



# PARLIAMENT OF INDIA RAJYA SABHA

DEPARTMENT-RELATED PARLIAMENTARY STANDING  
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY,  
ENVIRONMENT & FORESTS

TWO HUNDRED SIXTY EIGHTH REPORT

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES OF THE NILGIRIS

(PRESENTED TO THE RAJYA SABHA ON THE 12<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST, 2015)  
(LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE LOK SABHA ON THE 12<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST, 2015)



RAJYA SABHA SECRETARIAT  
NEW DELHI

AUGUST, 2015/ SRAVANA, 1937 (SAKA)

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• *To be appended at printing stage*

**MEMBERS OF THE DEPARTMENT-RELATED PARLIAMENTARY  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY,  
ENVIRONMENT & FORESTS (2015-16)**

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**RAJYA SABHA**

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4. Shri C.P. Narayanan
5. Shri Paul Manoj Pandian
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28. Smt. Renuka Sinha
29. Shri Vikram Usendi
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**SECRETARIAT**

Shri M.K. Khan, Joint Secretary  
Shri Rohtas, Director  
Shri V.S.P. Singh, Joint Director  
Shri Rajiv Saxena, Assistant Director

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\* Nominated w.e.f. 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2015.

## PREFACE

I, the Chairman of the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science & Technology, Environment & Forests, having been authorized by the Committee to present the report on its behalf, present this Two Hundred and Sixty-eighth Report on "Environmental issues of the Nilgiris".

2. During its study visit to Udthagamandalam (Ooty) from 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2015, the Committee heard the views of the officers of the Central Government and State Government of Tamil Nadu and Experts and Civil Society Organisations/NGOs on 'Environmental issues of Udthagamandalam (Ooty).

3. The Committee expresses its thanks to the officers of the Central Government and State Government of Tamil Nadu and Experts and Civil Society Organisations/NGOs for rendering their valuable views/replies to clarifications sought by the Committee.

4. In its meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> August, 2015, the Committee considered the draft report and adopted the same.

**NEW DELHI:**  
**11<sup>th</sup> August, 2015**

**ASHWANI KUMAR**  
*Chairman,*  
*Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee*  
*on Science & Technology, Environment & Forests*

### REPORT

The Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science & Technology, Environment & Forest during its examination of The Compensatory Afforestation Fund Bill, 2015 decided to visit Udthagamandalam popularly known as Ooty. During its visit to Ooty besides having the views of officials of Government of Tamil Nadu and NGOs/Experts on the provisions of Bill, the Committee also decided to apprise itself of the Environmental issues of Ooty. Since the Committee is submitting its report on the Bill separately, this report deals with only the environmental issues of Ooty.

2. Udthagamandalam popularly called Ooty is the "Queen of Hill Stations" in India. Udthagamandalam, the capital of the Nilgiris District, has once been the venue of Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly. The Nilgiris District situated in the Western Ghats is surrounded by the Coimbatore District, Kerala and Karnataka States on the eastern, western and the northern side respectively. It is a celebrated summer resort for the tourists from all over India. The economic activities of this district are accelerated by the visit of tourists to considerable extents which increase the income capacity of the people engaged in many fields.

3. Ooty besides being a hill station have Nilgiri forests and Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (MTR) Forest has since time immemorial fascinated mankind by virtue of its serene, solitudinous, soothing ambience, being home to flora and fauna and wildlife and treasure trove of precious minerals and other resources. Spiritual and material significance apart, forests support, sustain and enrich the health and well being of living being so much so that it is regarded as synonymous to life. But the high esteem that forest once enjoyed, gradually lost much of its steam and now it is primarily seen as source of natural resources, exploitation of which is sine-qua-non for overall economic development of the country. Consequently, forest area in the country has been put under severe stress. However, efforts are being made to strike a balance between development and conservation of forests.

4. The Committee started its business on 17<sup>th</sup> July, 2015, by holding a meeting with NGOs/Civil Society members/Experts on environmental issues of Ooty at Udthagamandalam. As the Chairman of the Committee could not attend the meeting due to his indisposition, the

Committee decided to choose Shri Bhupinder Singh, another Member of the Committee, to act as Chairman of the Committee for the meeting, under Rule 73(3) read with Rule 275 of the Rules of procedure and Conduct of Business in Rajya Sabha.

