

The reasons for increase in forests and tree cover can be attributed to better conservation strategies, afforestation and reforestation activities. Besides many afforestation schemes, the compensatory afforestation has been carried out over 3528.06 sq km between 2006-2018 which has also led to increase in forest and tree cover.

(d) The data regarding cutting of trees is maintained by the State Government. India ranks 8th among top 10 countries reporting greatest annual forest area gain as reported in Global Forest Resource Assessment 2015 published by Food and Agriculture Organisation.

(e) Protection and management of trees is primarily the responsibility of State/ Union Territory Governments. There are strong legal frameworks for protection and management of tree resources of the country which include the National Forest Policy, 1988, Indian Forest Act, 1927, Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and State Forest Acts/State Specific Tree Preservation Acts and Rules, etc. The State/UT Governments take appropriate actions in accordance with the provisions made under these acts/rules for regulating felling of trees.

#### **Earmarking of funds for Corporate Environment Responsibility**

179. SHRI SAMBHAJI CHHATRAPATI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has introduced a provision under the guidelines to set aside funds up to two per cent towards Corporate Environment Responsibility for every corporate seeking environment clearance;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether the provision has come into force with immediate effect or is likely to be introduced some time later?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI BABUL SUPRIYO): (a) and (b) Yes Sir. The Ministry *vide* OM dated 01.05.2018 has introduced guidelines to set aside funds towards Corporate Environment Responsibility for every development project seeking environment clearance.

The salient features of the Corporate Environment Responsibility (CER) Scheme *inter alia* include:—

(i) The cost of CER is to be in addition to the cost envisaged for the implementation of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)/Environmental Management Plan (EMP);

- (ii) The fund allocation for the CER shall be deliberated in the Expert Appraisal Committee or State Expert Appraisal Committee or District Expert Appraisal Committee, as the case may be, with a due diligence subject to maximum percentage as prescribed in the Office Memorandum of the Ministry dated 1st May, 2018;
- (iii) The activities proposed under CER shall be worked out based on the issues raised during the public hearing, social need assessment, Rehabilitation and Resettlement plan, EMP, etc. and the proposed activities shall be restricted to the affected area around the project; and
- (iv) The entire activities proposed under the CER shall be treated as project and shall be monitored.

(c) The CER provisions were already in existence under the name of Enterprise Social Commitment. Through the guidelines issued dated 1st May, 2018, it has been further rationalised and structured.

#### **Impact of drought on environment**

180. SHRI K. SOMAPRASAD: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has noticed the severity and the after effect of drought in India;
- (b) if so, the steps taken by Government to face the challenges;
- (c) whether any studies have been conducted on the impact of drought situation on environment by Government or by any agencies; if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) whether any drought prediction system is introduced by Government, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI BABUL SUPRIYO): (a) to (c) As per the information provided by Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoA&FW), South West Monsoon (June to September) contributes to more than 73% of annual rainfall in the country. Timely onset and spatial distribution of rainfall during South West monsoon is crucial for cultivation of Kharif Crops. Deficient South West Monsoon leads into drought like situation. During current year *i.e.* 2019-20, no State has submitted any memorandum seeking financial assistance from National Disaster Relief Fund in the wake of drought till date. No studies have been conducted by MoA&FW on the impact of drought situation on environment. However, the Government of