

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**LOKSABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3101**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 06.08.2021

**Land Degradation**

3101. SHRI T.R. BAALU

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware that a massive ecological and livelihood crisis is looming before the country and the issue of land degradation needs urgent attention and priority;
- (b) if so, the details thereof along with the measures taken by the Government to make land degradation a high-priority policy objective to tackle the above issue;
- (c) whether the Government has taken any initiatives to ensure adoption of strict policies for land use change, sustainable agricultural practices and involvement of communities in greening process in view of lengthy time required for reclamation of land and the sustained fiscal and human resource support for watershed management; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

**ANSWER**

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

**(a) to (d)** Land is a fundamental natural resource, both for the survival and prosperity. It provides all the provisioning services of ecosystems that are home, food, raw materials, fresh water and medical resources through biodiversity to the entire living organisms including human beings.

The Government has launched several schemes/ programmes which include inter-alia the National Afforestation Program, Green India Mission, Watershed Development Component of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojna (PMKSY) which contribute to restoration of land which, in turn, helps in livelihood security.

Afforestation and tree plantation activities in the country are undertaken as a cross sectoral and multi-departmental activity under various schemes of different ministries. The annual targets for afforestation are fixed under Twenty Point Program (TPP). The area of land covered through afforestation under the Twenty Point Program during the period 2015-2021 is about 10.81 million hectares.

National Mission for a Green India (GIM) is one of the ongoing eight Missions outlined under the National Action Plan on Climate Change. It aims at protecting, restoring and enhancing India's forest cover and responding to Climate Change by means of plantation activities in forest and non-forest areas.

As one of the measures to increase and improve forest area in the country, National Afforestation and Eco-development Board (NAEB) is implementing National Afforestation

Programme (NAP) for ecological restoration of degraded forests and adjoining areas through people's participation.

Initiatives have been taken to check land degradation under the National Mission on Himalayan Studies (NMHS) supported projects viz community-based plantation towards land reclamation, land greening through afforestation and plantation towards watershed management.

Department of Agriculture Co-operation and Farmers' Welfare is implementing the Sub-Mission on Agroforestry (SMAF) Scheme since 2016-17 to promote/encourage the agroforestry practices (tree plantation on farm land along with crops/ cropping system) to help the farmers get additional income and make their farming system more climate resilient and adaptive. Under the scheme, assistance to farmers is given through State Govt. for nursery development, boundary plantation and block plantation of prominent tree species to promote, inter-alia, fruit bearing trees, tree borne oilseeds, medicinal & aromatic plants, silk & lac rearing host plants in addition to timber species, so that farmers get early returns.

Also, plantation of trees has been undertaken along national highways by National Highways Authority of India.

Any change in land-use from forest to non-forestry purpose is permitted by the State Government, only after the prior approval of the Central Government obtained under the provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. Whenever such change is allowed, appropriate mitigation measures are taken in the form of undertaking compensatory afforestation, payment of Net Present Value etc

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