

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2394
TO BE ANSWERED ON 13.12.2021

Segregation of Carbon

2394. DR. PRITAM GOPINATHRAO MUNDE:
SHRI CHANDRA SEKHAR SAHU:
SHRI RAHUL RAMESH SHEWALE:
SHRI GIRISH BHALCHANDRA BAPAT:

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

- (a) whether the country's forests can help to achieve the target reduction in carbon emissions by 100 crore tonnes by 2030 by segregating and absorbing carbon from the atmosphere, if so, the facts in this regard;
- (b) whether the country's tree cover has declined by 5 per cent between 2001 and 2020 and whether the afforestation schemes are going on slow pace; and
- (c) if so, the total hectares of natural forests land lost during 2019, 2020 and 2021 and the response of the Government thereto?

ANSWER

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

- (a) The Government of India has taken several initiatives towards creating the carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes CO₂ equivalent through additional forest and tree cover by 2030. 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, Development of Wildlife Habitat and Forest Fire Prevention and Management Scheme to support and supplement the efforts of States and Union Territories. These initiatives also help in conservation of very dense forests and moderately dense forests as well as to increase forest and tree cover.

The Government of India is implementing National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC), comprising of eight Missions, which provides an overarching policy framework for all climate actions in the country. Under NAPCC, National Mission for a Green India (GIM) 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.

GIM was launched in 2015-16 and a total sum of Rs. 492.20 crores has been released to fifteen States and one Union Territory for undertaking afforestation activities over an area of 1,84,161 hectares including restoration of wetlands which contribute to achieving India's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) target.

India has also committed to achieve land degradation neutrality and restoration of 26 million hectares of degraded land by 2030. This will help in preserving forests and biodiversity, facilitating conservation of natural resources and improving carbon sinks. The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change is currently implementing a centrally sponsored scheme 'National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic ecosystems (NPCA)' for conservation and management of wetlands and lakes. NPCA aims at holistic conservation and restoration of wetlands and lakes for achieving the desired water quality enhancement and improvement in biodiversity and ecosystems.

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.

- (b) & (c) The assessment of forest cover and tree cover of the country is carried out biennially by the Forest Survey of India and findings are published in the India State of Forest Report (ISFR). ISFR-2019 is the latest report in the series. As per ISFR 2019, the tree cover of the country is 95,027 square kilometre and as per ISFR 2001, the tree cover was 81,472 square kilometre. Therefore, the tree cover has not declined during this period.

The multi-departmental efforts have yielded good results in conserving and developing forest and tree cover as evident from the fact that the Forest and Tree cover as reported in the latest India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2019 has increased by 13,209 sq km as compared to that of ISFR 2015 assessment.
