

facilities, improved wood crematoria, river front/bathing ghat development, etc. Project proposals are received from the State Governments from time to time for taking up pollution abatement works in towns along various rivers, and are considered for financial assistance under the NRCP subject to their conformity with the scheme guidelines, pollution status, prioritisation, appraisal by independent institutions and availability of Plan funds.

Further, to ensure proper treatment of municipal sewage before discharge into the rivers, CPCB has issued directions under Section 18 1(b) of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 to all the SPCBs/Pollution Control Committees (PCCs) in the country, including Chhattisgarh regarding setting up of sewage treatment plants in their respective States. CPCB has also issued directions to municipal authorities of 184 towns (66 metropolitan cities and State capitals + towns along Ganga) under Section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 for proper treatment and disposal of sewage generated to control pollution in rivers.

#### **Land Degradation and desertification**

2422. SHRI BHUBANESWAR KALITA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether land degradation and desertification are causing serious problems to the country's land map;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) measures being contemplated by Government to tackle the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI BABUL SUPRIYO): (a) and (b) A 2016 report by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) revealed that about 29 percent of India's land is degraded. A project entitled, "Desertification status Mapping", under the National Natural Resources Management System (NNRMS) Scheme, funded by Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change has been completed by Space Applications Centre, ISRO. The important outcome of the project was the "Desertification and Land Degradation Atlas of India". The Atlas was prepared at 1:500,000 scale for 2011-13 and 2003-05 time frame and presents Desertification/ Land Degradation Status maps depicting land use, process of degradation and severity level along with area statistics consolidated for entire country. The analysis revealed that 96.4 million hectares of the country is

undergoing process of land degradation *i.e.*, 29.23 per cent of the total geographical area of the country during 2011-13.

(c) Bonn Challenge is a global goal to bring into restoration 150 million hectares of degraded and deforested lands by 2020 and additional 200 million hectares by 2030. India also joined the voluntary Bonn Challenge pledge, to bring into restoration 13 million hectares of degraded and deforested land by the year 2020, and additional 8 million hectares by 2030. India's pledge is the largest from Asia. This Ministry implements National Afforestation Programme (NAP) for afforestation and eco-restoration of degraded forests in the country through people's participation involving Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMCs) at village level. An amount of ₹ 572.68 crores has been released to the all States during last five years (2014-15 to 2018-19) to carry out afforestation and ancillary activities under the scheme.

Besides, MoEF&CC fixes afforestation targets under 20 point Programme annually to each State/UTs. Tree Plantation / Afforestation activities, being the multi departmental effort, are taken up cross- sectorally by various Departments, NGOs, Civil Societies, Corporate bodies etc. under various Central and State Plan/Non Plan Schemes.

#### **Increase in forest area**

2423. SHRI ABDUL WAHAB: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the States where the forest area has increased during each of the last three years; and

(b) steps taken to increase the forest area in the Southern States?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI BABUL SUPRIYO): (a) Forest Survey of India, Dehradun, organization under the Ministry carries out assessment of forest cover of the country biennially and findings are published in India State of Forest Report (ISFR). As per the latest report *i.e.* ISFR- 2017, the total forest and tree cover in the country is 8,02,088 square kilometre (forest cover 7,08,273 square kilometre, tree cover 93,815 square kilometre) which is 24.39% of the geographical area of the country. There is an increase of 8,021 square kilometre (forest cover 6,778 square kilometre, tree cover 1,243 square kilometre) of total forest and tree cover compared to that of ISFR-2015. The