

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 223
TO BE ANSWERED ON 20.07.2026

Restoration of Native Forests

223. SMT. RACHNA BANERJEE:

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

- (a) whether the Government has taken note of recent studies indicating that an increase in tree plantations does not necessarily improve natural forest biodiversity;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the steps being taken to promote restoration of native forests instead of monoculture plantations; and
- (d) the measures adopted to monitor the ecological quality of forests under various afforestation programmes?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (c) Forest areas constitute complex ecological landscapes comprising a mosaic of diverse ecosystems, including forests, wetlands, grasslands, scrublands, rivers, and other natural habitats. These interconnected ecosystems collectively support rich biodiversity, sustain ecological processes, regulate hydrological and climatic functions, and provide a wide range of ecosystem services. Accordingly, conservation and management of forest areas are undertaken through an integrated landscape approach that recognizes the ecological interdependence of these various ecosystems.

Afforestation and eco-restoration activities in forest areas are undertaken with scientific and technical approach ensuring heterogeneous mix of native plant species. Apart from plantations the same principle is followed in seed sowing of grasses, sedges and seed sowing along soil moisture conservation structures. This is done to ensure a stratified, multi species floral composition in the forest which in turn supports faunal biodiversity. Such afforestation, forest restoration and biodiversity conservation programmes, with due emphasis on conservation of natural forests, restoration of degraded forest landscapes with use of locally suitable indigenous species, and enhancement of ecosystem functions lead to rich biodiverse forests.

(d) The ecological quality of forest areas created and restored under various afforestation programmes is monitored through frameworks prescribed under the respective programme guidelines. The implementation and monitoring of afforestation activities are primarily done by the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations, which undertake periodic field inspections and assessments to ensure adherence to approved technical standards and the

achievement of ecological objectives. Monitoring includes evaluation of plantation survival, species composition, regeneration, and site conditions, as applicable under the respective schemes. In addition, the biennial India State of Forest Report (ISFR), published by the Forest Survey of India, provides a comprehensive assessment of the country's forest and tree cover using remote sensing and field-based inventory. The report serves as an important national-level tool for assessing changes in forest and tree cover, growing stock, forest health and other related parameters, thereby providing valuable inputs for evaluating the overall ecological status of forest landscapes and informing policy, planning and management interventions.