5. Members of the NGOs/Civil Society and experts raised a number of issues pertaining to the environmental status of Udthagamandalam. A list of NGOs/Experts and their representatives who attended the meeting is at Annexure-I. Some of the views expressed by the NGOs/Civil Society and experts were as follows:-

- i) Representative of Keystone, Kotagiri informed that in Nilgiri region a lot of natural plantations had been converted into industrial plantations which were harmful for the environment. She therefore suggested that this trend of conversion of natural plantation into industrial plantation needs to be stopped.
- ii) Consultant, Wildlife and Nature Conservation Trust was of the view that NGOs should also be involved in the decision making process and should be consulted at drafting stage of Bills/rules. He added that biodiversity of the region should not be altered for developmental purposes.
- iii) Representative of Environment Conservation Group stated that tribals are the worst sufferers of diversion of forests for non-forest purposes. Their interest, therefore, needs to be taken care of. He was also of the view that dense/ pristine forest should not be allowed to be diverted. He also argued for allocation of more funds for Non-Governmental Organisations.
- iv) Representative of Nilgiri Wildlife and Environment Association suggested that to facilitate flora & fauna to flourish, restoration of grassland and biosphere system was necessary. According to him, Nilgiri eco-system had been spoiled because of plantation of alien species. He suggested that only local plants and fruit bearing trees should be planted. He also emphasised on the need for restoration of elephant corridors even in the private land adjacent to the forest area by acquiring the private land.
- v) Representative of Wildlife and Forest Research Trust stated that money collected through CAMPA Fund should be utilised for undertaking artificial regeneration and protection of forests and Government should not spend this amount for administrative purposes/constructing Institutes from CAMPA Fund. He further suggested that there was no need for setting up of a separate Compensatory Afforestation Management and Planning Authority because this work could be undertaken by Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change itself.
- vi) Representative of Tamil Nadu Green Movement stated that in Kudremukh National Park and Wyanad sanctuary a large number of families were ready for relocation but could not do so due to unavailability of enough funds. It was also added that the amount of compensation to the victims of Man-elephant conflict should be enhanced and be provided immediately after the incident.
- vii) President, Mudumalai Relocation Committee was of the view that tribals were suffering for the past 40 years in the absence of relocation plan. He stated that a PIL for relocation was filed but still no development had taken place. He apprised that core area was about 600 acres where the tribals resided. He informed that crops of the Tribals were destroyed by wild animals and they were affected by causalities and hence ready to leave the core area if provided with alternatives. He was of the view that CAMPA Fund might be utilized for relocation of villagers living in core areas of Tiger Reserves.
- viii) Ex-Vice President, Mudumalai Panchayat, Tamil Nadu informed that though some Tribal families were staying in the Nilgiri forest for three generations, due to man-animal conflict they were ready to settle near Gudalur. He informed that 2 hamlets of Bennai and Nellikarai located in the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve were ready to move because of man-elephant conflict. Residents of 7 villages were also ready to move and other would agree if they were assured about rehabilitation package.

