

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3713
TO BE ANSWERED ON 24.03.2025

EIA of Projects in and around Joshimath

3713. SHRI SUDAMA PRASAD:

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

- (a) the details of the Government's policies regarding Himalayan States and fragile Himalayan towns such as Joshimath, particularly in light of the 2022-23 disaster;
- (b) whether the Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) and Social Impact Assessments (SIA) have been conducted for major development projects in and around Joshimath, including tunnel construction, large hydroelectric projects and four-lane highways, if so, the details of the reports thereof;
- (c) whether the Government is considering a reassessment of large-scale infrastructure projects in the Himalayas, which are considered a major factor behind recurring disasters and if so, the details of alternative development plans; and
- (d) if not, the alternative disaster mitigation strategies chalked out by the Government?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a) to (d) As per provisions of the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006, as amended, all infrastructure projects like the Hydro-electric projects and Highways etc., including those located in Himalayan States, require prior Environmental Clearance before the start of construction of the project, as applicable. The Ministry has delineated a detailed procedure for comprehensive assessment of environmental and social impacts of such projects in the EIA Notification, 2006, as amended, which, inter-alia, provides for four stages of consideration process i.e., Screening, Scoping, Public Consultation and Appraisal by the Expert Appraisal Committee.

Whenever the Projects require prior Environmental Clearance, the Expert Appraisal Committee at the Central level or the State/UT level Expert Appraisal Committee and State/UT level Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA) comprising domain area experts, after detailed examination and deliberations on various environmental and social aspects of the project including appraisal of the studies/information related to seismology, geological profile, study of landslide prone areas, risk analysis studies, recommend the project for grant of Environmental Clearance by suggesting suitable mitigation measures and Environment Management to minimize the environmental and social impacts associated with the project. It is only after such detailed study and analysis that environmental clearances are issued subject to compliance of necessary environmental safeguards and general and specific conditions by the Project Proponent before undertaking construction of the project.

Project specific conditions related to safety measures like installation of Early Warning Telemetric system, implementation of Emergency Preparedness Plan, Disaster Management Plan, Catchment Area Treatment plan, stabilization of muck disposal sites, rim plantation, pasture development, nursery development etc. are also prescribed as part of General/Specific conditions forming part of Environmental Clearances, as may be applicable.
