

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2333
TO BE ANSWERED ON 03.08.2026

Forest Conservation Schemes

2333. SHRI VIJAYAKUMAR *ALIAS* VIJAY VASANTH:

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

- (a) whether forest-dependent communities are involved in conservation efforts, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons for lack of community participation;
- (b) whether funds allocated under forest conservation schemes have been fully utilised, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons for underutilisation;
- (c) whether climate change has exacerbated forest degradation and forest fires, if so, the details thereof and measures taken to mitigate such risks;
- (d) whether the Government has assessed the impact of mining activities in forest areas, if so, the details thereof and the steps taken to regulate environmentally sensitive zones;
- (e) whether wildlife habitats are being adversely affected due to shrinking forest cover, if so, the details thereof and conservation strategies implemented to protect biodiversity, and
- (f) whether policies exist to prevent fragmentation of forests due to infrastructure expansion, if so, the details thereof and effectiveness of such measures?

ANSWER

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

- (a) Forest-dependent communities are actively involved in forest conservation and sustainable forest management through various programmes and institutional mechanisms. Emphasis is given on promoting participatory forest management is by involving local communities through Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMCs) and Eco-Development Committees (EDCs) around Protected Areas constituted by State Governments. These institutions participate in various activities for protection of forests including preventing illegal felling, management of forest fires, afforestation activities, restoration of degraded forests, and sustainable management of forest resources.

Further, the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 recognize and vest forest rights in eligible forest-dwelling communities and empower Gram Sabhas to protect, regenerate, conserve, and manage community forest resources for sustainable use, thereby strengthening the role of local communities in forest conservation.

- (b) & In order to increase the forest and tree cover and restore degraded forest lands the
(c) Ministry provides technical and financial support to the States and Union Territories (UTs) under various schemes and programmes such as National Mission for a Green India (GIM), Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA), Nagar Van Yojana, Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats & Tangible Incomes (MISHTI), etc.

In addition, the National Action Plan on Forest Fires, 2018 provides a comprehensive framework for prevention, detection, control and management of forest fires through capacity building, use of modern technology, community participation and strengthening of forest fire management systems. The Ministry provides financial assistance to the States and Union Territories under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme, 'Forest Fire Prevention and Management' for integrated management of forest fire.

- (d) The Government assesses the environmental and ecological impacts of mining proposals in forest areas through the statutory appraisal processes prescribed under the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980, the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, and other applicable laws and rules. Mining proposals in forest areas are examined on a case-to-case basis, taking into account site-specific ecological features, likely impacts on wildlife and habitats, and the mitigation measures proposed.

- (e) As per India State of Forest Report, (ISFR) 2023, the forest and tree cover of the country is 8,27,356.95 square kilometer which is 25.17% of the total geographical area of the country. The forest and tree cover of the country has increased by 1445.81 square kilometer as compared to the last assessment of ISFR 2021.

A network of protected areas namely, National Parks, Sanctuaries, Conservation Reserves and Community Reserves covering important wildlife habitats have been notified all over the country under the provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, to conserve wild animals and their habitats. The number of Protected Areas have increased to 1134. Further, there are 58 Tiger Reserves and 33 Elephant Reserves. In addition, for maintaining the ecological connectivity, 32 tiger corridors and 150 Elephant corridors have been identified.

- (f) The diversion of forest land for non-forestry purposes, including infrastructure projects, is regulated under the provisions of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 and the rules and guidelines issued thereunder. Proposals involving diversion of forest land are examined on a case-to-case basis taking into consideration forestry, wildlife and environmental perspectives. While considering such proposals, emphasis is given to minimise the requirement of forest land and to avoid or reduce fragmentation of forests.
