

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-767
TO BE ANSWERED ON- 24/07/2025

IMPLEMENTATION OF FOREST RIGHTS ACT

767. SHRI SELVAGANAPATHI T.M.:

Will the Minister of TRIBAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the implementation of the Forest Rights Act (FRA) has attributed negative changes in forest and tree cover as per the India State of Forest Report (ISFR), 2023 and if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether it is also a fact that such claims were made without adequate scientific evidence and if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also true that over 150 forest rights and civil society groups have demanded that the Government reject the ISFR's claims regarding negative changes in forest cover being partly attributed to the implementation of FRA and if so, the details thereof; and

(d) whether it is also a fact that the FRA does not deal with the regularisation of encroachments and instead acknowledges pre-existing rights that are already being exercised by eligible individuals and communities dwelling in forest areas and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRIBAL AFFAIRS

(SHRI DURGA DAS UIKEY)

(a) & (b): The 'India State of Forest Report' 2023 has been published by Forest Survey of India (FSI) under the Ministry for Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC). The report contains information on forest cover, tree cover, mangrove cover, growing stock, carbon stock in India's forests, instances of forest fire, Agro forestry, etc. The said report mentions that the negative changes in the forest cover may be due to - Harvesting of short rotation plantations or other forms of logging, Shifting cultivation practices, Human activities, such as encroachment, Natural Calamities like storms, floods, and landslides, Titles given to beneficiaries under the Forest Rights Act (2006). In this regard, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs has raised concerns about the scientific validity of this claim with MoEFCC.

(c) : Yes, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs has received the said representation.

(d) : Forest Rights Act (FRA) was enacted to recognize and vest forest rights in legitimate claimants who were present in forest areas before December 13, 2005. Furthermore, FRA does not deal/lead to the regularization of encroachments. Instead, it acknowledges pre-existing rights that are already being exercised by eligible individuals and communities dwelling in forest areas, including national parks and sanctuaries as per the provisions of the FRA.
