

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1937

ANSWERED ON:23.07.2014

PROTECTION OF ELEPHANTS

Gaddigoudar Shri Parvatagouda Chandanagouda; Giluwa Shri Laxman; Singh Shri Sunil Kumar

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

- (a) whether incidents of elephant deaths due to accidents on railway tracks after being hit by moving trains in various National Parks and forests have been reported;
- (b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise including Jharkhand during the last three years and the current year;
- (c) the action taken/proposed to be taken in this regard;
- (d) whether the Government has any projects/programmes for the restoration of elephant corridors in the country and if so, the details thereof including the critical corridors identified in the country; and
- (e) the efforts made by the Government to protect wild elephants and their habitats in the country?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR)

(a) & (b) The details of elephant deaths due to train hits, state-wise, as reported by the States, for the current and the last three years are at Annexure I.

(c) The Government has taken the following measures in consultation with Ministry of Railways to prevent accidental deaths of elephants:

(i) A general advisory was issued jointly to all the railway zones suggesting measures to prevent collision of trains with wild elephants. These are as following:

- (a) Clearance of Vegetation on the sides of Railway tracks.
- (b) Underpasses/overpasses across the Railway track to allow elephants to escape.
- (c) Signage boards to pre-warn the Train Drivers.
- (d) Sensitization programmes for Train Drivers/Guards/Station Masters.
- (e) Engagement of Elephant trackers by MoEF and communication with Station Masters.
- (f) To keep Railway track free from food waste that attracts elephants.

(ii) A permanent coordination committee has been constituted jointly by the Ministry of Railways and Ministry of Environment and Forests to share information and monitor the implementation of the advisory.

(iii) Ministry of Railways has also been requested to regulate the speed of trains in identified vulnerable sections.

(iv) Nodal officers have been designated in State Forest Departments and Railways in the vulnerable sections to facilitate quick sharing of information.

(d) Under the Centrally-sponsored Scheme "Project Elephant" (CSS-PE) of the Ministry of Environment and Forests financial assistance is provided to the states, for inter alia the following activities in elephant habitats and corridors:-

- (i) Improvement of habitats / corridors by enrichment plantation/eco restoration
- (ii) Removal of invasive species
- (iii) Creation of water bodies/ salt licks

(iv) Fire protection measures

(v) Eco-restoration of corridors/migration routes and paths including acquisition and relocation

(vi) Soil and water conservation measures 138, 28 and 17 State, inter-State and international elephant corridors have been identified, respectively. The State-wise details in this regard are at Annexure II. Out the above corridors 88 have been identified as priority ones.

(e) Elephant is included under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. The Central Government is providing financial assistance to States under the Centrally-sponsored Scheme Project Elephant since 1992, for protection and management of elephants and its habitat. The Elephant range States have taken various activities to mitigate Man-Elephant conflict, improvement of Elephant Habitat, restoration of Elephant Corridors and various awareness programmes under the scheme. Some of the activities are as follows:

(i) For better management of wild Elephants and their habitats, 28 Elephant Reserves have been established by the States

(ii) Habitat improvement and restoration of Elephant Corridors in Elephant Range States under CSS-PE.

(iii) Infrastructure improvement in Elephant Reserves for effective management of elephant population.

(iv) Anti depredation squads, anti poaching squads and trekkers are engaged for protection of elephants.

(v) To restrict menace of elephants to human habitations, solar fencing, trenches and stone walling are being provided in the depredation prone localities.

(vi) Studies on various issues such as man animal conflict, carrying capacity of elephant habitat are encouraged.

(vii) Awareness programme among the local villagers are taken to minimize conflict with wild elephants.