

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COAL
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1564
TO BE ANSWERED ON 27.11.2019**

Underground Fires in Coal Mines

1564. SHRI CHANDRA PRAKASH CHOUDHARY:

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

- (a) whether some of the coal mine in the country including in Jharkhand are facing underground fire for quite some time and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the estimated losses due to such underground fire of coal mines during the last three years;
- (c) the reasons for such underground fire of coal mines and ways to prevent the same; and
- (d) whether the Government has taken measures to stop/prevent underground fire in coal mines and if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS, COAL AND MINES
(SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI)

(a): The coal mines under Coal India Limited are not facing underground fire for quite sometimes except, mining areas in Jharia Coalfield (JCF) in Jharkhand. The mining areas in Jharia Coalfield within the leasehold of Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCCL), are facing with problems of fire and subsidence due to the century old history of mining in the coalfield. As per approved Master Plan in 2009, after nationalization, 70 fires were known to exist in JCF in the leasehold of BCCL after investigation. Subsequently seven (7) more fires were identified making the total tally of fires to 77. Out of 77 fires areas, ten (10) fires got completely extinguished due to control measures taken after formation of BCCL. Fire dousing is going on in rest of the fire sites.

(b): According to the approved Jharia Master Plan, an assessment was made during the year 2009 that about 37 million tonne of good quality prime coking coal has been destroyed due to fire in Jharia Coalfield. However no further assessment has been made during last three years.

(c): Before nationalization, fire was initiated in underground mainly due to unscientific mining by private owners and also other reasons e.g. due to existence of old workings with full height extraction with wide galleries, multi seam and multi-section development under shallow depths, existence of developed seams under extracted lower seam with stowing etc.

Apart from compliance with statutory provision laid down in Coal Mines Regulations (CMR) 2017 in respect to underground fire, conventional methods are used with varying degree of success viz. (i) Excavation, (ii) Isolation by trenching, (iii) Blind flushing, (iv) Surface sealing, (v) Isolation by underground stopping, (vi) Quenching and cooling, (vii) Cooling by water curtain and (viii) Flooding.

Other Methods of Fire Control and Extinguishment are (i) Inert Gas injection, (ii) Chemical Treatment, (iii) Modified Bulk filling (Water / Slurry) and (iv) Modified Bulk filling (Pneumatic).

(d) : A Master Plan was prepared by CMPDI and approved by Govt. of India in Aug, 2009 for dealing with fire, subsidence and rehabilitation in the lease hold of BCCL. BCCL adopted a Strategic Plan and decided to liquidate the fires by excavating fire area by deploying HEMM. Surface fire study is being done by National Remote Sensing Centre, Hyderabad at regular intervals. All efforts are being done for controlling the fires.
