

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 1318
TO BE ANSWERED ON 11.12.2023

Extended Reach Drilling

1318. SHRI KARTI P. CHIDAMBARAM:
DR. A. CHELLAKUMAR:

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

- (a) whether the Government conducted any studies evaluating the impact of Extended Reach Drilling (ERD) on forests to exempt the technology before forest issuing clearance;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Government plans to allocate additional funds to State Governments, specifically State Pollution Control Boards in order to enable them to deal with the newly added responsibility of monitoring the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) of ERD project developers; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

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

- (a) & (b) The Ministry constituted an expert technical committee including experts from Petroleum Industry and Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE), Dehradun on 30.06.2020. This expert Committee submitted its report titled "Impact of Extended Reach Drilling (ERD) on above the ground bio - diversity of Forest" in December 2021. Further, Wildlife Institute of India (WII) was requested to submit a report on ERD Technology in reference to impact on the wildlife. WII submitted its report on impacts of ERD technology on the above ground biodiversity of forest areas. The report also includes measures to mitigate the impact from oil and gas extraction close to wildlife habitats.
- (c) & (d) Keeping in view the above study reports the Ministry vide letter dated 12.09.2023 has issued the detailed guidelines wherein Extended Reach Drilling Technology has been exempted from the purview of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 in forest areas, located outside the Protected Areas and Eco-Sensitive Zones subject to certain conditions stipulated therein.

The Govt. has not allocated any additional funds to State Governments, specifically State Pollution Control Boards to deal with the monitoring of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) prescribed in the guidelines dated 12.09.2023. However, it is pertinent to mention here that the 'land' is a subject

matter of the State Government. The forest areas and the legal boundaries thereof are determined and maintained by the concerned State Government. It is the responsibility of the concerned State Government/UT administration to ensure the compliance of all statutory provisions and the conditions stipulated in the guidelines dated 12.09.2023 issued by the Ministry.