- ix) Representative of Nilgiri Adivasi Welfare Association (ALWAS) claimed that their organisation, set up in 1958, was devoted for the welfare of 6 primitive tribal groups of Nilgiris namely, Gotha, Irula, Gurumba, Toda and others. He informed the Committee that around forty thousand tribal people lived in the Nilgiris. With about eight lakh non-tribal people now settled in the Nilgiris, the livelihood of the tribals have been put under severe pressure. They cannot collect even firewood. He also expressed his concern over growing exotic trees like Eucalyptus, Acacia and Pine on around 40 thousand acres of grassland which had adversely affected the ecology of the Nilgiri hills. He strongly advocated for ban on plantation of such alien species as it was essential to preserve the underground water level/availability of water. He made an appeal for restoration of the shola trees and pristine grasslands. He also demanded ban on chemical farming because excessive use of fertilizers and pesticides, etc. was polluting water bodies. He suggested that organic cultivation shall be promoted in the region.
- He was of the view that CAMPA Fund should also be used for welfare of tribals of the Nilgiri region. Contrary to other representatives, he opined that primitive groups of the Nilgiris had been living in harmony with the wild animals since time immemorial and unlike non-tribals they did not want to move from the forests. He emphasised on the need for creating job opportunities for the tribals.
- x) Smt. Geetha Srinivasan, an environment expert informed that Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve was declared the 1<sup>st</sup> biosphere reserve of India in September, 1978 and covered area of around 5500 square kms. There were 6 sanctuaries in the area. She drew attention to the problem of invasive alien weeds like congress grass, Lantana Camera and Parthenium Hysterophorus in the Nilgiri forest area and suggested that CAMPA Fund should also be used for eradicating these invasive alien weeds. To mitigate vehicular pollution Mass Rapid Transit System needs to be developed and 'No Vehicular Zone' may be earmarked in peak season on the lines of Matheran and Manali. For solid waste management land should be provided to the Department of Atomic Energy for setting up 'NISARGUNA' plant for solid waste management. She also suggested that local Panchayats should also be involved in waste management of Ooty and plastic brought by tourists should also be curbed.
- xi) Representative of World Wildlife Fund India, Regional office, Chennai suggested that afforestation should be undertaken in the nearby area of the forest where diversion of forest land had taken place. He was optimistic that if area was cordoned/weeds were removed, the forest cover would come up.
- xii) Representative of Organisation for Social Action and Improvement (OSAI) informed that disturbance in traditional migratory path of elephants had led to man-animal conflict in Nilgiris. While during the period of 1994 to 2004, 24 people had died due to man-elephant conflict, the figure rose to 100 during 2004-2014. He stated that those conflicts had taken place because of encroachment on the traditionally used corridors of elephants which now lie outside forest land. He suggested that CAMPA Funds should be used to purchase the private land which falls in the corridor area and construction of new roads in the wildlife area should be curbed. In addition to this, he suggested manual eradication of Lantana Camera. According to him claims made by Forest Department about increase in the green cover of the country were exaggerated. In fact, in reality quality of forest had degraded as major share of increased green cover was due to growth of Lantana Camera and other invasive weeds.
- xiii) The representative of Nilgiri Wildlife Trust informed that around 30,000 vehicles enter into Ooty city in the summer season which causes air pollution. He suggested that old Govt. vehicles which are more polluting should not be allowed to ply in the Nilgiris. Improvement/ expansion/ modernization of the Nilgiri train and development of Mass Rapid Transit System for Ooty, were some of the suggestions

aimed at improving the air quality of Ooty. He also pointed out that 3 companies, namely, Sterling Biotech, Good Shephard Farms and a Defence Establishment were causing industrial pollution. They were discharging sewage in the nearby water bodies/ rivers in utter violation of environmental norms. He also highlighted the issue of littering of plastic waste and polythene by tourists in Ooty and suggested that some mechanism for solid waste management needs to be put in place. He also emphasised on the need for preservation and conservation of wetlands and highlighted that lack of coordination among various Govt. agencies was the main reason for increase in level of pollution in Ooty. He also underlined that Ooty has already made its mark as a prominent tourist destination and hence there is a need to reconsider the justification for organizing Nilgiri Festival as it add to the level of pollution in the Nilgiris.

Yet another reason behind increasing level of pollution in the Nilgiris in general and Ooty in particular was transportation of construction and building material in the region. It was, therefore, suggested that people may be allowed to construct buildings from locally available wood products.

It was also brought to the notice of the Committee that fencing erected for the purpose of driving away wild animals was being misused to kill animals by using high voltage electricity and demanded that this matter needs to be seriously looked into and checked.

6. The Committee in its next meeting decided to hear the representatives of Government of Tamil Nadu. Principal Secretary, Environment and Forests Department; Govt. of Tamil Nadu; District Collector, The Nilgiris; Commissioner, Municipal Corporation of Udhamandalam; representative of Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board, representatives of Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and other officials. A list of officers who attended the meeting is at ANNEXURE-II.

7. The Chairman, while welcoming the officials highlighted the pitiable state of Ooty Lake and increased level of air pollution in the Nilgiris. He further stated that the Committee had been informed by civil society members/ NGOs that the main contributors of pollution in Udhamandalam were tourists, municipal solid waste, plastic waste, vehicular pollution, etc. He asked the officials to apprise the Committee of the various steps taken by different agencies to address these environmental issues. He also asked the authorities to apprise the Committee on eco-tourism, increased man-animal conflict in the Nilgiris and the manner in which the Committee could help the authorities in their endeavours to improve the environmental parameters of the Udhamandalam.

