

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2696
TO BE ANSWERED ON 17.03.2025

Variation in Forest cover in the Country

2696 SMT. BHARTI PARDHI:
SHRI SHRIRANG APPA CHANDU BARNE:
SHRI BAJRANG MANOHAR SONWANE:

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

- (a) the key findings of the latest India State of Forest Report (ISFR) regarding change in forest and tree coverage;
- (b) whether there has been any change in the forest coverage in the country in the last few decades;
- (c) if so, the details thereof and the challenges faced by the Government in maintaining it;
- (d) the details of the regional variations in forest cover across the country and the details of the factors driving such variations;
- (e) the details of the steps taken by the Government to combat deforestation and promote reforestation and afforestation; and
- (f) the ways the Government addresses the issue of forest conservation while promoting development?

ANSWER

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

- (a)to(f) Forest Survey of India (FSI), Dehradun, an organization under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, carries out the assessment of forest and tree cover of the country biennially and the findings are published in the India State of Forest Report (ISFR).

As per ISFR 2023, the total forest and tree cover of the country is 8,27,356.95 square kilometer which is 25.17 per cent of the geographical area of the country. This includes 7,15,342.61 square kilometer as forest cover and 1,12,014.34 square kilometer as tree cover. The current assessment shows an increase of 1445.81 square kilometer in the forest and tree cover as compared to the last assessment of 2021. This includes 156.41 square kilometer in the forest cover and 1289.4 square kilometer in the tree cover.

There has been a net increase of 16,630.25 square kilometer in forest cover during last ten years in the country between ISFR 2013 and ISFR 2023. Hence, the forest and tree cover of the country is not only maintained but has shown net increase over the last decade due to implementation of various policies and programs including conservation efforts made by the respective States/UTs. There is an increasing trend of forest and tree cover in the country since last decade.

The forest cover assessment is a wall-to-wall mapping exercise based on remote sensing supported by intensive ground verification and field data from the National Forest Inventory. Besides state-wise forest and tree cover assessment, the ISFR 2023 has also provided details for three specific region of the country, namely, Western Ghats Eco-Sensitive Areas (WGESA), Hill Districts of the Country and North Eastern Region. As per ISFR 2023, the forest cover in all districts under WGESA is 44,043.99 square kilometer, forest cover in the hills districts of the country is 2,83,713.20 square kilometer and the total forest and tree cover in the North Eastern Region of the country is 1,74,394.70 square kilometer.

The protection and management of forest and tree resources is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations. There are legal frameworks for the protection and management of forest and tree resources of the country which include, the Indian Forest Act 1927, Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam 1980, Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 and the State Forest Acts and Rules.

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change issues advisories to the State Governments/UT Administrations for protection and conservation of the forests. In this regard, various measures taken by the State Forest Departments include survey and demarcation of forest areas, fixing of pillars along forest boundary and regular patrolling by field staff.

In addition, the Ministry provides technical and financial support to the States /UTs for protection, conservation and management of forests in the country. For afforestation, the Government has provided funds under various schemes and programmes such as National Mission for a Green India (GIM), Development of Wildlife Habitats (DWH), Forest Fire Prevention and Management Schemes (FFPMS), Nagar Van Yojana (NVY) and Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats and Tangible Income (MISHTI). These schemes supports the efforts of the States and UTs for ecological restoration through afforestation in and outside forest areas, forest landscape restoration, habitat improvement, soil and water conservation measures, and protection etc. Afforestation is also carried out by the States/ UTs under the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA).

A campaign एक_पेड़_माँ_के_नाम #Plant4Mother has been launched on the occasion of World Environment Day 2024 to undertake plantation activities across the country following the “Whole of Government” and “Whole of Society” approach with participation of all stakeholders for increasing the green cover.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change while regulating the diversion of forest land for various developmental purposes under the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980; a balance between conservation and development is ensured with appropriate mitigation measures which includes the Compensatory Afforestation (CA), payment of Net Present Value (NPV), Soil and Moisture Conservation Works, and the site specific conservation plan.
