

Title : Regarding need to make amendments to Forest Act

**SHRI K. C. VENUGOPAL (ALAPPUZHA):** Thank you, Madam, for giving me an opportunity. This issue is one of the most serious issues which is concerning the human life of the people of Kerala. Invasion by wild animals in human habitation is happening day by day in Kerala. There is an alarming rise in human-animal conflicts, especially involving elephants, tigers and wild boars. Last year itself, these conflicts claimed around 100 lives. Over 10 fatalities have already been reported this year. In Wayanad district alone, four people have been killed within the past three-four months. Almost the entire agriculture plantation has been disturbed due to this man-animal conflict. In response, the Kerala Cabinet has declared this situation as a State-level disaster.

The situation in Kerala is not a unique situation. The national data reveals that there have been over 1500 deaths from elephant attacks and 125 deaths from tiger attacks between 2019 and 2022 that happened in Kerala. We are not against animals. But there is value of human life. We are asking for a proactive action from the Centre for the last so many years. The entire population of Kerala is asking for rescue from the Central Government. But there is no response at all. In February, the Kerala Assembly called for amendments to the Wildlife Protection Act. Of course, the Wildlife Protection Act was passed with a progressive mind. We agree. But now the problem is to see whether human life is important or not. Everyday people are in a great distress. People from the entire Kerala especially people who are residing near the forest area are greatly concerned about their livelihood and their lives. We need to intervene in that. Therefore, my submission is this. The Government of India is not taking any action. People are telling that the State Government is also not taking any action. Smart early warning system is not much effective. Strategic Rapid Reforms Teams have not been effective at all.

Regarding cutting-edge equipment and training, there is no sufficient equipment. Same is the case with community involvement through Jana Jagratha Samithies. These are all there for namesake only. But in effect, in reality what is happening is that everyday, human life is in danger. Therefore, the Kerala Assembly unanimously passed a Resolution. I am quoting that Resolution:

?To amend the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 including sub-section (2) of Section 5 delegating all the powers of Chief Wild Life Warden conferred under clause (a) of sub-section 1 of Section 11 of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 to the Chief Conservator of Forests so as to enable them to take immediate action.?

The Government of India has to make amendments immediately to the Forests Act.

माननीय सभापति: माननीय सदस्य, आपकी बात आ गई है।

**SHRI K. C. VENUGOPAL** : Madam, you allow for a political issue for whatever time they want. Madam Chairperson, this is a human issue. Everyday people are ?  
(*Interruptions*) At least, allow us to raise this issue. The Government has to come forward to change the law. That is what I want to say. Thank you very much.