

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No.1819
TO BE ANSWERED ON 22.12.2022

Replacing non-native trees in forests

1819. SHRI A.A. RAHIM:

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

- (a) whether Ministry has taken cognisance of the extent of non-native foreign species of trees including eucalyptus, acacia in forests in India, if so, the details of any studies on the same and extent of area covered by such trees;
- (b) whether any States are carrying out replanting of such areas with native trees, if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) whether any financial assistance is being provided to these States, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)

- (a)to(c) Yes, Sir. A task force was constituted in the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE), Dehradun, an organization under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, for National Policy and Action Plan on Management of Invasive Alien Species, during the year 2021-22. The Report of Task Force provides recommendations pertaining to prevention, early detection, surveillance, reporting, research, monitoring and management and ecological restoration, etc. for the control and management of Invasive Alien Species. Moreover, ICFRE has also released a publication “Important Invasive Alien Species in Forests of India: Status and Management” which deals in detail with major invasive alien species, history of their introduction, their spread in India, various management strategies and initiatives taken in the field. Recently, the Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2022, as passed in the Lok Sabha on 2nd August, 2022 and in the Rajya Sabha on 8th December, 2022 also provides for regulation/prohibition of import, trade, possession or proliferation of invasive alien species which pose a threat to the wild life or habitat in India.

Further, ICFRE, Dehradun is implementing an All India Coordinated Research Project to map the extent of some of the invasive Alien Plants including *Acacia mearnsii* (wattle), which is an invasive alien tree species planted mostly in the Shola-grassland ecosystems of the Western Ghats. These wattle trees spread in about 50,000 ha and 45,000 ha areas in parts of Kerala and Tamil Nadu respectively.

As reported by the States/Union territories, most of the State Forest Departments are well aware about the issues of non-native alien species of trees, and therefore, Forest Departments promote planting of native tree species through various schemes of State and Centre. Under the National Mission for a Green India, one of the eight Missions outlined under the National Action Plan on Climate Change, aims at protecting, restoring, and enhancing India's forest cover and responding to climate change by undertaking plantation activities in the forest and non-forest areas. The National Mission for a Green India also encourages the plantation of mixed indigenous species along with the natural local mix of grasses, herbs and shrubs along with tree species. Plantation of native species are also taken up by the State/UT Government under Compensatory Afforestation Funds under Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) and State fund.
