

LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 403

TO BE ANSWERED ON 18.12.2017

ONGC Projects in Tamil Nadu

403. DR. ANBUMANI RAMADOSS:

SHRI B. SENGUTTUVAN:

पेट्रो लयम एवं प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्री

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware of wide spread protests, strikes and resistance launched by the farmers and the local population against the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) for its hydrocarbon explorations in Neduvasal and Kadiramangalam villages of Tamil Nadu and if so, the details thereof along with the measures taken by the Government/ONGC to protect and prevent the environmental degradations and land and water pollutions;

(b) whether the agitation in Neduvasal in Pudukottai district of Tamil Nadu is against acquisition of fertile agricultural land from the farmers for drilling small wells for hydrocarbon extraction and agitation in Kadiramangalam in Thanjavur district is against the conduct of oil exploration that would affect the ground water conditions and if so, the details thereof along with the corrective steps taken

by the Government in this regard;

(c) whether public hearing meetings have been conducted with the land owners and residents of the land marked for the project and if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the Government has received any objections/protests against the implementation of the said project and if so, the details thereof along with the steps taken/stand of the Government in this regard;

(e) whether the Government/ONGC proposes to extract Coal Bed Methane/ hydrocarbon and shale gas projects in the Cauvery Delta Region/other places of Tamil Nadu and if so, the details thereof along with the steps taken by the Government to protect the livelihood of the farmers and others in nearby villages and cancel/withdraw all such Hydrocarbon exploration projects being carried out in Tamil Nadu; and

(f) whether the Government proposes to declare the Cauvery Delta Region as 'Protected Agricultural Zone' to prevent further installation and implementation of environmentally hazardous industrial projects in the said region and if so, the details thereof and the stand taken by the Government on the said issue?

Answer

पेट्रो लयम एवं प्राकृतिक गैस मंत्रालय में मंत्री

(श्री धर्मेन्द्र प्रधान)

MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM & NATURAL GAS

(SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN)

(a) to (c): Under Discovered Small Field (DSF) Policy bid round 2016, the Government has approved award of 31 contract areas including Neduvasal, Tamil Nadu contract area to the successful bidders for early development of fields. Subsequently, some local people/organizations, have submitted representations objecting to the award of above discovered small field expressing apprehension regarding possible environmental impact.

For starting any petroleum activity, operator of the field awarded under DSF has to obtain or get the requisite Mining Lease transferred from Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) Limited through the State Government. After the grant/transfer of lease, to start any actual operations the operator will have to get requisite environmental clearances from State Government / Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change by following the prescribed process, which may involve public hearing also. The awarded projects are taken up for production only after following the requisite process including obtaining environmental clearances.

ONGC is not starting any new project in Kathiramangalam village, Thanjavur.

Further, ONGC has been carrying Exploration and Production (E&P) activities in Cauvery Basin including Neduvasal, Tamil Nadu for more than 50 years and no adverse effect have been noticed in respect of agriculture and ecology. Besides, ONGC is also working for socio-economic development of the region under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities.

(d) Some local people/organizations, have submitted representations objecting to the award of some discovered small fields expressing apprehension regarding possible environmental impact. Two petitions, in this regard, have been filed in National Green Tribunal (NGT), Southern Zone, Chennai.

ONGC in collaboration with local administration disseminated information through various local media to allay the fears of people about environmental degradation. Clarification to various misconceptions on Methane/Shale Gas, depletion /pollution of ground water, effect on agricultural land, intricacies to Exploration and Production(E&P) activities, technologies, statutory requirement etc. were provided to State Government and local people through various local media.

(e) and (f): There are no Coal Bed Methane (CBM) and Shale activities going on in the State of Tamil Nadu. ONGC is neither carrying out nor having any plans for exploitation of Shale gas, Shale oil or CBM in Cauvery Basin. Further, Exploration and Production activities are coexisting with agriculture not only in Tamil Nadu but also in several delta regions in the other parts of the country.