8. The Principal Secretary, Environment & Forests, Govt. of Tamil Nadu in his presentation gave an overview of the State of forest and wildlife in Tamil Nadu. He asserted that forest in Tamil Nadu has been very well managed and well kept mainly because of involvement of people and other stakeholders in the process of conservation of forest. Thirty-three per cent of the forest area in the State form part of wildlife sanctuaries and National Park. Diversion of forest land for non-forestry purposes has been very less as compared to other States. Only about 5000 hectares of forest land has been divested so far. Cases of poaching and illegal felling of trees are also very few in the State.

9. On the pollution of Ooty Lake, Principal Secretary was of the view that almost all the hill stations in India had the problem because of excessive usage of water bodies by the people. Pollution is mainly caused by old vehicles entering into the Nilgiris. He pointed out that the District Collector, Nilgiris was taking care of in cooperation with the local people and the community to conserve the lake. District Collector, Ooty, thereafter, apprised the Committee about measures taken by the District administration to make the hill station clean and green.

10. After hearing both the civil society members and the officials of Tamil Nadu Government, the Committee flagged the following environmental issues of Ooty:-

## **I. POLLUTION IN OOTY LAKE**

11. On Ooty Lake, the District collector, Nilgiris pointed out that it is an artificial lake formed during 1824 and had 23 hectares surroundings. A number of Tea estates and 80 to 90 resorts/ hotels located in and around Ooty are major source of pollution in Nilgiris, many of which were dumping untreated sewage into the lake. Industrial waste and chemical waste is also increasing day by day. He further informed that Rs. 7 crores was allotted for restoration work of the lake and Rs. One crore was given for desiltation of its source. Bio-remedial conservation aimed at increasing the Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) level is also being undertaken. Sewage Treatment Plant of 2 MLD capacity has also been established. Toilet facilities have also been provided to the families of tea plant workers. All major discharge in the Kodappan Channel has been stopped. He further added that these efforts have made positive impact on the water quality of the lake and the odour has gone down.

**12. The Committee takes note of the steps taken by District administration, the Nilgiris to control pollution of Ooty Lake and effects thereof but feels that much more needs to be done. Since Ooty lake is a major tourist attraction, it is imperative that constant watch is kept on the ecological health of the lake. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change may extend financial assistance to the State authorities to rejuvenate all the lakes including prominent tourist places under National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Eco-systems.**

## **II. POLLUTION IN OOTY AND OTHER CIVIC ISSUES**

13. Ooty being a tourist attraction for tourists not only from various parts of India but even from abroad. This brings pressure on the pristine beauty of the hill station. To maintain the ecological balance of the Nilgiri hills, the Committee recommends that action on following points should be taken:-

- (i) **The District Collector, Nilgiris should explore the viability of banning plastic bags. Awareness campaign about environmental impact of throwing garbage/plastic bags in lakes/water bodies and public places should be initiated.**
- (ii) **Old and polluting Government vehicles major source of vehicular pollution in Ooty, should not be allowed to ply on the roads of the Nilgiris.**
- (iii) **To mitigate vehicular pollution Mass Rapid Transit System (MRTS) needs to be developed.**
- (iv) **'No vehicular zone' may be earmarked during peak season when tourists flood Ooty. For this purpose, efforts should also be made to improve the network and speed of the Nilgiri Train Network.**
- (v) **The pressure horn in automobiles should be banned to contain noise pollution.**
- (vi) **Solid Waste Management system of Ooty needs to be put in place.**
- (vii) **A lot of construction material is transported to Ooty everyday from the neighbouring cities which is a major contributor to pollution. Transportation of construction and building materials may be regulated and people should be encouraged to build homes with locally available wood products.**

## **Forests and Wildlife issues**

### **III. MAN ANIMAL CONFLICT**

14. Human-wildlife conflict refers to the confrontation between wild animals and people. This has caused negative impact on people or their resources, or wild animals or their habitat. It occurs when growing human population overlaps with established wildlife territory, creating reduction of resources or life to some people and/or wild animals. Nilgiri district being core part of the Western Ghats is having more than 56% of area under forest cover. Therefore, possibilities of man-animal conflicts are more common in the district.

