

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4323  
ANSWERED ON:12.08.2002  
FOREST COVER  
SHYAMA SINGH

**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 details thereof and the factors responsible therefor, State-wise;
- (c) whether the study conducted by UNFPA in this regard has revealed sharp decline in forest cover in the country; and
- (d) if so, the plans formulated by the Government to save the forests?

**Answer**

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

( a ) & ( b ) No, Sir. As per the last State of Forest Report 1999, forest cover in the country has increased by 3896 Sq Km during the period 1996 to 1998.

( c ) In the report of UNFPA, the forest cover assessed by Forest Survey of India in the period 1987 to 1997 has been compared with the figures of recorded forest area of 1951 and 1969, which are not comparable.

(d) Various plans formulated by the Government to save and increase forest are:

i) Afforestation programs are undertaken by State Governments from their own resources as well as with financial assistance from Government of India.

(ii) Externally Aided Projects are being implemented for the development and preservation of forests.

(iii) Guidelines have been issued to all States/UTs to involve village communities in protection and regeneration of degraded forests.

(iv) Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 has been enacted to regulate the diversion of forest land for non-forestry purposes.

(v) A net work of protected areas has been established.

(vi) Ministry of Environment and Forests has prepared a National Forestry Action Programme to enhance the contribution of forestry and tree resources for ecological stability and people centered development through increased investments in conservation and development of forest resources.