

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 757
TO BE ANSWERED ON 23.07.2021

Eco-tourism Projects

757. SHRI ACHYUTANANDA SAMANTA:

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

- (a) whether the Government or the Forest Advisory Committee (FAC) has eased norms for eco-tourism projects by allowing non-permanent structures to be built in protected areas without permission from the Union Government;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the type of non-permanent structures which can be built in such areas;
- (c) whether the Government has considered that even creation of non-permanent structures can cause ecological imbalance or fragmentation, especially in sensitive forest areas and natural habitats of wildlife; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof along with the steps being taken to ensure that such areas remain protected?

ANSWER

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

- (a) & (b) Forest Advisory Committee (FAC) is a statutory body constituted under Section 3 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. The role of the Committee, inter alia, is to advise on every question upon which the Central Government is required to be advised. The FAC's recommendation with regard to ecotourism is as follows:

“construction of permanent structures for the purpose of ecotourism on forest land shall be considered as non-forestry activity. In such cases Prior approval of the Central Government under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 is required”.

- (c) & (d) Eco-tourism is a form of responsible tourism to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people. It is envisaged that, no permanent structure shall be made/constructed to create ecotourism facility/structure, but temporary structures/facility made of predominantly natural material of local origin shall be allowed in Protected Area or on forest land. Such ecotourism facility/structure is to be part of the approved Working Plan/Management Plan/Working Scheme of that area to ensure that such facility/structure are in consonance with the local ecology, and forests and wildlife remain protected.
