

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 519
TO BE ANSWERED ON 04.12.2025

Establishing heredity of captive elephants

519. SHRI SAKET GOKHALE:

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

- (a) the existing laws, rules and policies that govern the establishment of heredity and parentage of captive elephants across all the States and UTs in the country; and
- (b) whether all the States follow DNA testing for determining the parentage of captive elephants and if not, the other procedures followed and by which States?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a) & (b) The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 is the principal statute governing ownership, registration and transfer of captive wild animals (including elephants). The Act provides for issuance of certificates of ownership of captive animals and empowers State authorities to verify and record information relating to captive animals before issuing ownership/transfer certificates. In addition, as per the “Guidelines for care and management of captive elephants” issued by the Ministry on 08.01.2008 *“It would be mandatory for the owners to declare in writing in advance to the nearest Divisional Forest Officer or to the authorized officer by the state government of the pregnancy of the female elephants in order to get fresh ownership certificate of the calf. The certificate would be issued to the calves of the legal cows only after physically ascertaining that they are genuine offspring or after getting the DNA test done”*. Further, as per the Captive Elephant (Transfer or Transport) Rules, 2024 *“No transfer of an elephant shall be permissible unless genetic profile of the elephant has been entered in the electronic monitoring application of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change”*

The Ministry, in collaboration with the Wildlife Institute of India, has developed a mobile application “Gajah Suchana” for the collection of biological samples from captive elephants across India for DNA profiling.

As per information received from the States, Assam and Kerala follow the practice of DNA testing for determining the parentage of captive elephants. The State of Karnataka maintains stud books for establishing lineage, while the State of Nagaland determines parentage based on birth certificates and registration records of captive elephants.