GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2218
TO BE ANSWERED ON 09.12.2024

Biodiversity Conservation in Odisha's Coastal and Riverine Ecosystems

2218. SHRI AVIMANYU SETHI:

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

(a) whether the Government has formulated any specific plans or initiatives to conservebiodiversity within the coastal and riverine ecosystems of the State of Odisha, particularly focusing on rare and endangered flora and fauna in Bhadrak and surrounding regions;
(b) the details of measures being implemented to protect and restore habitats critical forsustaining biodiversity in these ecosystems, with a focus on balancing ecological preservation with local community needs; and
(c) the details of metrics or indicators used to assess the success of these biodiversityconservation efforts, especially in terms of preserving species unique to Odisha's coastal andriverine areas?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a) and (b) The Government of India has taken several steps and initiatives to conserve the biodiversitywithin the coastal and riverine ecosystem of State of Odisha including Bhadrak and surrounding regions which includes implementation of National Mission on Sustainable Habitat; National Water Mission; Green India Mission; National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Ecosystems; Amrit Dharohar; Water Resources programme for Repair, Renovation and Restoration of Water bodies; Nagar Van Yojana; Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats and Tangible Incomes; and Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management (CAMPA).

The Government of India, in collaboration with Government of Odisha has undertaken significant measures including the rehabilitation of mangroves as part of the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Project (ICZMP), which encompasses reforestation activities in regions such as Bhitarkanika and the Baitarani delta to safeguard biodiversity and alleviate the effects of cyclones.

Further, for overall biodiversity assessment of Bhadrak and surrounding regions, the People's Biodiversity Register has been documented that *interalia* includes

information regarding agricultural land, fallow lands, marshy land, swamps, riverine tracts, creeks, estuary, oceans and ponds and wide array of biodiversity.

The measures undertaken to protect and restore habitats critical for sustaining biodiversity in coastal and riverine ecosystem pertaining to Bhadrak and surrounding regions includes planting indigenous and mixed species in forest areas, formation of Vana Surakhya Samitis (VSSs) and Eco Development Committees (EDCs), distribution of saplings of different species, creation of water-bodies, raising of mangrove and casuarina plantations.

(c) To evaluate the effectiveness of biodiversity conservation initiatives in the coastal and riverine regions of Odisha, various essential metrics and indicators are commonly utilized such as assessments and documentation of biodiversity richness, including surveys of species diversity and abundance. These metrics encompass trends in species populations, particularly focusing on distinctive or threatened species such as Olive Ridley turtles, Irrawaddy dolphins, estuarine crocodiles, and Horseshoe Crab, which are emblematic of these areas.

In addition, Planning and Convergence Department, Government of Odisha has formulated the Odisha Sustainable Development Goals Indicator Framework (OSIF) document in consultation with all departments and devised indicators for monitoring the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the State. The indicators used to assess the achievement of SDG Goals - Life Below Water (SDG 14) and Life on Land (SDG 15) have direct relevance to biodiversity conservation efforts. These indicators *inter alia* include percentage change in area under mangroves, percentage change in Marine Protected Areas (MPA), percentage of Tree Outside Forest in total forest cover, conservation of local wildlife species.

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