

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 846
TO BE ANSWERED ON 09.02.2023

Preservation of Asian elephants population

846. DR. ASHOK KUMAR MITTAL:

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

- (a) whether the number of Asian elephants in the country has reduced in the last three years, the State-wise data of the same;
- (b) the steps taken by Government to reduce man-animal conflict, especially in areas of cash crop plantations;
- (c) the steps taken by Government to prevent a decline in the genetic diversity among Asian elephants; and
- (d) whether Government is planning to launch special programmes on preserving the Asian elephant population along the Western Ghats, if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

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

(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)

- (a) No sir. The details of elephant population estimation are at **Annexure**.
- (b) The management of wildlife including mitigation and management of human-elephant conflict (HEC) is primarily the responsibility of State Governments/UTs Administration. The state forest departments are working with the local people to address the HEC issues through periodic awareness campaigns to sensitize, guide and advise the general public on man-animal conflict, including dissemination of information through various forms of media. Further, Forest Departments are engaging with local communities as animal trackers to monitor the movement of elephants and also to caution local people to avoid human-animal conflict, prevent damage or loss of human life and elephants.

In addition, the following measures taken by Ministry also help in mitigation of human elephant conflict:-

- (i) The Ministry provides financial and technical assistance to States/UTs under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes 'Project Elephant' for protection and conservation of elephants and their habitats in the country.
 - (ii) To reduce man-elephant conflict and to avoid retaliatory killing of elephants. Compensation is provided to local communities for loss of their property and life caused by wild elephants. The Ministry has notified enhancement of ex-gratia rates related to wildlife depredation vide letter No. 14-2/2011 WL-I (part) dated 9th February, 2018.
 - (iii) Various other Centrally Sponsored schemes being implemented by this Ministry contribute to the improvement in the natural habitat of elephants by augmenting water sources, planting of fodder trees, regeneration of bamboo etc. Such schemes include Development of Wildlife Habitat and Project Tiger. The Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act 2016 and the Rules made there under also provide for use of the Fund for development of wildlife habitats, including for elephants, establishment of animal rescue centres, etc. which also contribute to reduction in HEC.
 - (iv) A guideline for Management of Human Elephant Conflict has been issued by the Ministry on 6.10.2017 and elephant range states have been requested for implementation of the same.
 - (v) Critical elephant habitats are notified as 'Elephant Reserve' for focus and synergy in elephant conservation and to reduce conflict. The notification is carried out with the approval of Steering Committee formed in the Ministry. So far 33 Elephant Reserves have been established in 14 major elephant States.
 - (vi) A field manual for frontline staff to manage Human Elephant Conflict was released during the 16th meeting of the Steering Committee on 29th April, 2022.
- (c) The Ministry has also initiated the process for groundtruthing of Elephant corridors in India, so as to create a better connectivity between the different landscape and elephants herds for maintaining genetic diversity. Apart from general protection, habitat improvement, removal of invasive alien species etc., special efforts are taken such as, protection of wildlife corridors, treating injured elephants and their release to their wild habitat, strengthening protective measures against unnatural death of elephants are the major activities taken to protect the Elephants to prevent the decline in genetic diversity.
- (d) No such proposal has been received by the Ministry from the State Governments.

ANNEXURE

ANNEXURE REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (a) OF THE RAJYA SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 846 RAISED BY DR. ASHOK KUMAR MITTAL REGARDING 'PRESERVATION OF ASIAN ELEPHANTS POPULATION' DUE FOR REPLY ON 09.02.2023.

Population of wild elephants as reported by States

REGION	STATE	ELEPHANT POPULATION		
		2007	2012	2017
North-East	Arunachal Pradesh	1690	890	1614
	Assam	5281	5620	5719
	Meghalaya	1811	1811*	1754
	Nagaland	152	212	446**
	Mizoram	12	-	7
	Manipur	-	-	9
	Tripura	59	59	102**
	West Bengal (North)	300-350	647	488
Total for North-East		9305-9355	9239	10139
East	West Bengal (South)	25	#	194
	Jharkhand	624	688	679
	Odisha	1862	1930	1976
	Chhattisgarh	122	247	247
	Bihar	-	-	25
	Madhya Pradesh	-	-	7
Total for East		2633	2865	3128
North	Uttarakhand	1346	1346*	1839
	Uttar Pradesh	380	291	232
	Haryana	-	-	7
	Himachal Pradesh	-	-	7
Total for North		1726	1637	2085
South	Tamil Nadu	3867	4015	2761
	Karnataka	4035	5648-6488	6049
	Kerala	6068	5942-6422	5706**
	Andhra Pradesh	28	41	65
	Maharashtra	7	4	6
	Andaman & Nicobars	-	-	25**
Total for South		14005	15650-16970	14612
GRAND TOTAL		27669-27719	29391-30711	29964

* Meghalaya and Uttarakhand has not conducted elephant census after 2007. Therefore, the figure of 2007 has been maintained for 2012 as well.

The figure for North and South Bengals are combined.

* * Results are based on indirect (dung) count method as direct counts could not be carried out as informed by State & UTs like Kerala, Nagaland, Tripura and A&N Islands.