

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 8
TO BE ANSWERED ON 21.06.2019

Ecologically Sensitive Areas of Western Ghats

8. SHRI ANTO ANTONY:

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

- (a) whether the Government has issued final notification on recommendations of Dr. Kasturirangan Report on Western Ghats;
- (b) if so, the details thereof along with its major recommendations;
- (c) whether the Government has taken into consideration viewpoints of all State Governments concerned in this regard and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether there is a reduction in Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESAs) in final notification as recommended by Dr. Kasturirangan Report; and
- (e) if so, the details there of, State/UT wise?

ANSWER

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

(a) No Sir,

(b) The High Level Working Group (HLWG) headed by Shri Kasturirangan, had delineated a contiguous Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA) of 59,940 sq. km in the Western Ghats region spread over six States- (i) Kerala (ii) Tamil Nadu (iii) Karnataka (iv) Goa (v) Maharashtra and (vi) Gujarat and recommended specific measures for conservation. It has recommended prohibition or regulation of identified projects and activities in the ESA, which have interventionist and destructive impacts on natural ecosystems. This Ministry in principle accepted the HLWG report and issued directions under Section 5 of Environment(Protection) Act, 1986 vide Order dated 13.11.2013 to respective State Governments of the Western Ghats regions to prohibit five categories of new and/or expansion projects/activities in 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.

(c) to (d) Before notifying the Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESA) in the Western Ghats region, this Ministry had invited suggestions from all the six State Governments of the Western Ghats region for modification of boundary of the ESAs, identified by the HLWG. The Government of Kerala undertook the exercise of physically demarcating ESA in the state through Panchyat Level Committees and with interaction with various stakeholders recommended reduction of ESA area from 13108 sq. Km. to 9993.70 sq. km. The Draft

Notification, S.O. 733 (E) dated 10.03.2014 with an ESA area of 56825 sq. km. was issued after incorporating the recommendation of the Government of Kerala.

Consequently, after addressing the concerns/ apprehensions expressed by various stakeholders from time to time the Draft Notification declaring ESA of the Western Ghats has been re-published on 04.09.2015 and 27.02.2017 and 03.10.2018 with the same ESA area ie 56825 sq. Km.

(e) The state wise area included in the ESA is as follows:

- I. Gujarat: 449 sq. Km.;
- II. Goa: 1,461 sq. Km.;
- III. Maharashtra: 17,340 sq. Km.;
- IV. Karnataka: 20,668 sq. Km.;
- V. Tamil Nadu: 6914 sq. Km.;
- VI. Kerala: 9993.7 sq. Km.;
