

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO: 318*
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 20.12.2021

Depletion of Forest

* 318 SHRI GAURAV GOGOI:
SHRI DEEPAK BAIJ:

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

- (a) whether the Government has assessed forest depletion in the North Eastern region of the country and Odisha over the past decade;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Government has conducted consultations with stakeholders from the North Eastern region and Odisha regarding the proposed amendments to the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI. BHUPENDER YADAV)

(a) to (d) The statement is laid on the table of the House.

Statement refer to in reply to part (a) to (d) of Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 318 due for reply on 20.12.2021 regarding 'Depletion of Forest' by Shri Gaurav Gogoi and Shri Deepak Baij.

- (a) & (b) Forest Survey of India (FSI), Dehradun, an organization under the Ministry carries out the assessment of forest cover of the country biennially since 1987 and the findings are published in India State of Forest Report (ISFR). The forest cover assessment is a wall-to-wall mapping exercise based on remote sensing supported by intensive ground verification and field data from National Forest Inventory. As per latest ISFR 2019, the total forest and tree cover of the country is 8,07,276 square kilometres which is 24.56 % of the geographical area of the country. There is an increase of 13,209 square kilometre of forest and tree cover at the national level in the ISFR-2019 as compared to the ISFR-2015. There has been decrease in forest cover in the States of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura while there has been increase in forest cover in the state of Odisha and Assam over a decade. Gain in forest cover or improvement in forest canopy density may be attributed to better conservation measures, protection, afforestation activities, tree plantation drives and agroforestry whereas, loss in forest cover and impairment of forest canopy may be attributed to shifting cultivation, forest fires, felling of trees, natural calamities, anthropogenic pressure and developmental activities.

The State wise details of change in forest cover in the North Eastern region and Odisha in India between ISFR 2009 to ISFR 2019 is given below:-

(area in km ²)					
Sl. No.	State/UT	Geographical Area (GA)	ISFR 2009	ISFR 2019	Change in forest cover
1	Arunachal Pradesh	83,743	67,484	66,688	-796
2	Assam	78,438	27,692	28,327	635
3	Manipur	22,327	17,280	16,847	-433
4	Meghalaya	22,429	17,321	17,119	-202
5	Mizoram	21,081	19,183	18,006	-1177
6	Nagaland	16,579	13,464	12,486	-978
7	Sikkim	7,096	3,359	3,342	-17
8	Tripura	10,486	7,985	7,726	-259
9	Odisha	1,55,707	48,855	51,619	2764
	Total	4,17,886	22,2623	222,160	-463

The States have primary responsibility for protection and management of forest. For protecting, restoring and enhancing India's forest cover and responding to Climate Change by means of plantation activities in the forest and non-forest areas, afforestation

and tree plantation activities are undertaken by States and Union Territories Governments under various State schemes. The Ministry provides financial assistance to States and Union Territories Governments under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes including, inter alia, National Afforestation Programme, Green India Mission to support and supplement the efforts of States and Union Territories.

Afforestation activities are also taken up under various programmes/schemes such as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, Compensatory Afforestation Funds under Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA).

These initiatives also help in conservation of very dense forests and moderately dense forests as well as to increase forest and tree cover. The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare is also implementing the National Agroforestry Policy (NAP) since 2014. Further, the 15th Finance Commission has assigned 10% weight to forest and ecology in its horizontal devolution criteria and weights.

- (c) & (d) The Ministry has received suggestions from various Ministries, State Governments and stakeholders regarding amendments in the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. In this regard, a public Consultation paper containing the details on the proposed amendments was circulated for inviting comments/suggestions from various stakeholders including those in the Northeast region and Odisha in October, 2021. The Ministry has also written to the State Governments, Administrators/Lt. Governors of the Union Territories to send the comments of their respective Governments/ administrations on the consultation paper.
