	32,87,469	98158	308318	406476

