

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO : 1922
TO BE ANSWERED ON 05.12.2019

NEUTRINO OBSERVATORY IN TAMIL NADU

1922. SHRI VAIKO:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Neutrino Observatory is being planned in Theni district of Tamil Nadu;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether any opposition has been raised against the project, in view of serious endangerment to bio-diversity of Western Ghats;
- (d) if so, whether any survey of local people and local representatives have been consulted and taken into confidence about the environmental degradation;
- (e) if so, the details thereof; and
- (f) whether the project would be abandoned in view of large scale opposition in the area?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS
AND IN THE PMO (DR. JITENDRA SINGH):

- (a)&(b) Yes, Sir. The India based Neutrino Observatory is being planned in the Theni district in Tamil Nadu.
- (c)(d)(e)&(f) There has been opposition from some sections of the local populace. INO has been conducting outreach programmes in & around Madurai and Theni for students in schools & colleges, for faculty as well as journalists and media professionals. A large outreach program took place during May-August 2018 covering other towns in Tamil Nadu and a few in Kerala. Many students, faculty and members of the public have visited the INO transit campus where an 85 ton mini-ICAL Detector is operational detecting naturally occurring cosmic ray muons. This is a much smaller version of the Detector that is planned in the cavern at the end of a 2km horizontal tunnel at the INO site. In June 2010, a public meeting, though not mandated by Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF), was called by the Theni Collector. It was attended by about 1200 local people, including the Panchayat President, who endorsed the project. All the statutory norms and regulations are also followed in implementing the INO project. The INO site is not in the Eco Sensitive Area as identified by the High Level Working Group (HL WG) chaired by Dr. Kasturirangan and referred to in the MoEF Notification F.No.1-4/2012 - RE (Pt.) dated 13-11-2013.