

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 3654
TO BE ANSWERED ON 20.12.2021

Unauthorised Disposal of Ash

3654. SHRI SURESH PUJARI:

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

- (a) whether there has been any progress in the enquiry/ examination of the issue of Air and Water pollution caused due to unauthorised disposal of fly ash by the industries in the district Jharsuguda of Bargarh PC in Odisha by the Central Pollution Control Board;
- (b) if not, the expected time by when it is likely to be taken up by the Central Pollution Control Board;
- (c) if so, the report submitted by the Board; and
- (d) whether the Government proposes to give direction to the Board to cause enquiry without the knowledge of any quarter so that truth about pollution and its degree can be ascertained without any cover up?

ANSWER

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

- (a) to (d) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has sought inquiry report from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). On the directions of CPCB, the State Pollution Control Board, Odisha has conducted enquiry on the compliance of fly ash utilization and its disposal by thermal power plants located in Jharsuguda District, Odisha.

A copy of the report submitted by State Pollution Control Board, Odisha dated 26.10.2021 is enclosed as *Annexure-1*.

Enquiry Report on alleged environmental pollution due to unscientific disposal of fly ash by the industries of Jharsuguda District

(Matter raised under Rule 377 by Sri Suresh Pujari Hon'ble MP Lok Sabha)

A letter was received on 22.09.2021 from the Head Office SPCB, Odisha, Bhubaneswar to submit an enquiry report regarding alleged environmental pollution due to unscientific disposal of fly ash by the industries of Jharsuguda district as raised under rule 377 by Sri Suresh Pujari, Hon'ble MP, Lok Sabha. In this regard, the details of the report are as follows:

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Fly Ash is generated due to the burning of Coal in the thermal power plants. There are 5 nos of industries having thermal power plants operating in the district of Jharsuguda and generating fly ash.

1. M/s. Vedanta Ltd. Bhurkhamunda, Jharsuguda.

- M/s. Vedanta Ltd. has two thermal power plants i.e; Captive Power Plant of capacity 1215 MW and Thermal Power Plant of capacity 2400 MW. Consent to Operate of both the thermal power plant is valid upto 31.03.2022. Hybrid ESP's are provided for the treatment of boiler emissions before let out to the atmosphere through two stacks of 275m height as pollution control measures. The unit has installed online Continuous Ambient Monitoring Systems for ambient air monitoring and online Continuous Emission Monitoring System for source emission through stack. The online systems are connected to the server of SPCB and CPCB for real time data transmission.
- Coal consumption of the unit is about 18 Million Tonne per Annum and Ash generation is about 7 Million Tonne per Annum. The industry has adopted high concentration ash slurry disposal system (HCSD) and the ash slurry is being transported from the ash handling plants to the designated ash ponds through pipeline. It has three nos of Ash Pond at Kurebaga, Katikela and Siriapali for disposing high concentration ash slurry. It has also been utilising fly ash for various purposes like ash pond dyke raising, cement industries, brick units, reclamation of low-lying areas, road and fly over constructions, abandoned quarry filling etc. for achieving 100% utilization as per the Fly ash notification S.O.2804 E, 3rd November 2009. It has been doing reclamation of low-lying area by utilizing fly ash and is obtaining separate Consent to Establish (CTE) and Consent to Operate (CTO) as per the guidelines of SPCB Odisha.

2. M/s. Ib Thermal Power Station (OPGC), At/Po – Banharpali, Jharsuguda

- M/s. Ib Thermal Power Station (OPGC), At/Po – Banharpali, Jharsuguda, is a Thermal Power Plant consisting of 4 units out of which two units are 210 MW capacities each and rest two units are 660 MW each. Consent to operate of the industry is valid upto 31.03.2022. ESPs have been provided as pollution control measures for the treatment of the boiler emissions before let out to the atmosphere through the stack height of 220 m as pollution control measures. The unit has installed online Continuous Ambient Monitoring Systems for ambient air monitoring and online Continuous Emission Monitoring System for source emission through stack. The online systems are connected to the server of SPCB and CPCB for real time data transmission.
- Coal consumption of the unit is about 3.5 Million Tonne per Annum and Ash generation is about 1.3 Million Tonne per Annum. Fly Ash generated from the unit is transported through lean slurry method to the 2 nos of designated ash ponds, located at Rengali and Tilia. It has been utilising fly ash for various purposes like ash pond dyke raising, cement industries, brick units, reclamation of low-lying areas, road and fly over constructions, abandoned quarry filling etc. for achieving 100% utilization as per the Fly ash notification S.O.2804 E, 3rd November 2009. It has been doing reclamation of low-lying area by utilizing fly ash and is obtaining separate Consent to Establish (CTE) and Consent to Operate (CTO) as per the guidelines of SPCB Odisha.

3. M/s. SMC Power Generation Ltd, At-Hirma, Dist-Jharsuguda.

- M/s SMC Power Generation Ltd has also a captive thermal power plant of capacity 17 MW (AFBC). Consent to operate granted to the unit is valid up to **31.03.2023**. ESPs have been installed as pollution control equipment for the treatment of flue gas emissions before let out of the atmosphere through the stack height of 70 m. The unit has installed online Continuous Ambient Monitoring Systems for ambient air monitoring and online Continuous Emission Monitoring System for source emission through stack. The online systems are connected to the server of SPCB and CPCB for real time data transmission.
- Coal consumption of the unit is about 80 Metric Tonne per Annum and Ash generation about 52 Metric Tonne per Annum. Fly Ash generated from the unit is being disposed off in the low-lying areas of the plant premises as stipulated in CTO order. It has also been utilizing fly ash for brick making and other purposes.

