

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 655
TO BE ANSWERED ON 24.07.2023

Death due to Wild Elephant Attack

655. SHRI PRAJWAL REVANNA:

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware of public outrage towards increasing number of deaths due to wild elephant attack on villagers in Sakakeshpura, Alur, Belur talukas of Hassan Lok Sabha Constituency, Karnataka;
- (b) if so, the details of deaths occurred due to wild elephant attack along with the details of compensation paid to the affected families;
- (c) whether the Government has any permanent solution to the elephant menace and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) the details of action taken by the forest department to install rope barricades, solar fences, digging trenches along with the funds spent for the purpose during the last three years; and
- (e) whether the Government has provided adequate permanent front line staff like forest guards, watchers and rapid response teams, anti depredation camps to the area affected with elephant menace?

ANSWER

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

(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)

- (a)&(b) As per the information received from State of Karnataka, the details of human deaths occurred due to elephant attack alongwith the details of compensation paid, in Sakleshpura, Alur, Belur talukas of Hassan Lok Sabha constituency are as follows:

District, State	Year	No. of human deaths	Compensation paid (Rs. In Lakhs)
Sakleshpura, Alur, Belur taluks of Hassan Lok Sabha Constituency, Karnataka	2018-19	1	5.00
	2019-20	3	15.00
	2020-21	5	37.50
	2021-22	5	37.50
	2022-23	4	30.00

(c)to(e) 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 human-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.

The Government of Karnataka has taken following measure for prevention of human deaths due to elephant attacks:

- (i) Districts Elephant Task Force constituted in the Hassan District with headquarters at Sakaleshpura on 20.11.2022.
- (ii) Elephant task force is headed by DCF along with 01 ACF, 01 RFO, 04 Dy RFO, 08 Forest Guard & 32 out Sourced Watchers.
- (iii) In addition to the permanent frontline staff, non-permanent watchers are deployed as Anti-Depredation Camps (ADC) and Rapid Response Teams (RRT) whose details are given below:

RRT	5 Teams	20 Watchers
ADC	22 Teams	88 Watchers
Total	27 Teams	108 Watchers

- (iv) Elephant task force has Control Room functioning 24x7 at Sakaleshpura & complaints are received from Alur, Belur, Sakleshpura & Yeslur range and immediate action is being taken for its redressal. Record are being maintained regarding the calls received & action taken.
- (v) Elephant task force is monitoring the movement of Wild Elephants in village limits and driving them back to the forests, wherever the wild elephant's movement is seen in village limits.
- (vi) Along with Elephant Task Force staff, Rapid Response Team (RRT) regular front line staff is working to safe guard people and property.
- (vii) There are 5 Rapid Response Teams (RRT) and 22 Anti Depredation Camps (ADC) established for immediate response.
- (viii) Advance warning system is established by sending SMS, Whatsapp messages, mike announcement etc. to make villages aware about Elephant movement.
- (ix) By using used railway tracks, Rails Barricades have been constructed in Alur range, Doddabetta Forest region to prevent the entry of Elephants from other districts using the State Government funds. The details of rail barricade which is constructed are given below:
 - a. During 2020-21 - 4.511 Kms,
 - b. During 2021-22, 5.148 Kms work is completed,
 - c. this year 2022-23, 11.147 Kms work is in progress.

- (x) 45 Elephants have been captured and relocated since 2001-02 and 4 Elephants have been Radio collared in last 3 years.
- (xi) To secure and protect the agricultural crops Government of Karnataka provides subsidy for construction of solar power fences under which 50 percent subsidy is provided to framers for protection of crops.
- (xii) Awareness program is conducted in public areas, schools & colleges.

In addition, the following measures have been taken by Ministry also help in mitigation of human-elephant conflict: -

- (i) The Ministry provides financial and technical assistance to States/UTs under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes 'Project Tiger and Elephant' for protection and conservation of species and their habitats in the country.
- (ii) To reduce human-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. 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) 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 project agencies in designing linear infrastructure, including electric transmission lines, in a manner that reduces human-animal conflicts.
- (vii) The Ministry has released a book titled "Best Practices of Human Elephant Conflict Management in India" for the benefit of States and other stakeholders.
- (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) Regional coordination meeting for the Eastern Region to address Human-Elephant Conflict was conducted on 19th January, 2023 at Kolkata.