15. The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in its background note provided to the Committee given following major causes of Man-Animal conflict:-

- (i) Habitat fragmentation and shrinking of habitat give rise to shrinking of space, food etc. in the forest which is required for the wild animals which result in animals stray out of habitat in search of food, water or shelter.
- (ii) Encroachment in the forest lands by local people has resulted in shrinkage of wildlife habitats especially on the fringes which has increased the pressure on the limited natural resources in the forest area.
- (iii) Increased disturbance due to collection of fuel wood, fodder, NTFPs, water etc. from the forests has also increased the incidences of man-animal conflict.
- (iv) Increase in area under cultivation around wildlife habitats and changed cropping pattern have also contributed to increased man-animal conflict. People have started growing commercial crops like sugar cane and banana, which provide good hiding place for the wild animals like wild boar, sloth bear and panther.
- (v) In some forest areas, the numbers of wild animals especially prolific breeders like wild pig have increased beyond the carrying capacity of the habitat concerned. Hence, wild animals stray out of forests cause man-animal conflict.
- (vi) Most incidences of man-animal conflicts are noticed during summer when water becomes scarce. The livestock and wild animals have to share the limited water sources on the fringes or inside forest. Human interference with the natural drainage system in forest areas and diversion of water towards habitation has further complicated the issue.
- (vii) Infestation of wildlife habitat by the invasive exotic weeds like Lantana, Eupatorium and Parthenium have resulted in decreased availability of edible grasses for the wild herbivores. As a result, herbivores come out of forest area and cause depredation of agricultural crops on the fringes.

16. In the context of Mudumalai National Park, the Committee was informed that 95 per cent cases of man-animal conflict involved elephants and most of the victims are migrant labourers who are ignorant about the animal behaviour and hence became easy prey of the wild animals. Mudumalai is one of the highest tiger density parks in the country. The standard carrying capacity of a tiger reserve is 18 tigers per hundred sq. km. and Mudumalai Tiger Reserve has about 19 tigers per hundred sq. kms.

17. Explaining the initiatives taken to tackle the problem of man animal conflict, the Field Director, Annamalai Tiger Reserve (ATR) informed the Committee that early warning system/surveillance systems had been put in place to alert the people about the movement of wild animals. Tourists and plantation workers were also being educated about the behavior of the wild animals' particularly wild elephants. One of the unique things initiated was introduction of surveillance camera which helped in noticing the animal movement.

18. The Committee was also informed of the following measures taken by the Forest Department, Government of Tamil Nadu:-

- Anti-depredation teams involving local tribes had been deployed in all the conflict areas to drive away the elephants straying into human habitation to nearby forest area, then and there. Those teams along with forest staff were provided with crackers, torches and other necessary equipments.
- Awareness camps on man-animal conflicts were organized in all the conflict areas to enlighten the public on the issue.
- Elephant proof trenches, which would prevent entry of elephants into human habitation, had been erected in the specified places. Solar fencing facilities were provided at suitable places to prevent entry of wild animals into the agricultural fields.
- Water holes had been constructed inside the Reserve Forests to meet water requirement of animals during summer besides making available necessary fodder under various Schemes.

- Village Elephant Depredation team involving local villagers and forest staff were being formed to manage the man-animal conflict at all village levels.
- Publicity Boards indicating the elephant crossing zones had been erected in all the major National Highway and other roads to alert the passersby.
- Hand bills and posters informing the public about Do's & Don'ts had been distributed/posted in all the public places.
- Early Warning system which would send advance signals about elephant movements to the public as well as the department had been installed in the district. Installation of the same device in all other Ranges will be undertaken in due course.
- Further, the state authorities have been addressed regarding the measures to be undertaken to curb the menace. They had been requested to provide toilet facilities and other basic amenities, to check movement of labourers especially during night hours, to deploy requisite number of watchers to monitor the movement of animals and alert the labourers.
- Public address system/Rapid Response Unit was in place round-the-clock in all the Range Offices and the Divisional Officers to act upon the information received in that regard.
- Payment of compensation for loss of life/crop damage/property damage/loss of life stock, etc. was being made immediately.

**19. The Committee, while taking note of the steps taken for reduction of man-animal conflict cases particularly with elephants, feels that there is a need not only to continue with the said efforts/measures but some out of the box thinking is needed to obviate this problem. The Committee recommends provision of adequate immediate compensation to the next of kin of the victims of wild animals.**

#### **IV. ELEPHANT CORRIDORS**

20. Protection and preservation of animal corridors particularly for elephants emerged as a major issue during the interaction of the Committee with the NGOs/ experts. Suggestions were made to protect wild animal corridors not only in the forest but also in the private land adjacent to the forest area. On being enquired about the steps taken in this regard, Conservator of Forests, Coimbatore informed that Tamil Nadu Government was taking proactive measures to manage animal corridors. Land measuring around 80 acres in Jhaggarai corridor was acquired for managing the elephant corridor. Still 600 hectares needed to be acquired near the forest for the corridor. Japan International Cooperation Agency was also funding the project for the establishment of barriers along the corridors.

