

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. *341
TO BE ANSWERED ON 10.08.2018

Death of Elephants

*341. SHRI JITENDRA CHAUDHURY:

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

- (a) whether as many as 140 elephants have died unnaturally in Assam during the years from 2013 to 2016 and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Asian elephants of Assam have been declared endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether increased deforestation and construction activities have destroyed the natural habitat of the animal and if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the corrective measures taken by the Government in this regard?

ANSWER

MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(DR. HARSH VARDHAN)

(a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) to (d) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. *341 REGARDING 'DEATH OF ELEPHANTS' DUE FOR REPLY ON 10.8.2018

- (a) As per the information received from the state of Assam, 100 elephants have died unnaturally during the year of 2013 to 2016. Details of the unnatural death of elephants in the state of Assam are given below.

Year	Number of unnatural deaths of elephants
2013	23
2014	26
2015	20
2016	31
Total	100

- (b) Asian elephants of Assam are not separately listed as Endangered. However, since 1986, Asian Elephants have been listed as Endangered in the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red list.
- (c) It is a fact that construction activities, deforestation, have adversely affected the natural habitat of elephants. Fragmentation and Deforestation is severely affecting the animal including the elephants. The total estimated area under encroachment in the notified Reserve Forest and Protected Area in Assam is about 3555 Sq. Km (13.29 % of the total notified area) have also affected the habitat of elephants by way of fragmentation.
- (d) Following corrective measures have been taken by the Government in this regard.
- i. Financial and technical assistance is provided to elephant range states under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes 'Project Elephant', to protect elephants, their habitat and corridors, to address issues of man-elephant conflict and welfare of captive elephants. In addition financial assistance is provided to the State/Union Territory Governments under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes of 'Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats' and Project Tiger, for providing better protection to wildlife including leopards and improvement of habitat.
 - ii. Notification of the critical elephant habitats as "Elephant Reserves" for better management of wild elephants. So far 29 Elephant Reserves have been established in 14 major elephant States.
 - iii. To improve the habitat in the degraded notified areas plantations are being raised as an ameliorative step. As for example, in the northern landscape of Assam (which is mostly degraded) the following plantations have been raised since 2013-14.
 - (a) 90 Ha under Sonitpur East Division.
 - (b) 450 Ha under Sonitpur West Division.
 - (c) 642 Ha under Lakhimpur Division.
 - (d) 365 Ha under Dhemaji Division.

- iv. The State Government of Assam constituted co-ordination committee by involving all stakeholder, Civil and Police Administration, Divisional Forest Officers of Territorial and Wildlife Wing, Block Development Officer, Gaonburahs and Gram Panchyat Presidents, Village defence parties, representative of NGO's, Head Masters of Schools, Stations Masters of Railway Stations, PWD (Roads), District Transport Officers etc.
- v. Elephant is listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, to provide it highest degree of legal protection.
- vi. Wildlife Institute of India in consultation with the Ministry of Environment Forest & Climate Change, National Highway Authority, National Tiger Conservation Authority and World Bank Group has published a document namely ' Eco-friendly Measures to Mitigate Impacts of Linear Infrastructure' to assist the project agencies of linear infrastructure in designing the linear infrastructure in a manner which will reduce human-animal conflicts in the areas where these linear infrastructures are passing through Protected Areas and other wildlife areas.
- vii. Protected Areas, viz., National Parks, Sanctuaries, Conservation Reserves and Community Reserves covering important wildlife habitats have been created all over the country under the provisions of Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 to conserve wild animals and their habitats. Improvement of National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuary, Critical habitat, including Elephant Reserves and Corridors is carried out regularly so that enough food and shelter is available for elephants.
- viii. In order to conserve the habitats, central and State Governments take various steps such as Afforestation, Reforestation and many habitat restoration activities to prevent the death of animal and the human beings.
