

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2956
TO BE ANSWERED ON 07.08.2023

Western Ghats Spatial Decision Support System

2956. SHRI KARTI P. CHIDAMBARAM:

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware about the reduction in evergreen forest cover by 5 per cent as discovered by Indian Institute of Science's Energy and Wetlands Research Group through its Western Ghats Spatial Decision Support System (WGSDSS);
- (b) whether the Government is aware about the reasons for the reduction of the evergreen forest cover and if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (c) whether the Government proposes to use the WGSDSS to keep track of deforestation and for decision making and 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 ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)

(a) to (c) As informed by the Indian Institute of Science, the Western Ghats Spatial Decision Support System (WGSDSS) hosted by the Institute is a part of the ongoing ecological research in the Western Ghats considering recent advances in information and open source web technologies through the integration of spatial with the attribute information at disaggregated levels. The WGSDSS has no provision for regular tracking of fresh deforestation events.

As per the India State of Forest Report (ISFR) of the Forest Survey of India 2021, the total forest and tree cover of the country is 80.9 million hectare, which is 24.62% of the geographical area of the country. As compared to the assessment of 2019, there is an increase of 2261 sq.km. in the total forest and tree cover of the country. Out of this, the increase in the forest cover has been observed to be 1540 sq.km. and that in tree cover is 721 sq.km. The total forest cover recorded during 2019 in six States (Goa, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu), falling within the Western Ghats region is 1,53,955 sq.km. However, 1,54,370 sq.km. of the forest cover was recorded in these six States during the year 2021, which shows an increase in 415 sq.km. forest cover.