**21. The Committee, while noting the need of wild animal corridors, especially elephant corridors, feels that not only in the forest but also in the private land wherever necessary near the forest, area may be acquired. Government should encourage people to voluntarily donate the private land falling under the corridor. The Committee also feels that the Central Government may extend necessary financial assistance to the State Government for this purpose. The efficacy of such corridor needs to be monitored constantly.**

#### **V. MUDUMALAI TIGER RESERVE (MTR)**

22. Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (MTR) is situated at the tri- junction of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala states. It is contiguous with Wynaad Wildlife Sanctuary on the west and Bandipur Tiger Reserve on the north. The MTR also forms part of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve. The core area of the reserve is 321.00 km<sup>2</sup>. The area is an important and unique habitat known for varied flora and fauna which provides an ecologically sustainable habitat for about 70 tigers, 800-1000 elephants apart from other wild animals.

23. Relocation of villagers from the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve emerged as a major issue during the discussion with the Civil Society Organisations/ NGOs and experts. Several NGOs flagged the relocation issue. During the discussion with the Tamil Nadu Government, the

Committee sought the response of the officers of Forests Department, Government of Tamil Nadu on the pressing issue of relocation and enquired about the steps taken in that direction.

24. A brief background on the problem of relocation of villagers in MTR provided in the background note furnished by the Tamil Nadu government to the Committee, is as follows:-

"The entire relocation process started long back during 1980's voluntarily by the people and the method of relocation has been formulated by the then Revenue Divisional Officer, Gudalur during 1992 sent to the Collector of Nilgiris vide D.O. letter No:A1/3920/1992, dated: 12.09.1992. The people had moved with a writ petition filed by inhabitants living in 7 hamlets located within the Core area of MTR in W.P.No.18531 of 1998 before the Hon'ble High Court of Madras requesting for their relocation outside the Protected Areas. This Writ petition culminated in the order of the Honorable High Court of Madras dated 19.02.2007 asking the authorities to relocate the above villagers outside the Protected Area, preferably within a year.

After the implementation of Project Tiger the issue was resumed and speeded up by following guidelines issued by NTCA for the successful implementation of the programme and to ensure better living condition of the people to ensure inviolate space for tigers and other wildlife. The reserve management was taking all sorts of action in coordination with the District administration for successful implementation of the programme."

25. On issue of relocation of villagers from Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (MTR), the Field Director, MTR informed the Committee that a three-phase relocation plan had already been prepared for which approximately an amount of Rs. 63.00 crores would be required. For the implementation of the first phase approximately 24 crores was required. An amount of Rs. 23.50 crores is to be borne by NTCA and the additional amount of Rs.30.97 lakhs would be met from State Government. A detailed proposal for 1<sup>st</sup> phase has been submitted to National Tiger Conservation Authority and the relocation process would begin once the funds are received.

26. The Relocation Proposal Phase-1 proposes to relocate two villages, namely, Bennai and Nellikarai, out of the 7 villages. Relocation Proposal Phase-2 proposes to relocate 3 villages, namely, Puliyalam, Mandakkarai and Nagampally. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the last phase, Gudithal and Mudukuli villages are proposed to be relocated. It was informed that there were two options available as per NTCA guidelines. Option-1 (Cash option) by payment of relocation package @ Rs.10.00 lakhs per family and the family relocated themselves and Option - 2 (Relocation by the department) @ per family norms out of Rs.10.00 lakhs as per NTCA guidelines. Initially during 2010, 19 families were relocated under Option I (cash option) and one family was yet to be relocated for want of authenticity of claim.

