

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3699
TO BE ANSWERED ON 24.03.2025

Decline in Vulture Population

3699. DR. RANI SRIKUMAR:

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware of the significant decline in vulture populations in the country, particularly due to the use of veterinary medicines such as diclofenac;
- (b) if so, the specific data on vulture population trends in Tamil Nadu over the past decades and any provisions for the creation of safe zones;
- (c) the measures taken by the Government to monitor and regulate the use of harmful veterinary drugs that adversely affect vulture populations; and;
- (d) the details of any public awareness campaigns initiated to educate veterinarians and livestock owners about the impact of certain veterinary medicines on vultures and the promotion of safe alternatives?

ANSWER

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

- (a) to (d) As per information available in the Ministry, the population of three species of vultures, namely *Gyps indicus*, *Gyps bengalensis* and *Gyps tenuirostris*, declined drastically during the 1990s. Protection and management of wildlife is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations. Population estimation of vultures is done in different States at different times. Population estimates of Vultures in the country are not collated at the level of the Ministry.

The important steps taken to save vultures include the following:

- (i) All the nine species of vultures found in India are listed in the Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, thereby providing them with the highest degree of protection.
- (ii) In August 2006, the Drugs Controller General of India banned the use, sale and manufacture of Diclofenac veterinary use.
- (iii) The vial size of the Diclofenac for human use has been restricted to 3 ml to prevent its misuse in treating livestock.
- (iv) The Government of India has restricted the packaging of multi-dose vial of Diclofenac to single dose for human use in July, 2015.

- (v) The Government of India has prohibited the manufacture, sale and distribution of Ketoprofen and Aceclofenac and their formulations for veterinary use in July, 2023.
- (vi) The Government of India has prohibited the manufacture, sale and distribution of Nimesulide and its formulation for animal use in December, 2024.
- (vii) Over-the-counter sale of veterinary non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs without prescription are prohibited.
- (viii) An Action Plan for Vulture Conservation was launched by the Ministry in November, 2020.
- (ix) The Ministry provides financial assistance to State Governments/Union Territory Administrations under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme –Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats which includes ‘Development of Wildlife Habitats’ and ‘Project Tiger and Elephant’ which aims at conservation and protection of wildlife and improvement of habitat including vultures.
- (x) Vultures have been identified as one of the 22 species for providing funding support to the States/Union Territories under the Species Recovery Programme component of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme- Development of Wildlife habitats for their conservation of vultures.
- (xi) Eight Vulture Conservation Breeding Centres have been set up across India.
