

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:116
ANSWERED ON:28.07.2003
FOREST COVER AND ILLEGAL FELLING OF TREES
BIR SING MAHATO;MADAN PRASAD JAISWAL

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the forest cover in the States has been shrinking despite spending of thousands of crores rupees by the Union Government on the afforestation;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether any officials have been held responsible for this work during the last two years;
- (d) if so, the details thereof, States-wise;
- (e) whether illegal felling of trees has taken place during the last three years and is still continuing in certain States including Orissa due to the nexus between forest officials and forest mafia; and
- (f) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto and action being taken thereon?

Answer

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R.BAALU)

- (a) No, Sir. The forest cover in the country according to 1999 assessment made by Forest Survey of India was 637,293 Sq. Km. while according to 2001 assessment, it has been estimated as 675,538 Sq. Km.
- (b) to (d) Does not arise.
- (e) & (f) There is no report with the Central Government regarding forest personnel having connections with forest mafia. However, the cases of illegal felling of trees do occur in various States including Orissa and on detection, action is taken by officials of the State Governments under Indian Forest Act, 1927 and other relevant Acts. The implementation of the provisions of these Acts and Rules is the responsibility of the State Governments.