**27. The Committee has been given to understand that people living in the core area of the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve are voluntarily willing to be relocated and a relocation plan has also been worked out by Tamil Nadu Government. The proposal seeking financial assistance for the first phase of relocation has been sent to National Tiger Conservation Authority, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in April, 2015. The Committee also understands that relocation is pending due to delay in sanction of the required Central assistance. The Committee, therefore, recommends that necessary financial assistance to the tune of Rs. 23.50 crores for relocation may be considered expeditiously. The Committee also recommends that the Central Government should also ensure that the entire three phase-relocation programme in Mudumalai Tiger Reserve, Udthagamandalam is implemented within the timeframe stipulated for the purpose.**

## **VI. WEED MANAGEMENT**

28. The Committee was informed that alien weeds particularly Lantana Camera, Eupatorium sp., and Parthenium have invaded the wildlife habitats and forest in the Nilgiris. It was also informed that the problem of weeds has acquired serious dimensions

and needs to be addressed in right earnest or else weeds are going to over shadow the forest area. Growth of weeds was adversely affecting the quality of forest and the wildlife.

29. On the issue, the Director, Regional office of National Tiger Conservation Authority admitted that management of weeds in fact posed a major challenge but it has to be done in scientific manner. Opening the area suddenly may invite herbivores and increased conflicts will happen so the weed has to be managed in a phased manner based on the carrying capacity of the park/sanctuary. Presently, manual removal of weeds is undertaken every year.

**30. The Committee feels that the problem of weeds particularly parthenium is not confined only to the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve but has spread to forest and even in agrarian fields almost all over the country. The Committee is therefore of the view that the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change should come up with the solution on Invasive alien species considering its magnitude and its impact on environment. The necessary financial and scientific help in this regard should also be provided to the Government of Tamil Nadu.**

**Annexure-I**

**List of NGOs/ Civil Society and experts who participated in Parliamentary  
Committee meeting on 17.07.2015 at Ooty**

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Name of Organization</b>	<b>Names of Representative</b>
1	Wildlife and Nature Conservation Trust	Mr. T.S. Vivek, Consultant
2	Environment Conservation Group	Mr. R. Mohammed Saleem
3	Nilgiri Wildlife and Environment Association	Mr. S. Kuppuraja
4	Key Stone Kotagiri	Ms. Anita Varghese
5	Wildlife and Forest Research Trust	Mr.M. Santhanu Ranas
6	Tamil Nadu Green Movement	Mr. Madhusudhanan
7	World Wildlife India	Mr. Bhoopinder
8	Organisation for Social Action and Improvement	Mr. Kalidas
9	World Wildlife Fund of India, Nilgiri Wildlife	Mr. Mohan Raj
10	Wildlife Institute	Ms. Tamilselvi
11	Federation of Tea Cultivators	Mrs. Kullani
12	Nilgiri Adivasi Welfare Association (ALWAS)	Mr. Alvas, Member Secretary,
13	Mrs. Geetha Srinivassan	Environment Expert

**List of officials of Tamil Nadu Government and Union Ministry of Environment,  
Forest and Climate Change present on 18/7/15 at Ooty.**

1. Shri Hans Raj Verma, Principal Secretary, Tamil Nadu Environment & Forests Department
  2. Dr. P. Shankar, Collector, Nilgiris
  3. Dr. S.S. Negi, ADG, MoEF & CC
  4. Shri Amarnath Shetty, APCCF, NTCA, Bengaluru
  5. Shri Somasekhar, APCCF, MoEF & CC Bengaluru
  6. Dr. M.R.G. Reddy, APCCF, MoEF & CC (RO, Chennai)
  7. Shri T.P. Ragunath, APCCF, CAMPA, TN Forest Department
  8. Dr. P. Raghuram Singh, APCCF, Project Tiger, TN Forest Department
  9. Shri Prashanth, APCCF, IFGTB, Coimbatore
  10. Shri Srinivas R. Reddy, Field Director & CCF MTR, Project Director HADP
  11. Dr. V.T. Kandasamy, Field Director & CCF ATR, Annamalai
  12. Shri I. Anwardeen, CF, Coimbatore Circle
  13. Shri Harish Choudhary, Director (HQ) MoEF & CC
  14. Dr. K. Ganesh Kumar, DCF, MoEF & CC (RO, Chennai)
  15. Shri S.N. Thejasvi, DFO, Gudalur
  16. Shri Badrasamy, DFO, Nilgiri South
  17. Shri D. Chandran, DD, MTR
  18. Shri V. Swaminathan, AEE, Pollution Control Board, Ooty
  19. Shri R. Rajmohan, ACF Training, Coimbatore
  20. Shri A. Pushpakaran, ACF, Gudalur.
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