

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:117

ANSWERED ON:28.07.2003

UNAUTHORISED CULTIVATION OF GANJA IN THE RESERVE FORESTS

CHANDRA NATH SINGH;NVEDITA MANE

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

(a) whether the Government are aware that a large area of reserve forests is being used for unauthorised cultivation of Ganja in various parts of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise and location-wise; and

(c) the steps taken/being taken by the Government to check the Ganja cultivation in the reserve forests?

Answer

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT & FORESTS (SH. T.R.BAALU)

(a) to (c) The statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement referred to in reply to parts (a) to (c) of the Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 117 due for reply on 28-07-2003.

(a) & (b) The unauthorized cultivation of Ganja is not a common occurrence in the Reserve Forests of the Country. According to the information provided by the Governments of Tamil Nadu and Kerala, the extent of Ganja Cultivation within the forest area during the year 2002 is as follows. No large scale Ganja cultivation in Reserve Forests has been reported during the said period by other States.

Tamil Nadu - This activity is mainly confined along the Western Ghats in Theni, Kodaikanal, Thirunelveli and Dharmapuri Districts. During the year 2002 Ganja has been destroyed in 36.198 ha.

Kerala - The inaccessible forest area of Attappady Hills in Palakkad District and Idduki District are found to be more susceptible. During the year 2002, a total of 256510 Ganja plants were destroyed.

(c) To prevent cultivation of Ganja in and around Reserve Forests, Government of Tamil Nadu has formed Special Protection Squads to keep continuous vigil on these areas. With the coordinated efforts of Revenue, Police, Forest officials, and State Police Narcotic Bureau wing cultivation of Ganja in fresh areas is being kept under check.

Forest Department, Kerala has set up an Anti Ganja Squad under the charge of Assistant Conservator of Forests to curb the illegal cultivation and take action against offenders. Regular raids and combing operations in susceptible areas are being conducted by the territorial and flying squads divisional forest officers. An intelligence cell is functioning under the Chief Conservator of Forest (Vigilance) to gather secret information on such illegal activities. Two units of rapid action force consisting of personnel of Police and Forest Departments are also functioning for taking action against Ganja cultivation.

In addition, Government of India has taken a number of steps to curb drug trafficking as well as measures to destroy illicit growth of cannabis in the Country. These include:

(i) Empowerment of a large number of Central and State Agencies under Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985, to ensure its effective implementation.

(ii) Improved coordination between various Drug Law Enforcement Agencies in order to have better coordination to have a check on the illegal activity.

(iii) Strengthening of the Intelligence Apparatus to improve the collection, analysis and dissemination of operational intelligence.

(iv) Training to upgrade the skill of law enforcement officers.