

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO: 176
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 04.12.2023

Forest Cover

176. DR. A. CHELLAKUMAR:
DR. AMAR SINGH:
SHRI ABDUL KHALEQUE:

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

- (a) the percentage of land under forest cover in the State of Assam;
- (b) whether the forest cover has decreased over the last ten years in the north-east region including Assam, if so, the reasons therefor and the steps taken by the Government to increase the forest cover in the country;
- (c) the percentage of land under unauthorized occupation and whether the Government has any rehabilitation plan for those living in forest land;
- (d) whether the Government has taken any steps to understand the social life of forest dwellers as a part of the Forest Survey of India's methodology and if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the corrective steps proposed by the Government to achieve its target to increase forest or tree cover and improve the quality of forests?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)

(a) Forest Survey of India (FSI), Dehradun carries out the assessment of forest cover biennially, since 1987 and the findings are published as India State of Forest Report (ISFR). As per ISFR 2021, the forest cover in the State of Assam is 28,312 square kilometer which is 36.09 % of the geographical area (78,438 square kilometer) of the State.

(b) The forest cover in the northeast region of the country has decreased by 3,698 square kilometer during the last ten years, based on ISFR 2011 to ISFR 2021. However, there has been an increase of 639 square kilometer in the forest cover of Assam during the last ten years. The details of forest cover in the northeast region including State of Assam during the last ten years given at **Annexure-I**. The loss in the forest cover of north-east region of the country may be attributed mainly to natural calamities, anthropogenic pressure and developmental activities.

The Ministry provides technical and financial assistance to States/UTs under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes namely, Green India Mission (GIM), Forest Fire Prevention and Management Scheme, Compensatory Afforestation Fund (CAMPA), Nagar Van Yojana and other schemes of line ministries to increase the forest and tree cover of the country.

(c) The Protection and management of forests is primarily the responsibility of the State and UT Governments which take appropriate actions to remove encroachment under the provisions of Indian Forest Act, 1927, Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and rules made there under, and also under State Specific Acts and Rules. The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 recognizes the rights of the forest dwelling tribal communities and other traditional forest dwellers for self-cultivation and habitation as individual rights and for activities such as grazing, fishing and access to water bodies in forests, habitat rights for PVTGs etc as community rights.

(d). Forests contribute significantly as source of sustenance and livelihood for the tribal communities. The Forest Survey of India (FSI), Dehradun regularly assesses the forest cover across 218 tribal districts in 26 States/UTs as identified by the Government of India under the Integrated Tribal Development Programme (ITDP). Further, bamboo contributes to the subsistence needs of forest dwellers, a majority of whom are tribals, whose livelihoods depend on harvesting, processing, value addition and selling of bamboo products. Accordingly, FSI undertakes detailed assessments of the bamboo resources of the country and are published in the State of Forest Report.

(e) Afforestation activities like Green India Mission (GIM), Forest Fire Prevention and Management Scheme, CAMPA, Nagar Van Yojana and other schemes of line ministries such as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, National Bamboo Mission, Sub-Mission on Agroforestry etc. have been initiated to increase the forest and tree cover and improve the quality of forests in the country. The multi departmental efforts have yielded good results in conserving and enhancing the forest and tree cover in the country.

Annexure referred to in reply to part (b) of the Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 176 due for answer on 04.12.2023 regarding 'Forest Cover'

Forest Cover of North Eastern States as per ISFR 2011 and ISFR 2021

(Area in Square Kilometer)

State	ISFR 2011 (a)	ISFR 2021 (b)	Change in Forest Cover from ISFR 2011 to ISFR 2021 (b)- (a)
Arunachal Pradesh	67,410	66,431	-979
Assam	27,673	28,312	639
Manipur	17,090	16,598	-492
Meghalaya	17,275	17,046	-229
Mizoram	19,117	17,820	-1,297
Nagaland	13,318	12,251	-1,067
Sikkim	3,359	3,341	-18
Tripura	7,977	7,722	-255
Total	1,73,219	1,69,521	-3,698