

Regarding relief and rehabilitation package for affected victims of Wayanad landslides

SHRI M. K. RAGHAVAN (KOZHIKODE): Thank you, Madam Chairperson, for giving me this opportunity.

I stand before you with the deepest grief regarding the severe catastrophe which fell upon my State of Kerala due to landslides at Wayanad and Vilangad regions of Kozhikode. The devastating landslides in Wayanad killed hundreds and left thousands homeless. Search and rescue operations are going on. It is estimated that 48 per cent of Kerala's total land area, that is, 38,865 sq. kms., is occupied by the Western Ghats where this major tragedy has occurred.

Madam, what hurts me even more is the blame game that has happened after this incident. The Centre claims they have issued a warning; the State says they have not been provided with sufficient warnings. Between this Centre-State tussle, thousand innocent lives are severely affected.

What happened to the Geological Survey of India? It is the nodal agency for landslide prediction. Unfortunately, the agency has said that it could not issue an accurate early warning for Wayanad because of inadequate and inaccurate rainfall readings from the Indian Meteorological Department. The State needs more rain gauges in landslide-susceptible areas, better coordination between various agencies, and more reliable data to mitigate such disasters in the future. To mitigate such disasters in the future, we need a more reliable rainfall data. The current system is inadequate. In such critical locations, a rain gauge every five sq. kms. is required for better and accurate predictions.

I request the Government of India, through you, Madam, to urgently initiate the following measures :-

(1) Provide assistance for rehabilitation of the affected victims.

(2) The families of those affected now have to begin from zero. They have lost their beloved and all their life savings. Hence, the Government must provide for, at least, Rs. 1 crore per family.

- (3) Provide adequate financial support for those survivors for building their life.
- (4) Establishment of more rain gauges for accurate rainfall predictions along with latest technologies such as all-weather radars and others.
- (5) Special Central package for rebuilding Wayanad such as those announced in the Budget for certain States.
- (6) Special considerations for Kerala to adopt and mitigate disaster response in future.
- (7) Special battalions of NDRF, Indian Army for speedy rescue and relief operations.
- (8) My request is to declare Wayanad as the national disaster spot.

Thank you, Madam.