

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:41

ANSWERED ON:23.07.2001

ILLEGAL TRADE OF SHAHTOOSH SHAWL

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Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) Whether despite the ban on shatoosh shawl, illegal trade of the shawl in India and the fashion capitals of the world is thriving as per reports released by the Wildlife Trust of India and International Fund for Animal Welfare;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the action taken by the Government in this regard;
- (d) the number of cases booked and persons arrested who were involved in this trade during the last three years;
- (e) whether the Government propose to amend the Wildlife (Protection) Act , 1972 to check the illegal trade of shatoosh shawl;
- (f) if so, the details thereof; and
- (g) the extent to which it is likely to check the said trade?

Answer

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R.BAALU)

(a)&(b)Wildlife Trust of India and International Fund for Animal Welfare have recently published a report on the poaching of Tibetan antelope(Pantholops hodgsonii) and illegal trade of its derivatives and products. The report gives substantial evidences of poaching of Tibetan Antelope in its natural habitat in Tibet autonomous region, Quinghai and Xinjiang autonomous region of China. The report also provides a comprehensive account of the nexus that exists between the poachers, traders and manufacturers of shawls in various countries including India. Details of seizure made in various countries particularly India, China, France, UK, Hong-Kong, Nepal etc. have been provided.

(c) The steps taken by the Government are:

(i) Tibetan Antelope has been included in Schedule-I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and poaching and trade is prohibited in the country except in the State of Jammu & Kashmir that has its own Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1978.

(ii) Tibetan Antelope is included in Appendix I of CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) since 1979. Commercial trade in this species, its parts and derivatives including shahtoosh is prohibited by the Convention. India is one of the signatories to the CITES.

(iii) The State of Jammu & Kashmir has been requested to amend its State Act so as to provide complete protection to the Tibetan Antelope and also to ban the manufacture and trade of shahtoosh shawls and other products.

(iv) A nation wide campaign has been launched with the help of prominent NGOs to provide wide publicity against use of shahtoosh shawls and other products.

(d) During the last three years 14 cases of illegal trade of shahtoosh have been detected and complaints have been filed against 19 suspected offenders under the provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

(e),(f)&(g) The existing provisions of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 are adequate to take effective action against the offenders. However, the lucrative prices offered for wildlife products in general and shahtoosh shawl, in particular have led to involvement of organised mafias in clandestine trade of wildlife products. Several initiatives have been taken by Central Government to strengthen the implementation of the provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.