

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:109  
ANSWERED ON:31.07.2000  
DECLINE IN FOREST COVER  
BRIJLAL KHABRI;JASKAUR MEENA

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

- (a) whether the country's forest cover has drastically declined during the past few years;
- (b) if so, the factors responsible for such a steep decline in forest cover;
- (c) the total forest area in the country as on date in comparison to the last three years;
- (d) whether the study conducted recently by the UNFPA in this regard has revealed sharp decline in forest cover in the country;
- (e) if so, whether the Government have formulated any scheme for the safety of the forests;
- (f) if so, the details thereof; and
- (g) the amount sanctioned for those schemes?

**Answer**

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

(a),(b),(c),(d),(e),(f)&(g) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT IN RESPECT OF PART (a) to (g) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 109 DUE FOR REPLY ON 31.7.2000 REGARDING DECLINE IN FOREST COVER

(a), (b) & (c) Forest Survey of India assesses forest cover of the country biennially using satellite data. The assessment shows that forest cover of the country has marginally declined from 19.49% (6,40,819 sq.km) to 19.39% (6,37,293 sq.km) between 1981-1983 to 1995-1998. Details of each assessment of forest cover are as under:

No.	Assessment	Satellite Forest Data	Forest Cover as %age of geographical area
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1	First	1981-83	640819	19.49
2	Second	1985-87	638804	19.43
3	Third	1987-89	639364	19.45
4	Fourth	1989-91	639386	19.45
5	Fifth	1991-93	638879	19.43
6	Sixth	1993-95	633397	19.26
7	Seventh	1995-98	637293	19.39

Some of the factors affecting forest cover are unsustainable withdrawals from forests due to large gap in demand and supply, shifting cultivation, forest fires, inadequate pasture lands, diversion of forest lands for non forestry purposes and inadequate investments.

(d) No, Sir. According to the Report of United National Population Fund (UNFPA) titled "Population and Forests- A Report on India, 2000", "forest cover of the country declined only marginally in the period 1989-1997". The Report also states that forest cover of the country has declined from 22% of geographical area in 1951 to 19% in 1997. However, scientific assessment of forest cover of India, using satellite data of 1981-83, was done by the Ministry of Environment and Forests for the first time in 1987 and has since continued biennially. The UNFPA Report has compared the forest cover, as assessed by the Ministry of Environment and Forests since 1987, to the figures of recorded forest area of 1951 and 1969, which are not comparable.

(e), (f) & (g) The Ministry of Environment and Forests implements Centrally Sponsored Schemes for conservation and development of

forests. An indicative list of such schemes is as under:

S.No	Name of the Scheme for Ninth Plan (Rs.in crores)	Objectives of the scheme	Outlay approved
1.	Integrated Afforestation & Eco-Development Projects Scheme	Integrated afforestation and development of watersheds	247.00
2.	Area Oriented Fuelwood & Fodder Projects Scheme	Augmenting production of fuelwood and fodder	135.00
3.	Conservation Development of Non-timber Forest Produce including medicinal plants.	& Production of Non-timber forest produce with special emphasis on bamboo & medicinal plants.	80.50
4.	Tree & Pasture Seed Development Scheme	Generating quality seeds.	6.00
5.	Grant-in-Aid Scheme Voluntary Agencies afforestation and planting	to Aid to voluntary agencies and NGOs for tree	8.00
6.	Association Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes in regeneration of degraded Forests	of Regeneration of degraded forest by associating Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes	15.00
7.	Modern Forest Control Methods	Fire Prevention & control of Forest Fires	40.00
8.	Development National Parks and Sanctuary	of Scientific management of habitat and protection of wildlife.	70.00
9.	Project Tiger	Protecting entire eco-system forming part of habitat of the tiger	75.00
10.	Beneficiary Oriented Scheme for Tribal Development Sanctuaries	Relocation of tribal families living in National Parks &	19.00
11.	Eco-development Sanctuaries and National Park including Tiger Reserves	around To harmonise development and conservation through activities that are ecologically sustainable.	175.00