

of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF & CC) is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme “National Afforestation Programme (NAP)” for regeneration of degraded forests through people’s participation. The NAP scheme provides for seven different models of plantations with generally mixed species wherein number of plants varies from 200 plants per hectare to 2000 plants per hectare. The tree species to be planted is selected by members of local community on the basis of their needs, ecological conditions and other local factors in consultation with the State Forest Department. The native forestry species are encouraged for plantation in the forest areas giving special importance to trees with multiple uses including medicinal plants. During 2014-15, an amount of Rs. 605.34 lakhs has been sanctioned under NAP for planting an area of 1348 ha. under its Model “Regeneration of perennial herbs and shrubs of medicinal value”.

Afforestation/tree plantation activities being the cross-sectoral effort are taken up under various centrally sponsored and State sponsored Plan/Non-Plan Schemes. The afforestation achievements are monitored by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) under Twenty Point Programme (TPP) according to which about 122 crore seedlings have been reportedly planted during 2014-15 including medicinal plants in the public and forest lands of the country. The species wise number of planted trees is not maintained under twenty point programme.

Failure of Heavy Industries to meet Environmental Norms

2743. DR. T. N. SEEMA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether certain heavy industries are failing to meet environmental norms despite securing certification for high level of environmental and safety management systems, if so, the details thereof and the action taken thereon;

(b) whether Government is considering to increase the environmental norms and standards for such industries; and

(c) if so, the details thereof along with the reviews on environmental clearance being given to these industries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR): (a) Heavy industries like thermal power, integrated iron and steel, cement, fertilizer, refinery etc. are required to comply with the prescribed environmental standards. The standards prescribed are monitored by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) / State Pollution Control Boards/Pollution Control Committees. In the last two years (2013-14 and 2014-15) 307

industrial units were inspected by the Environmental Surveillance Squad of CPCB and directions were issued under Section 5 of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 to 41 non-compliant industrial units. These industrial units included major sectors like thermal power, integrated iron and steel, cement, fertilizer, refinery etc.

(b) and (c) Revision of existing standards is a continuous process. The current process of revision covers major sectors like thermal power, cement, paint and fertilizer. The revision lays emphasis on conservation of water, energy efficiency and stricter standards. Directions have been issued to these industries to install 24X7 continuous effluent and emission monitoring devices. The Ministry stipulates specific conditions in environmental clearance for compliance as per the latest standards notified.

Steps taken to prevent desertification in Maharashtra

2744. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:-

(a) whether Government is aware that due to consistent drought conditions in various parts of Maharashtra fast desertification is taking place, if so, the details thereof; and

(b) what action Government has taken or propose to take to prevent desertification of drought prone areas of Maharashtra?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR): (a) Desertification refers to land degradation including loss of soil productivity, in arid, semi arid and dry sub-humid areas resulting from various factors, including climatic variations and human activities. Consistent drought conditions do not necessarily result in fast desertification because productivity of soil can be restored unless degradation has gone beyond threshold levels.

As per the Desertification & Land Degradation Atlas of India published by the Space Application Centre, Department of Space, Government of India in 2007, about 32.07% of the geographical area of the country is under the process of desertification/land degradation and 43.41% of the total geographical area of the State of Maharashtra is under desertification/land degradation. There is no report with the Government indicating fast desertification in the country or Maharashtra. However, Government of Maharashtra has reported 26 districts in the State as a drought affected districts.

(b) The primary responsibility to address land related issues lies with State