

**CHIEF MINISTER'S OFFICE
GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA**

PRESS RELEASE

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Chief Minister Sri K. Chandrashekar Rao's statement on 'Telanganaku Haritha Haram' delivered in the State Legislative Assembly on Thursday.

The World is in existence in tune with the laws of nature. Mankind is one of the crores of life species that exist on this Planet. Despite rapid strides made by the human beings in science and technology, it is impossible to live beyond the laws of nature.

Forgetting this truth, man is destroying the nature and often cutting the branch on which he is sitting. In the beginning, there was only water and vegetation on this Planet. Human beings first started cutting the trees, for his survival. He has cleared the land of trees, leveled it to use as agriculture fields and for making shelters. Man's survival depended on the fruits given by the trees. As the Civilization, advanced man has lost the balance with nature. He has indiscriminately destroyed the environment. This has resulted in several natural calamities like the Earthquakes, Typhoons and a steep increase in the Global warming. In the process, rivers and other water bodies fast disappearing and the human settlements have become victims of the pollution. Human Beings are in a desperate search for clean air and water. After having experienced the adverse affects of the destruction, man is now trying to find ways and means to protect the environment. All countries in the World have realised the importance of environment protection.

Environmental balance is possible if only there is 33 percent green cover on our Planet. However, this is not the status in our country now. According to a survey conducted by Climate Reality Project Worldwide, in Canada there is the highest ratio between an individual and trees at 1: 8,953, in Russia 1:4,461, USA, 1:716, in China 1:102 and in India 1:28 only. On an average, per head there are only 422 trees worldwide. This has amply proved that our country is at the threshold of danger.

As far as Telangana State is concerned, nature has given us a boon in the form of the forest cover. In the erstwhile Adilabad, Khammam, Medak, Warangal, Karimnagar, Nizamabad and Rangareddy districts we have thick and deep forests. Forestland spread over 26,903 square kilometers in the State. Of this at one point of time, there was 25 percent of thick forest and 50 percent of moderate forest cover in the State. The rest 25

percent used to be a land with shrubs and bushes. But now, only 1.06 percent of thick forest cover and about 28.95 percent of moderate forest cover is available as part of the forest land. The rest has become a barren land. Earlier governments have totally neglected the forests and allowed deforestation in a big way. They never had the vision to restore the forest cover.

The Government statistics reveal that, in the United AP State, for the protection, plantation, and restoration of forests, tree planning and other such activities a meager Rs. 14 crore per year was spent on an average. During 2004-2014, only Rs. 130.16 Crores was spent by the forest department under the state plan expenditure. Tree plantation program was just a formality. Between 1980 and 2014 in Telangana tree plantation was limited to only 3.17 lakh hectares. In these 34 years, just 35.3 crore saplings were planted in Telangana. According to the Government statistics, the forestland of 2.94 lakh hectare was encroached upon during the same period. This has led to Telangana region paying a heavy price. Barring some regions in the erstwhile Adilabad, Khammam, and Warangal districts, the rest of Telangana region has been facing a deficit rainfall every year.

Abundant rainfall is experienced where the forests are dense and drought is predominant in the deteriorating forest areas. The district of Jayashankar Bhoopalpally, Komaram Bheem Asifabad, Bhadradi Kottagudem and Nirmal where forest cover is more, the rainfall is also more. The districts where the forest cover is less such as Karimnagar, Warangal Urban, Warangal Rural, Janagaon, Siddipet, Siricilla, Yadadri, Rangareddy, Mahabubnagar, Jogulamba Gadwal, Wanaparthy the rainfall is less than the state average rainfall. The districts Karimnagar, Gadwal, Hyderabad, Janagaon, Warangal Rural, Warangal Urban, Suryapet, Yadadri, Wanaparthy, Sangareddy, Rangareddy, Mahabubnagar, Medchal, Nalgonda where the extent of forest is less than 10 percent the situation is gruesome. In days to come, unless checked there is a chance that these districts will soon become the desert. Khammam, Pedapalli, Vikarabad, Siricilla, Jagtial, Medak, Nizamabad, Kamareddy where the extent of forest is less than 30 percent, it is evident that the situation in these districts would also deteriorate.

The wildlife situation is also in chaos due to the indiscriminate destruction of forests. Forest-based wild animals perturbed with the deforestation migrating to habitations in search of food. The monkey menace is one of the problems that are being faced by the agricultural sector. There is no point in accusing the dumb animal as it is a man made mistake. Ways and means should be found out to solve the problem.

No one else but we have to be solely responsible for the grave disaster that is going to occur if we are not alert to the ground realities. Keeping this alarming problem in view,

the Government of Telangana has started a massive programme of “Telanganaku Haritha Haram”. In the process of everlasting and great efforts put forth worldwide to increase the green cover, “Telanganaku Haritha Haram” is the third largest such programme attempted by human being. The first programme took place in China where people planted trees along 4500 kilometers and built the green wall of China. The Second biggest effort that took place was in Brazil. To conserve the forests along Amazon River, 100 crore trees were planted under the programme “One Billion trees for Amazon”. Telangana State Government’s Haritha haram will soon surpass the first two programme worldwide.

