

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:748
ANSWERED ON:12.07.2004
DECREASE IN VULTURE POPULATION
Kurup Adv. Suresh

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

- (a) whether the Government has conducted any surveys on dwindling population of vultures;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the population of vultures has come down drastically in the country over the last ten years;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and
- (e) the steps taken/to be taken to regenerate their population ?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA)

(a) to (e) 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. Subsequently, post mortem and diagnostic tests revealed that this drastic decline was due to consumption of veterinary diclofenac by the vultures who fed on carcasses of livestock. Veterinary diclofenac caused deposition of uric acid in the visceral organs leading to sudden death. The steps taken in this regard by the Government are as follows:

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

(iii) The State Governments have been asked to workout a comprehensive plan for effective conservation of vultures.

(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.