

(d) The studies conducted world over suggest that the changes in biodiversity due to human activities have been occurring more rapidly in the past 50 years than at any other time in human history. The main reason of biodiversity loss are habitat degradation, over exploitation of natural resources, proliferation of invasive alien species and climate change.

Spread of silicosis

1093. SHRI GOVINDRAO WAMANRAO ADIK: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has taken note of the spread of silicosis caused by the quarries and stone crushing factories and toll of human life as a result thereof year after year especially among the workers in quarries;

(b) if so, the effective steps taken by Government to prevent air pollution by such factories; and

(c) the toll of human lives caused by silicosis during the last three years and the current year, so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) Prolonged exposure to silica dust may cause silicosis and silico-tuberculosis in stone quarries and stone crushing factories. The steps taken by the Government to prevent air pollution include the following:—

1. Model Rules have been framed in manipulation of stone or any other material containing free silica under Section 87, of the Factories Act, 1948. The said Schedule contains provisions relating to precautions in manipulation such as damping the stone, providing water spray, enclosing the process, isolating the process, providing localized exhaust ventilation and maintenance of the floors etc. for prevention and control of particulates.
2. Stringent National Ambient Air Quality Standards have been notified recently under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
3. The Coal Mines Regulations, 1957 and Metalliferous Mines Regulations, 1961 provide for wet drilling and use of dust extractors in metal mines, wet cutting and use of dust extractors in coal mines with periodic monitoring of work environment for measures to keep respirable dust within permissible limits, monitoring of airborne dust through regular sampling and analysis, taking control measures where permissible limits exceed and use of personal protective equipments like dust respirators.
4. Emission standards have also been notified under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 in respect of Suspended Particulate Matter (SPM) to reduce/contain dust from stone crushers. In addition, the units are also required to adopt following control measures:—
 - Dust containment cum suppression system for the process equipment.

- Construction of wind breaking walls.
- Construction of the metalled roads within the premises.
- Regular cleaning and wetting of the ground within the premises.
- Growing of a green belt along the periphery of units.

(c) No death caused by silicosis has been reported to the Directorate-General of Mines Safety by mine management during the last three years and the current year. In case of stone crushing units, no case of silicosis has been reported from the States except two cases of silicosis from the State of Gujarat.

Control of emission

1094. SHRI MOINUL HASSAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether there is any outside pressure to announce measures for control of emission;
- (b) if so, what steps Government has taken to resist the pressure;
- (c) whether it is a fact that Government is working together with G5 and G77 countries; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) In the International Negotiations on Climate Change, developed country Parties have advocated that large developing economies should also commit themselves to emission reduction targets. However, India's stand is that, as per the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), developing countries, including India have no obligation to reduce their emissions. India's per capita emissions are meagre 1.2 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent and the total GHG emissions from the country is only 3 to 4% of the global emissions. India has argued that social and economic development and poverty eradication are our overriding priority and emission reduction commitment will adversely affect our economic growth. India has expressed its willingness to take mitigation actions as supported and enabled by transfer of technology and finance by developed countries.

(c) and (d) The Government is fully engaged with our partners in G5 and G77 countries and have coordinated its approach in all international meetings together with partner countries. However, differences still persist in the approach of developed and developing countries towards mitigation actions, long-term goal for emission reduction and provision of financial resources for addressing climate change impact and vulnerabilities. Parties are expected to reach an agreed outcome in the climate change negotiations at Copenhagen in December, 2009.

Scheme on social forestry

1095. SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state: