

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 71
TO BE ANSWERED ON 21.06.2019

Eco-Sensitive Area

71. SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI, M.P.:

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

- (a) whether the process for earmarking Eco-Sensitive Area (ESA) of Western Ghat has started in the year 2011 and the Union Government issued first draft notification in 2014, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether since then notification was issued afresh several times and fourth one was issued recently to bring the concerned States on board;
- (c) if so, the details thereof along with the main demand of the individual States;
- (d) whether even a high level working group failed to bring unanimous decision in this regard and if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether the Government has started the process in this regard afresh; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof and time by which a final decision is likely to be arrived at in this regard?

ANSWER

MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR)

(a) The process to conserve and protect the Western Ghats was started in the year 2010 with the setting of Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP) and followed by the constitution of High Level Working Group (HLWG) in the year 2012. The Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEFCC) had issued first draft notification *vide* S.O. 733 (E) dated 10.02.2014, with an Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA) of 56,825 square kilometres, in the States of Goa, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.

(b) &(c) Yes Sir, the draft Notification S.O. 733 (E) dated 10.02.2014 was subsequently republished thrice, *vide* S.O. 2435 (E) dated 04.09.2015; S.O. 667 (E) dated 27.02.2017 and S.O. 5135 (E) dated 03.10.2018. In general, the demand from the states is to reduce/alter the ESA area as recommended by the HLWG.

(d) to (f) Based on the recommendation of the HLWG, MoEF & CC has issued directions under Section 5 of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 *vide* Order dated 13.11.2013 and prohibited five activities having interventionist and destructive impacts on natural ecosystems of the ESA of the Western Ghats, namely (i) Mining, quarrying and sand mining (ii) Thermal Power Plants (iii) Building and construction projects of 20,000 square meter area and above (iv) Township and area development projects with an area of 50 hectare and above and/or with built up area of 1,50,000 square meter and above (v) Red category of industries.

In order to follow a coherent and consistent approach in notifying the ESA of the Western Ghats, Ministry is working for the last several years, it had interactions with all the States of Western Ghats region at various levels on 15th January 2016; 9th to 11th February 2016; 11th August, 2016 and 11th April 2018. Considering the validity of the latest draft Notification as 31st March, 2019, fresh discussion to finalise the Notification to declare the ESA of the Western Ghats has already been initiated with the states and a meeting was held on 15th February, 2019.
