

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5049  
ANSWERED ON:13.08.2014  
DECLINE IN VULTURE EAGLE POPULATION  
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**Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether there has been a sharp decline in the Vulture and Eagle population in the country over the years and if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (b) whether the Government has received reports of deaths of Vultures and Eagles due to drug poisoning in some parts of the country including Rajasthan;
- (c) if so, the details thereof;
- (d) the action being taken by the Government in this regard; and
- (e) the strategy likely to be formulated by the Government for protection and conservation of Eagles and Vultures?

**Answer**

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

(a) to (c) A survey conducted by the Bombay Natural History Society under a special project sponsored in the year 2000 by the Ministry of Environment & Forests revealed that there has been more than 90 percent decline in the populations of three species of vultures viz, White Backed, Long Billed and Slender Billed in many parts of the country, including Rajasthan. Post mortem and diagnostic tests have revealed that this decline has been due to consumption of the veterinary drug 'Diclofenac' by the vultures that fed on carcasses of livestock. Diclofenac causes deposition of uric acid in the visceral organs leading to sudden death.

However, there are no specific reports available in the Ministry indicating sharp decline in Eagle population.

(d) & (e) The important steps and strategies taken by the Government to protect the Vultures and Eagles include:

(i) Protection status of White backed, Long Billed and Slender Billed Vultures has been upgraded from Schedule IV to Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

(ii) Endangered species of Eagles are included in the Schedule-I of the Act, thereby according them the highest degree of protection.

(iii) Two workshops were organized in New Delhi in September 2000 and April, 2004 to work out a comprehensive strategy for conservation of vultures in consultation with scientists.

(iv) Bombay Natural History Society in collaboration with the Haryana State Forest Department has taken up a project on conservation of vultures. A 'Vulture Captive Care facility' has been established at Panchkula.

(v) The Ministry of Health has been requested to replace the use of the drug diclofenac with suitable alternative drugs.

(vi) The Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) on may 6, 2006 has issued order for withdrawal of licenses for manufacturing Diclofenac for veterinary purposes.

(vii) The State Governments have been requested to set up vulture care centres for the conservation of three species of vultures.

(viii) Government of India has formulated a National Action Plan (2006) on Vulture Conservation. The Action Plan provides for strategies, actions for containing the decline of vulture population through ex-situ, in-situ vulture conservation.

(ix) Department of forests of all states/UTs has been requested to constitute a Monitoring committee for vulture conservation with a view to implement the Action Plan, 2006 and for recovery of existing vulture sites.

(x) Captive breeding centres at 4 Zoos at Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Junagarh and Hyderabad have also been set up through Central Zoo Authority.

(xi) Ministry has also taken initiatives to strengthen the mass education and awareness for vulture conservation.