

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COAL
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1478
ANSWERED ON 09.12.2024

Impact of Jharia Coal Mine Fires

1478. Shri Derek O' Brien:

Will the Minister of **COAL** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is aware of the current status of the Jharia coal mine fires, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether Government is working on any long-term plan to combat this case of continuously ongoing coal mine fire;
- (c) if so, the details thereof, if not, the reason therefor;
- (d) whether Government has conducted any study during the last five years on the impact of coal mine fires on the population residing near mines affected by coal mine fire in Jharia; and
- (e) if so, the findings of the study, if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER
MINISTER OF COAL AND MINES
(SHRI G. KISHAN REDDY)

(a): Government is aware of the current status of the Jharia coal mine fires. Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCCL) under Ministry of Coal annually conducts survey through National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC), Hyderabad for delineation of surface fire. As per the survey report of 2020-21, the surface fire area has reduced to 1.80 sq. km, spread over at 27 locations from previous surveyed area of 3.26 Sq Km spread over 34 locations in year 2017-18.

(b) & (c) : The fire is being extinguished by digging out through excavation. As per the survey report of 2020-21, the surface fire area is 1.80 sq. km, located at 27 locations. Out of these 27 locations, fire at 16 locations is being dealt by operating fire dealing projects through excavation. Out of the balance sites, blanketing at 8 locations are completed.

(d) & (e): A survey covering the Kustore, Kachi balihari, Katras and Bagmara areas was done by National Institute of Occupational Health (NIOH), Ahmedabad regarding occupation health, the report of which was submitted on 11.10.2019. This survey covered individuals with mean age from 35 to 54 years. The findings of the survey are as below:

1. Musculoskeletal pain (34%)
2. Hypertension (20%)
3. Restrictive pulmonary test (3%)
4. Ophthalmic (5%- General Eye Problem) + (9% Cataract)

Recommendations of the survey are as under:

1. Prevalence of musculoskeletal pain during work in a good number of workers reflects that manual work of the work processes might be causing some discomfort for the workers. Training on proper method of manual material handling and regular proper exercise should be promoted among workers especially supervisory employees to get rid of ill effects of sedentary activities.
2. Special emphasis should be given to protection of respiratory health, hearing ability. Periodic relevant examination (lung function test, audiometry) at regular interval is recommended.
3. Industrial hygiene survey (periodic monitoring of dust and other environmental hazards) including noise level monitoring in different operations at regular interval should be undertaken.
4. Some prevalent symptoms observed may be representation of nervous system effect due to exposures to toxicants. In order to exclude the possibility of exposure from occupational environment, environmental study should include assessment of exposure to metals.
5. Measures like using protective appliances (eg. PPEs), per-placement and periodic medical examination, for the control and prevention of relevant health hazards, are to be implemented and maintained by all the mining areas to protect the health of the workers.
