

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.3145
TO BE ANSWERED ON 06.08.2021

Ecological Impact of Coal Mining Project

3145. SHRI ANUBHAV MOHANTY:

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

- (a) whether the Government has approved the coal mining projects in Talabira, Sambalpur district, Odisha;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Government had gathered an assessment from experts on the adverse ecological impact that the project would have on the forest and the surrounding villages due to the mining activities; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the manner in which the Government is likely to assess the adverse impact of mining in that area?

ANSWER

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

- (a) & (b) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has granted two Environmental Clearances (EC) for coal mining project in Talabira, Sambalpur district of Odisha. First one was granted on 05.03.2001 to Talabira-I Opencast Coal mine located at village Khinda district Sambalpur in Odisha in mine lease area of 170.3 Hectare for production capacity of 0.4 million tons per annum, which was later expanded to 3 million tons per annum vide Ministry's letter dated 8th November, 2011. Further Forest clearance for diversion of 49.62 Hectare has also been accorded for the said project under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.

Second Environment Clearance was granted on 11.10.2018 to Talabira-II & III for opencast coal mining for 23 million tons per annum production capacity in an area of 1914.063 Hectare, which is located in districts Sambalpur and Jharsuguda, Odisha. Forest Clearance for this project has been accorded by Ministry for non-forestry use of 1038.187 Hectare of forest land under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.

- (c) & (d) Environment Clearances are granted by this Ministry under the provisions of Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006, under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and after the appraisal of Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Report & Environment Management Plan (EMP) with recommendation of a technical committee (Expert Appraisal Committee- EAC)

as mandated in EIA, Notification, 2006. While appraising EIA reports for mining project, the EAC considers Environment Management Plan (EMP) as submitted by project proponent based on scientific study by taking into consideration of environment sensitivity such as ecological area, wildlife sanctuary/National Parks, etc. It also assesses the impact of mining activity on nearby habitation/villages. Environment Clearances granted to project are prescribed with conditions of environment management measures to be adopted by project proponent for protection of flora-fauna of the area including health of habitation around the project site.

Further, it is to mention that any non-forestry activity including coal mining has a possible impact on the environment. Whenever a proposal for diversion of forestland is received, it is examined and due diligence is made to avoid the use of forestland, or to keep it at bare minimum. In cases where it is unavoidable, the forest area is allowed to be diverted, subject to certain conditions including stipulation of Compensatory Afforestation (CA), payment of Net Present Value (NPV) and protection/ afforestation of Safety Zone area. Wherever necessary, the additional mitigation measures in the form of Soil and Moisture Conservation works, Wildlife Management plan etc. are also stipulated on case-to-case basis.
