

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO: 5101**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 04.04.2022

**Steps to Increase Forest Cover**

5101. SHRI SANJAY SADASHIVRAO MANDLIK:  
SHRI SUDHEER GUPTA:  
SHRI PRATAPRAO JADHAV:  
SHRI BIDYUT BARAN MAHATO:  
SHRI DHAIRYASHEEL SAMBHAJIRAO MANE:  
SHRI SHRIRANG APPA BARNE:

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

- (a) whether the Government has recently released the India's State of Forest Report(ISFR), 2021 and if so, the details thereof and the findings of the said report;
- (b) whether as per the report the forest cover in the Northeast is decreasing and natural forests are degrading and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the steps taken by the Government to prevent the same and increase forest cover in the Northeast as well as other parts of the country;
- (d) the total area currently under forest cover in the country along with its percentage share out of the total geographical area; and
- (e) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to make compensatory afforestation plantations more bio-diverse?

**ANSWER**

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

- (a) India State of Forest Report-2021 (ISFR-2021) prepared by Forest Survey of India, an organisation under the Ministry, was released on 13<sup>th</sup> January, 2022. The Salient findings of the ISFR -2021 are as follow:-
  - (i) Forest and Tree Cover of country is increasing.
    - The total forest and tree cover of the country as per 2021 assessment is 8,09,537 square kilometre which is 24.62 % of the geographical area of the country.
    - The current assessment shows an increase of 1,540 square kilometre of forest cover, 721 square kilometre of tree cover and 2,261 square kilometre of Forest and tree cover put together, at the national level as compared to the previous assessment i.e. ISFR 2019.
    - The Very Dense Forest has increased by 501 square kilometre as compared to last assessment.
    - The top five States in terms of increase in forest cover are Andhra Pradesh (647 square kilometre), Telangana (632 square kilometre), Odisha (537 square kilometre), Karnataka (155 square kilometre) and Jharkhand (110 square kilometre). The positive change are increase in vegetation, which can be attributed to conservation measures, afforestation activities, enhance protection measures in plantation as well as in traditional forest areas, expansion of trees outside forest.

- Major loss in Forest Cover is observed in Arunachal Pradesh (257 square kilometre), Manipur (249 square kilometre), Nagaland (235 square kilometre), Mizoram (186 square kilometre) and Meghalaya (73 square kilometre). The negative change correspondent to decrease in forest cover due to harvesting of short rotational plantations, shifting cultivation, biotic pressure, clearance in encroached area and developmental activities.
- (ii) Mangrove cover of the country has shown a positive change.
- Mangrove eco-systems are rich in biodiversity and provide a number of ecological services. They also play a major role in protecting coastal areas from erosion, tidal storms and tsunamis.
  - The current assessment shows that mangrove cover in the country is 4,992 square kilometre, which is 0.15 % of the country's total geographical area.
  - There has been a net increase of 17 square kilometre in the mangrove cover of the country as compared to 2019 assessment. The States showing significant gain in mangrove cover are Odisha (8 square kilometre) and Maharashtra (4 sq km).
- (iii) Growing stock has gone up both inside and outside forest.
- The growing stock estimates of Forest and Trees Outside Forest have been generated at the National and State level. The total growing stock of wood in the country is estimated at 6,167.50 million cum which comprising 4,388.15 million cum inside forest areas and 1,779.35 million cum outside recorded forest areas. The average growing stock per hectare in forest has been estimated as 56.60 cubic metre. There is a total increase of 251.74 million cum in the growing stock of the country as compared to the estimates reported in ISFR 2019.
- (iv) Carbon stock in forest is increasing.
- The carbon stock for 2021 has been estimated 7,204.0 million tonnes. There is an increase of 79.4 million tonnes of carbon stock as compared to the estimates of last assessment of 2019. The annual increase is 39.7 million tonnes, which is 145.6 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent.
- (v) Bamboo stock is increasing.
- The total bamboo bearing area of the country is estimated as 1,49,443 square kilometre. The total estimated green weight of bamboo culms at national level is 402 million tonnes. As compared to the estimate of ISFR-2019, an increase of about 124 million tonnes equivalent green weight of bamboo has been observed in the present assessment.
- (b) As per ISFR-2021, there is an overall decrease of 1,020 square kilometre of forest cover in the North Eastern States namely Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Sikkim and Tripura as compared to the previous assessment in 2019. The loss in forest cover in the North Eastern States may be attributed mainly to natural calamities, anthropogenic pressure, developmental activities and shifting cultivation practices.
- (c) Various schemes are being implemented by the Central and State Government/Union Territory Administration for increase in forest and tree cover in the country. These includes the National Afforestation Programme (NAP) and Green India Mission (GIM) being implemented by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. National Afforestation Programme is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for regeneration of degraded forest and adjoining areas in the country. Now NAP scheme has been merged with Green India Mission. National Mission for a Green India (GIM) is one of the 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 the forest and non-forest areas.

Afforestation activities are also taken up under various programmes/funding sources such as Compensatory Afforestation Funds under Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA), afforestation activities under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA), National Agro-forestry Policy and Sub-mission on Agro-forestry (SMAF), National Bamboo Mission and National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture.

In addition to above, State and UT Governments have their own afforestation and reforestation programmes. Almost every State has activities under social forestry, which largely focuses on tree planting in the areas outside forests. The State Governments in the North Eastern region also take up awareness programme to educate people against shifting cultivation.

- (d) As per ISFR-2021, the forest cover of the country is 7,13,789 square kilometre which is 21.71% of the geographical area of the country.
- (e) As per provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, Forest Conservation Rules and Guidelines, as far as practicable, a mixture of local indigenous species are planted and monoculture of the species is avoided. The States are also taking plantation of local species in the areas identified for compensatory afforestation for ensuring the biodiversity in these areas.

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