

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 1492
TO BE ANSWERED ON 01.01.2018

Threat of extinction of Dugong

1492. SHRIMATI KANIMOZHI:

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

- (a) whether it is a fact that the marine animal Dugong, commonly known as sea cows are under threat of extinction in the Gulf of Mannar; and
- (b) if so, the steps taken by Government for the conservation of the Dugong as well as other marine life in the Gulf of Mannar?

ANSWER

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

(DR. MAHESH SHARMA)

- (a) The Dugong (*Dugong dugon*) is a critically endangered species and found in the Gulf of Mannar, Palk Bay in Tamil Nadu, in coastal areas of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Gulf of Kutch in Gujarat.
- (b) Important efforts made by the Government for conservation of Dugongs and other marine life in the Gulf of Mannar are given below:
 - (i) Dugong is listed in Schedule-I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, thereby, according them highest degree of legal protection from hunting.
 - (ii) Dugongs have been identified for conservation efforts under the component 'Species Recovery Programme' of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) - Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitat.
 - (iii) Important habitats of Dugongs and other marine life are designated as National Parks/ Sanctuaries for their better protection.
 - (iv) The Ministry has taken up the initiative for conservation breeding of the Dugong under the Endangered Species Recovery Programme- CAMPA Assistance in the State of Tamil Nadu as well as in Gujarat and Andaman & Nicobar Islands.
 - (v) The Forest Department under the Tamil Nadu Biodiversity

Conservation and Greening Project has a component of Species Conservation Action Plan for Dugongs, which is meant exclusively for conservation of the species. The project is being implemented in the areas of Gulf of Mannar & Palk Bay.

- (vi) Assessment of Sea Grass Habitats and sea grass transplantation works in degraded areas.
- (vii) Creating awareness to the fisherman folks and local communities through folkfare programmes and awareness generation programmes.
- (viii) Enhance the capacity of the forest department by way of training.
- (ix) Regular patrolling by the field protection staff.
- (x) Initiation of awarding system (incentives/compensation for the day) to the fishermen assisting forest department in rescue and release of Dugongs.
- (xi) Development and use of Android based mobile application for grant of rewards/ compensation to the fisherfolks.
