

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 4155
TO BE ANSWERED ON 27.03.2023

Study on Human-Animal Conflict

4155. SHRI KOMATI REDDY VENKAT REDDY:
DR. JAYANTA KUMAR ROY:
SHRI MANNE SRINIVAS REDDY:
SHRI KANUMURU RAGHU RAMA KRISHNA RAJU:
SHRIMATI SANGEETA KUMARI SINGH DEO:
SHRI KOTHA PRABHAKAR REDDY:

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

- (a) whether the Government has conducted any study to understand the causes of human-elephant conflict in West Bengal and Odisha, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government has collected data on the deaths of humans and elephants as a result of such conflict in West Bengal and Odisha and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the details of the measures aimed at mitigation and management of human-elephant conflict in West Bengal and Odisha?
- (d) whether the wildlife population is increasing due to protection measures and the area under forest cover should also have been expanded by creating buffer zones as such areas could have acted as sinks to absorb the rise in animal population and provided connectivity for animal migration;
- (e) whether the forests have either shrunk or been disturbed with the Government clearing infrastructure projects by diverting forest land for non-forestry purposes and for other purposes also to protect environment;
- (f) if so, the details thereof, State-wise along with reasons therefor; and
- (g) the corrective steps being taken till date, State-wise and funds sanctioned/spent to protect and provide suitable environment to wildlife?

ANSWER

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

- (a) The Ministry has not conducted any study to understand the human-elephant conflict in the State of Odisha and West Bengal.

- (b) As per the information received from the State of Odisha and West Bengal, the details of human casualties due to wild elephant attack and elephant casualties, are as follows:

Year	Human casualties due to elephant attack		Elephant Casualties	
	Odisha	West Bengal	Odisha	West Bengal
2020-21	139	117	14	11
2021-22	112	77	18	6

- (c) 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-animal conflict:-

- (i) The Central Government provides financial assistance to State/Union Territory Governments under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes 'Development of Wildlife Habitats', 'Project Tiger' and 'Project Elephant' for management of wildlife and its habitat 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) An advisory on dealing with human-wildlife conflict has been issued by the Ministry in February 2021. The advisory recommends coordinated interdepartmental action, identification of conflict hot spots, adherence to Standard Operating Procedures, establishment of rapid response teams, formation of State and District level committees to review the quantum of ex-gratia relief, issuing guidance/instructions for expedited payments, and provision of adequate funds for suitable portion of ex-gratia relief to be paid within 24 hours to the affected persons in the case of death and injury to persons.
 - (vi) The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has also issued Guidelines to States/UTs on 3rd June, 2022 on managing Human Wildlife conflicts including damage to crops. It includes promotion of crops in forest fringe areas which are unpalatable to wild animals, agro forestry models which include cash crops like chillies, lemon grass, khus grass etc. suitably mixed with tree/shrub species. It also includes preparation and implementation of comprehensive long-term plan for alternate cropping by the state Agriculture/Horticulture Department under different schemes in vulnerable areas.
 - (vii) 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.
 - (viii) 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.
 - (ix) The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 provides regulatory functions for dealing with human wildlife conflict situations.
 - (x) A Capacity Building Workshop for Railway Officials Training the Trainers: A special online training programme for sensitizing officials of the Indian Railways' Training Institutes towards India's wildlife and rich biodiversity was conducted on 19th September, 2022.
 - (xi) Regional coordination meeting for the Eastern Region to address Human-Elephant Conflict was conducted on 19th January, 2023 at Kolkata.
 - (xii) A Capacity Building Workshop on "Minimizing Railway-induced Elephant Mortalities for the Officers of the Indian Railways" was conducted on 1st -3rd February, 2023.
- (d)to(g) As per the information received from the States, adequate measures are being taken to protect forest and wildlife. Various Centrally Sponsored Schemes being implemented by this Ministry contributing to the improvement in the natural habitat of elephants by augmenting water sources, planting of fodder trees, regeneration of bamboo etc. Such schemes also 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, connectivity and corridors for animal migrations. As per the information received from the State of Odisha and West Bengal, a total of Rs. 4776.58 lakhs and Rs.788.42 lakhs have been allocated respectively, during the current financial year 2022-23, under various Centrally Sponsored Scheme, for the protection and to provide suitable environment to wildlife.
