

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO: 201
TO BE ANSWERED ON 21.12.2023

III-effects of climate change

*201. SHRI IRANNA KADADI:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether climate change is going to be one of the major concerns in the near future affecting millions in the country;
- (b) if so, the steps taken by the Ministry to mitigate the effects of climate change;
- (c) whether the forest cover in the country has increased;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) whether Government has taken any steps to increase the forest land in the country during the last three years?

ANSWER

MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI BHUPENDER YADAV)

(a) to (e): The statement is laid on the table of the House.

Statement referred to in reply to part (a) to (e) of Rajya Sabha Starred Question No. 201 due for reply on 21/12/2023 regarding 'Ill-effects of climate change' by Shri Iranna Kadadi

(a) and (b): As per Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability-Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC); Global warming, reaching 1.5°C in the near-term, would cause unavoidable increases in multiple climate hazards and present multiple risks to ecosystems and humans. The level of risk will depend on concurrent near-term trends in vulnerability, exposure, level of socioeconomic development and adaptation. Near-term actions that limit global warming to close to 1.5°C would substantially reduce projected losses and damages related to climate change in human systems and ecosystems, compared to higher warming levels, but cannot eliminate them all.

As per the third national communication submitted by India to the United Nations Framework convention on the Climate Change (UNFCCC) in December 2023, India is experiencing full range of climate change impacts, ranging from floods and droughts to heat waves and glacier melt. The Government is seized of the matter and has taken number of steps to reduce the vulnerability and mitigate the impacts of the climate change.

India's blueprint on climate action, the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC), encompasses nine National Missions, both on adaptation and mitigation, and covers various climate-vulnerable sectors. Of these nine Missions, three pertain to developing energy sources and improving energy efficiency to reduce the emission of Greenhouse Gases into the atmosphere. The remaining six have specific components of adaptation incorporated into the respective mission objectives. The missions are highly interconnected and include measures to facilitate action across sectors. State-level Action Plans on Climate Change (SAPCCs) have also been formulated with a higher focus on adaptation and afforestation than on mitigation. Agriculture, water, health, forests, and coasts are the major sectors which have been covered for addressing State-specific climate impacts.

Apart from NAPCC and SAPCCs, the Government has been implementing a series of schemes to maintain a high economic growth rate to improve the living standards of its people, to strengthen the adaptive capacities of the vulnerable communities and to reduce their vulnerability to the impacts of climate change.

The Government has been pursuing a two-pronged policy approach by mainstreaming adaptation into its developmental planning through a qualitative shift in its growth trajectory and by drawing adaptation benefits from the ongoing schemes. Various Ministries of the Government of India have been consistently developing and implementing relevant climate adaptation programmes to protect the natural environment and to reduce social and economic vulnerabilities and build adaptive capacities to withstand both current and future climate change impacts.

(c) and (d): As per the latest India State of Forest Report (ISFR)-2021, the total forest cover of the country is 7,13,789 square kilometer, which is 21.71% of the geographical area of the country. The forest cover has increased by 1,540 square kilometer between ISFR 2019 and ISFR 2021 assessments.

(e): The Ministry provides technical and financial assistance to States/UTs under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes namely, Green India Mission (GIM), Forest Fire Prevention and Management Scheme, Compensatory Afforestation Fund (CAMPA), Nagar Van Yojana and other schemes of line ministries to increase the forest and tree cover of the country as per the mandate of National Forest Policy, 1988.

Green India Mission which was initiated during 2015-16, aims at protection, restoring and enhancing India's forest cover by restoring degraded forest lands and undertaking afforestation activities in the forest and non-forest areas.

The Ministry is implementing the Nagar Van Yojana which envisages creation of 600 Nagar Vans and 400 Nagar Vatika in the country during the period 2020-21 to 2026-27. The Nagar Van Yojana aims at enhancing the green cover in the urban and peri-urban areas and augmenting biological diversity.

The CAMPA is being utilized by States/UTs as per provisions of Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act, 2016 (CAF Act) and CAF Rules, 2018, for taking up compensatory afforestation for compensating the loss of forest & tree cover undergone due to the diversion of forest land for developmental projects.

Afforestation activities are also taken up under various programmes and schemes of line Ministries such as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, National Bamboo Mission, Sub-Mission on Agroforestry etc. and under schemes of State Government/UT Administration. The multi departmental efforts have yielded good results in conserving and enhancing the forest cover in the country.
