

Get GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2653
TO BE ANSWERED ON 17.03.2025

Environmental Degradation in Tribal Areas

2653. SMT. RACHNA BANERJEE:

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

- (a) the manner in which the Government addressing the environmental degradation in tribal areas, particularly the loss of forests and wildlife and the role are tribal communities playing in environmental conservation;
- (b) the measures taken to address the impact of climate change on tribal communities particularly those who rely on agriculture, forestry and natural resources for their livelihoods;
- (c) the manner in which the Government ensuring the involvement of tribal communities in natural resource management such as forest conservation and water resource management to protect their way of life;
- (d) the details of policies implemented to prevent deforestation and the destruction of tribal habitats due to mining, infrastructure development and industrial activities; and
- (e) the manner in which the Government promoting sustainable development practices in tribal regions that protect the environment while supporting economic growth?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

- (a) to (e) The National Forest Policy, 1988 emphasizes that the life of tribals and other poor people living within and near forests revolves around forests and the rights and concessions enjoyed by them should be fully protected. Having regard to the symbiotic relationship between the tribal people and forests, the Policy also focus to associate the tribal communities closely in the protection, regeneration and development of forests as well as to provide gainful employment to people living in and around the forest.

In consonance of this, the National Forest Policy, 1988 also envisages the national goal to have a minimum of one-third of the total land area under forest or tree cover and two-thirds of the area under such cover in the hill and mountainous regions of the country.

The Ministry provides technical and financial assistance to States/UTs under various schemes and programs namely, Green India Mission, Forest Fire Prevention and Management Scheme, Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA), Nagar Van Yojana (NVY) and Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats & Tangible Incomes (MISHTI). The tree plantation campaign “Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam” was also launched during June 2024 to undertake plantation activities across the country, including in the tribal areas.

Afforestation activities are also taken up under various programmes and schemes of line Ministries such as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, National Bamboo Mission, Sub-Mission on Agroforestry etc. and under schemes of State Government/UT Administration. The multi departmental efforts have yielded good results in conserving and enhancing the forest cover in the country.

Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMCs) and Village Eco-Development Committees (EDCs) have been established, through participatory approaches, at the village levels involving local communities in forest protection, conservation, and management of forests, including enhancing the livelihoods of forest dependent communities and tribals.

The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 recognizes the rights of the forest dwelling tribal communities and other traditional forest dwellers to forest resources, on which these communities were dependent for a variety of needs, including livelihood, habitation and other socio-cultural needs. The Act encompasses rights of self-cultivation and habitation, community rights as well as recognition of traditional customary rights and right to protect, regenerate or conserve or manage any community forest resource for sustainable use.

India’s climate actions across various sectors are embedded in various programme and schemes. The National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) provides the overarching framework for all climate actions and comprises missions in specific areas of solar energy, enhanced energy efficiency, sustainable habitat, water, sustaining Himalayan ecosystems, Green India, sustainable agriculture, human health and strategic knowledge for climate change. All these Missions address the impact of climate change on tribal communities particularly those who rely on agriculture, forestry and natural resources for their livelihoods.

The protection and management of forest and tree resources is primarily the responsibility of the concerned State Government/Union Territory Administration. There are legal frameworks for the protection and management of forest and tree resources which include, the Indian Forest Act 1927, Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam 1980, and the State Forest Acts and Rules. The State Governments /UT Administrations take appropriate actions to protect forests and trees as per the provisions made under these Acts/ Rules.