The objective of Haritha Haram is to improve the green cover to 33 percent in the state. The goal is to plant about 230 Crore seedlings. About 120 Crore seedlings are being planted in villages, along roads in towns, open areas, along with banks of lakes, canal, and fields, in the premises of Government, private organizations, colonies, and in every house. Plans and implementation are in progress to rejuvenate by way of planting 100 crores saplings in the forest area to replace the trees that were lost due to inappropriate care. We are planting 10 Crore seedlings within the limits of GHMC. As part of this programme which started on July 3, 2015, about 15.86 Crore seedlings during first year and 31.67 Crore seedlings this year were planted. We are planning to plant another 40 Crore seedlings next year. The programme of planting on an average 40,000 seedlings in every village and 40 lakh seedlings in every constituency is being implemented on a massive scale. The programme of planting 5 Crore Eetha seedlings on banks of lakes in order to save the toddy tappers profession is going on. This year about 50 lakh Palm trees (Eetha) seedlings were planted.

The Government is aware that its responsibility does not end with Planting of saplings. Follow-up action is taken to water the seedlings and to save them. Water is being supplied to seedlings with the help of 3,200 Tankers. The programme for the conservation of seedlings is continuing in Gram Panchayats, Municipalities under the supervision of District Collectors. Forest Department is undertaking the responsibility of conservation of seedlings in the forestlands.

At the time of formation of the Telangana State, in the past 35 years, 35 crores of seedlings were planted as per the Government statistics. After our Government came to power, 47.98 Crores of seedlings were planted in two and half years. In the past 35 years efforts were made for the renewing forest in 3.17 lakh hectares of the forestland only. But in these 2 years in 4.31 lakh hectares plantation was done. In order to keep the seedlings easily accessible to the people, 4000 nurseries are developed statewide. Today one nursery is available and accessible to the people for every two villages on an average in the state.

Comprehensive measures were taken in order to strengthen and expand the forest department, which was neglected in the past. Increased the allocation of funds in the State's Budget for the forest department and also increased a number of employees.

All out efforts have been made to strengthen the forest department that was neglected earlier. Our Government has allocated Rs. 1,243 Crores for Haritha Haram since the inception of the Telangana State to till date whereas only Rs. 14 Crores was spent by the earlier government on the plantation. This will mean, on an average, the Telangana Government is spending Rs. 400 Crores for extending the green cover. This is 30 times more when compared to the allocations made by the previous Governments in the then United AP.

In tune with the needs, requirements and necessities, the Forest Department has been reorganized. For the first time, in the Telangana State about 28 District Forest Officers were appointed. Earlier there were 28 Forest Divisions, and we have increased them to 37. Forest Ranges have also been increased from 106 to 185. About 469 sections were increased to 831. Regular Beats have been increased from 1428 to 3132. Accordingly numbers of employees were also increased. 2058 fresh posts have been created and would be filled up in the department. We have sanctioned additional 67 Range Officers Posts, 90 Section Officer Posts, 1857 Beat Officer posts and 44 other posts.

The initiatives were taken by the government for conserving forest lands and curb teakwood smuggling are yielding good results. We have succeeded in preventing to a larger extent felling of trees in the forests. In the past, on an average, 15000 tree-cutting incidents took place and this year the number is reduced to about 5000. Five notorious teak smugglers were arrested under the PD Act and were sent to Jail. In the past, there were no sufficient numbers of vehicles to do the patrolling in forests. In the past forest department had only 237 vehicles in total. After our Government came to power, we have provided 2143 new vehicles to the Forest department. Among them were 26 Cars, 124 Jeeps and 1993 Motor Cycles.

I would like to clarify regarding the rights of people who live depending on forests. In the past, the Government accorded Recognition of Forest Rights (R.O.F.R) under which, the people living in the forests have a right to procure the forest produce and make a living. But they don't have any right to level the forest or cut trees. This right is intended not to disturb the living style of Adivasis. I would like to clarify through this house that this right does not extend to right over the forest land.

Telanganaku Haritha Haram is a continuous programme and not mere Government programme routine in nature. Haritha haram is a movement with the partnership of people. I gave the slogan, "Rains should return" and "Monkeys should go back" and it had touched hearts of the people. During the rainy season, everyone had planted saplings in all available and suitable places by obtaining from local Nurseries. People have responded enthusiastically to the slogan given by the government and turned up in thousands and planted seedlings on a massive scale along the highways of Vijayawada and Bengaluru.

Let me assure this August House that the great endeavour for increasing the green cover on Telangana soil will continue uninterruptedly and voluntarily. Let me convey to the people through this House that despite political differences, all sections should come forward and unveil the Green Telangana.

CPRO to CM