

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 55
TO BE ANSWERED ON 02.02.2023

Decline in population of vultures

55. SHRI RAKESH SINHA:

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

- (a) whether it is a fact that there has been a steep decline of vulture population in the country;
- (b) the base year to know the state of population of vultures in India;
- (c) whether it is also a fact that the population of vultures in Keoladeo National Park, Bharatpur, declined from 2000 to just 4;
- (d) the details of reasons for such drastic decline in vultures population and its impact on the environment; and
- (e) the steps that are being taken to save the species?

ANSWER

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

- (a) As per information available in the Ministry, the population of three species of vultures, namely *Gypsindicus*, *Gyps bengalensis* and *Gyps tenuirostris*, declined drastically during the 1990s.
- (b), (c) and (d) Population estimation of vultures is done in different States at different times. As per the information received from the State of Rajasthan, there was a steep decline of vulture population in Keoladeo National Park, Bharatpur in the past. The major cause of the mortality of vultures was found to be the veterinary non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug Diclofenac found in the carcass of cattle scavenged by vultures.
- (e) The steps taken to save vultures include the following:
 - (i) All species of vultures have been listed in the Schedules of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
 - (ii) The vial size of the drug diclofenac has been restricted to 3 ml to prevent its use in livestock.
 - (iii) Vultures are being conserved in Jod Beed Conservation Reserve in Rajasthan.
 - (iv) Eight Vulture Conservation Breeding Centres have been established in India.

- (v) States have been requested to develop education and awareness materials, keeping the Animal Husbandry sectors and farmers in mind.
- (vi) An Action Plan for Vulture Conservation was launched by the Ministry in November, 2020.
- (vii) Government of India provides funding support to the States under Centrally Sponsored Scheme- Development of Wildlife habitats for conservation of vultures under the species Recovery Programme.
