

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 2026
TO BE ANSWERED ON 14.03.2022

Non-forest activities in forest areas

2026. SHRI ANUBHAV MOHANTY:

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

- (a) whether the country is losing its forest cover area to non-forest activities at an increasingly alarming rate;
- (b) the strategy adopted by the Government in the absence of an updated National Forest Policy, to preserve the rights of the indigenous people dwelling in the forest area;
- (c) whether the Government come up with an updated National Forest Policy in order to preserve the rights of the indigenous people dwelling in the forest area thereby protecting the forest cover area; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reason therefor?

ANSWER

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

- (a) Forest Survey of India (FSI), Dehradun, an organization under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, carries out assessment of forest cover of the country biennially and publishes the findings in the India State of Forest Report (ISFR). The assessment is based on remote sensing supported by intensive ground verification. As per ISFR-2021, there is an overall increase of 1540 square kilometre in the forest cover at the national level as compared to the previous assessment i.e. ISFR-2019.
- (b)to(d) The National Forest Policy, 1988 is the main policy document containing guiding principles for conservation, protection and management of forests in the country. The principal aim of the National Forest Policy, 1988 is to ensure environmental stability and maintenance of ecological balance including atmospheric equilibrium which are vital for sustenance of all life forms.

The National Forest Policy, 1988 provides a strategy on “Tribal People and Forests” which acknowledges the symbiotic relationship between the tribal people and forests. The policy mentions that while safeguarding the rights and interests of tribal people, forestry programmes should pay special attention to the protection, regeneration and optimum collection of minor forest produce along with institutional arrangements for the marketing of such produce. Hence the existing Forest Policy takes care of the rights of indigenous people dwelling in the forest area along with protection of the forest.
