

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOKSABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 568
TO BE ANSWERED ON 24.07.2023

Environmental Pollution due to Mining activities

568. SHRI CHANDRA SEKHAR SAHU:
DR PRITAM GOPINATHRAO MUNDE:
SHRI RAHUL RAMESH SHEWALE:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has taken note of the serious environmental and social concerns including air, noise, water pollution and land degradation caused due to coal mining activities in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether it is a fact that large number of coal mining is undertaken by Coal India Limited and its subsidiaries which are openly flouting environmental norms in the country;
- (d) if so, the facts and the details in this regard; and
- (e) the corrective steps taken by the Government to ensure that all mines/washeries have air quality monitoring stations to facilitate online monitoring of ambient air quality in the country?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)

- (a) to (e) In order to assess the possible environment and social impacts due to various project activities including coal mining, the Central Government has devised the process of Environment Impact Assessment, as a regulatory tool under the provision of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. Under the said Act, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has notified the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006 as amended from time to time, which deals with the process of granting Environmental Clearance (EC) after having comprehensive analysis of EIA reports prepared by the coal companies. The coal mining projects accordingly are required to obtain the prior Environment Clearance under the EIA, Notification 2006.

It is to mention that Coal mining works are site specific activities and may cause various impacts which can be ameliorated by taking necessary ameliorative measures. Any likely impacts due to coal mining activities on ambient air, water, land and noise levels at project site along with social impact in nearby areas, are assessed in EIA report and accordingly its mitigation measures are incorporated in the Environmental Management Plan (EMP) report.

Apart from the above, the concerns of local affected persons and others who have plausible stake in the environmental impacts of the project or activity, are addressed through the process of public consultation/hearing under the EIA, Notification, 2006. The project proponents are required to address the issues appropriately in EIA and EMP reports arising from public consultation with budgetary provision. The EIA and EMP are evaluated and appraised by the Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC), comprising domain experts and based on their recommendations MoEF&CC considers the proposals for granting the Environment Clearance (EC) to coal mining projects.

In addition, any forest diversion required for coal mining activities are covered under the provision of Forest (Conservation), Act, 1980. The Coal companies are required to take separate Forest Clearance (FC) under the said Act to assess the amount of land degradation.

The coal mines & subsidiaries under Coal India Limited (CIL) commence their operation only after obtaining Environment, Forest Clearance and other statutory permissions from the State Government. The pollution control measures as per EIA/EMP reports and conditions laid down in EC and FC are required to be implemented by the project proponent to minimize the damage caused to environment due to mining. The pollution control norms are also monitored by the concerned State Pollution Control Board (SPCB) and Union Territories (UTs). The respective SPCBs/UTs issue the Consent to Operate under the provisions of Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 and Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 to oversee the compliance of emissions/effluent standards and take action against violators under the provision of said Water and Air Acts.

As per the EIA Notification, as amended, the Project Proponents are mandated to submit six monthly compliance reports to the concerned Integrated Regional Office (IRO) of the Ministry. In order to monitor the online air quality of project site in coal mining areas/washeries, a condition for installing the Continuous Air Quality Monitoring Station (CAQMS) is prescribed with aim to integrate the environmental data with the server of Central & State Pollution Control Boards. MoEF&CC through its Integrated Regional Offices monitors the compliance of this condition on regular basis.

As per available information, M/s Coal India Limited (CIL) has installed 72 Continuous Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Stations (CAQMS) for air quality monitoring. The CIL has also installed 70 PM₁₀ Analyser through its subsidiaries namely M/s Eastern Coalfields Limited, M/s Central Coalfields Limited and M/s Bharat Coking Coal Limited including 7 PM₁₀ analysers in coal washeries.
