

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:788
ANSWERED ON:12.07.2004
EFFECTS OF FOREST FIRES
Chowdhury Shri Adhir Ranjan

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

- (a) the details of the deleterious effects of forest fires on the regeneration capacity of natural forests including the regeneration of Sal (*Shorea robusta*);
- (b) whether any study has been under taken in this regard;
- (c) if so, the findings thereof;
- (d) whether forests in our country predominantly Sal are being gradually thinned out by the recurring forest fires and collection of leaves etc;
- (e) whether the Government has constituted any Technology Mission on preventing forest fires; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA)

- (a) Recurrent or uncontrolled forest fires influence the natural regeneration capacity of natural forests including Sal forests by affecting the viability & development of seeds, damage to young saplings & mature stands making them susceptible to pests & diseases, altering the soil properties etc.
- (b) & (c) Yes Sir. Few studies have been carried out in the Western Ghats, Himalayan region and in the Eastern Ghats, which have focused on regeneration status of certain species due to forest fires. It has been reported that in Western Ghats many endemic species are disappearing from their native habitat due to recurrent forest fires. In Eastern Ghats it has been reported that the regeneration of sandal trees in its natural habitat and regeneration of many species in Shola Forests has been adversely affected due to forest fires
- (d) Recurring forests fires, heavy lopping of Sal trees for collection of Sal leaves and burning of ground for Sal Seed collection etc. have adversely affected natural Sal forests.
- (e) & (f) There is no formal technology mission on forest fires as such but protection and control of unregulated forest fire has always been a priority issue with the ministry. A pilot project was launched in two states during 1985-1990 to address the problem of damage to forests from uncontrolled forest fires. Based on the success of the pilot project, the scheme titled `Forest Fire Control Methods` was launched during VIIIth -plan in 11-states and later on area of operation of the scheme was extended to all the states. During Xth plan, Integrated Forest Protection Scheme is under implementation which has Forest Fire Control and Management as one of the important component. The total outlay for the 10th plan is Rs. 445 Crores.