

**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 366**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 06.02.2025

**Protection of ecologically sensitive Western Ghats**

366. SHRI JAGGESH:

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

- (a) whether it is a fact that the ecologically sensitive Western Ghats recorded loss of hundreds square kilometer of forest over the last ten years;
- (b) the number of decadal forest loss recorded out of 45 Ghat districts in six States and the number of districts which lost maximum forest cover, State-wise;
- (c) whether the moderately dense forest and open forest decreased by thousands of square kilometre in the last ten years;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the details of the steps taken by Government to protect the ecologically sensitive Western Ghats?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

- (a) to (e) Forest Survey of India, Dehradun, an organization under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change carries out assessment of Forest Cover of the country every two years and publishes the findings in the India State of Forest Report (ISFR). As per ISFR 2023, the forest cover of the country is 7,15,342.61 square kilometer which also include the Eco-Sensitive Area in Western Ghats. Further, there has been a net increase of 16,230.25 square kilometer in forest cover during last 10 years between ISFR 2013 and ISFR 2023. However, during the same period, there has been a decrease in forest cover in 25 districts in the State of Goa, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu falling under the Eco-Sensitive Area in Western Ghats, but at the same time, very dense forest in the eco-sensitive area of Western Ghats has increased by 3,465.12 square kilometer, whereas moderately dense forest and open forest has decreased by 1,043.23 square kilometer and 2,480.11 square kilometer respectively between ISFR 2013 and ISFR 2023.

To protect the ecologically sensitive Western Ghats, the Government supports the efforts of respective State Governments for ecological restoration through afforestation in and outside forest areas, forest landscape restoration, habitat improvement, soil and water conservation measures, and protection etc. by providing funds under various schemes and programmes such as National Mission for a Green India (GIM), Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats, Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) and Nagar Van Yojana (NVY) etc.

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