4. M/s. Thakur Prasad. Sao & Sons (P) Ltd., (Unit-IV), At- Lahandabud, Kantapali, Jharsuguda

- M/s Thakur Prasad. Sao & Sons (P) Ltd has a captive thermal power plant of capacity 4 MW (AFBC). Consent to Operate granted to the unit is valid up to 31.03.2022. ESP has been installed as pollution control equipment for the treatment of flue gas emissions before let out of the atmosphere through the stack height of 60 m. The unit has installed

online Continuous Emission Monitoring System for source emission through stack. The online systems are connected to the server of SPCB and CPCB for real time data transmission.

- Coal consumption of the unit is about 50,000 Metric Tonne per Annum and Ash generation about 20,000 Metric Tonne per Annum. Fly Ash generated from the unit is being disposed off in the low-lying areas of the plant premises as stipulated in CTO order. It has also been utilizing fly ash for brick making and other purposes.

5. M/s. Seven Star Steels Ltd, At-Kelendamal, Gudigaon, Jharsuguda

- M/s SMC Power Generation Ltd has also a captive thermal power plant of capacity 4 MW (AFBC). Consent to Operate granted to the unit is valid up to 31.03.2025. ESPs have been installed as pollution control equipment for the treatment of flue gas emissions before let out of the atmosphere through the stack height of 50 m. The unit has installed online Continuous Emission Monitoring System for source emission through stack. The online systems are connected to the server of SPCB and CPCB for real time data transmission.
- Coal consumption of the unit is about 50,000 Metric Tonne per Annum and Ash generation about 20,000 Metric Tonne per Annum. Fly Ash generated from the unit is being disposed off in the low-lying areas of the plant premises as stipulated in CTO order. It has also been utilizing fly ash for brick making and other purposes.

Observations on the Complaint Matter

- The Ministry of Environment and Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) in its Notification No. S.O.763 (E) dated 14th September 1999, last amended on 25th January, 2016 mandates that, no agency, person or organization shall within a radius of three hundred kilometres of a coal or lignite based thermal power plant undertake or approve or allow reclamation and compaction of low-lying areas with soil; only ash shall be used for compaction and reclamation. In this regard, it is noteworthy to mention that aforesaid 5 nos. of thermal power plants are located in the district of Jharsuguda and for land development activities, the land owner/tenant of the land request/ make application the ash generators i.e thermal power plant to carry out land development activities with fly ash and the ash generator applies to the State Pollution Control Board for the Consent to Establish and Consent to Operate for the same as

per the Guidelines for Reclamation of Low-Lying Areas and Abandoned Quarries with Fly Ash 2017.

- No permission has been granted in the agricultural land (crop fields/area) and Gochar Kisan Land except the Panchapada reclamation site where Collector, Jharsuguda has permitted the Gochar Kisan Land in urban area for ash filling for undertaking developmental activities vide District office letter no. 7296 dtd. 25.08.2018. Copy of the permission letter is enclosed for ready reference.
- M/s. Vedanta Ltd had made an agreement with Sri Raju Gond of Junanimunda village in the district of Jharsuguda to fill his down area land of Ac 8.20 dec with fly ash for establishment of his firm & house. The industry has obtained NOC from Local Authority, Consent to Establish and Consent to Operate from State Pollution Control Board, Odisha for reclamation of low-lying area land of Sri Raju Gond with fly ash. Due to breach of the earthen embankment of the aforesaid reclaimed area, surface runoff along with fly ash had flown to the nearby area and a Kata (Pond) of Sri Ajit Kumar Dhala, State Pollution Control Board, Odisha has directed M/s. Vedanta Ltd to take remedial action. Sri Ajit Kumar Dhala has filed Original Application 10/2020/EZ before Hon'ble National Green Tribunal. In this regard, the joint inspection was conducted on 08.07.2021 by the Committee constituted in compliance to the order dtd. 15.06.2021 of the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal, EZB, Kolkata in the matter of O.A NO. 10/2021/EZ and report has been submitted. The matter is under sub-judice and next hearing date is scheduled on 25.10.2021.
- Ash transportation was carried out in moist condition by tippers/ trucks/ dumpers with tarpaulin covering as per point no. 3 of Guidelines for Reclamation of Low-Lying Areas and Abandoned Quarries with Fly Ash. Ash transportation by open trucks (without tarpaulin covering) is not carried out in the district of Jharsuguda as verified from time to time and is ensured by ash generators.
- Soil covering on ash reclaimed area has been found to be carried out to minimize its exposure to atmosphere. This office is not aware of air pollution related health hazards and crop damage, due to fly ash & reclamation of low-lying area with fly ash for land development.
- Reclamation of low-lying areas with fly ash in the district of Jharsuguda was regulated & monitored through Consent Administration of the SPCB, Odisha. Where water resources like seasonal nallah or any specific waterbody / surface features exists

near to the reclamation site, provision of specific safety measures/ protection bonds is being ensured through consent administration & regulatory mechanisms.

In case of non-compliances to stipulated consent conditions and Guidelines for Reclamation of Low-Lying Areas and Abandoned Quarries with Fly Ash 2017 observed, action is being taken against the defaulting ash generating units & the application and directions is being issued for taking remedial measures.