GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COAL

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3438
TO BE ANSWERED ON 09.08.2023

Land Degradation due to Coal Mining

3438. SHRI T.R.V.S. RAMESH:

Will the Minister of **COAL** be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the areas affected by land degradation due to coal mining during the last three years, year-wise;

(b) whether Government is aware that around 70 per cent of the country's coal reserves are conducive for underground mining, a greener mining option to prevent land degradation;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) whether it is a fact that the Government has requested the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to allow coal mines with existing environmental clearance to increase their production by up to 40 per cent and to hike production by up to 50 per cent without a fresh environmental impact assessment or public consultation and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

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

(a) The details of the areas affected by land degradation due to coal mining during the last three years, year-wise, coal company-wise are as under:

Coal company	Excavated/degraded land area (in Ha)		
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
CIL	3508.30	3012.23	3008.05
SCCL	475.78	480.39	270.71
NLCIL	36.00	25.00	40.00

(b) & (c) Mining of coal reserve (resource) by underground or opencast mining depends mainly on its technical and financial feasibility analysis. Application of available technology, scale of operation & its financial feasibility changes with new technology development, input costs, price and other parameters. At the time of nationalization, majority of coal mines were underground mines and the depth of coal seams was up to 100m. After nationalization, depth of opencast mines increased significantly and currently, it is generally considered up to 300m. Presently, underground coal mines are working at depth up to 600-700m.

As per available mining technology, coal resources within the depth range of 300 to 600m and higher are considered as amenable to underground mining. The depth-wise estimated coal resources as per the Coal Inventory published by GSI, as on 01.04.2022, is as under:

(Resources in million tonne)

Depth Range (m)	**Coking**			**Non-coking**			**High Sulphur**	**Grand Total**
	Prime	**Medium**	**Semi coking**	**Superior (G1-G6)**	**Inferior (G 7-G17)**	**Ungraded**		
0-300	3.02	11961.89	466.77	21688.23	156530.68	6718.12	1453.54	198822.25
0-600*	4060.49	4645.14	0.00	204.52	5897.48	0.00	0.00	14807.63
300-600	0.00	6509.31	758.14	13786.84	81952.69	12058.87	202.00	115267.85
600-1200	1254.78	4963.25	482.61	3434.04	16990.39	5388.66	0.00	32513.73
0-1200	**5318.29**	**28079.59**	**1707.52**	**39113.63**	**261371.24**	**24165.65**	**1655.54**	**361411.46**

*** For Jharia Coalfield only**

(d) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) had, vide OM dated 15.09.2017, allowed coal companies for 40% expansion without public hearing, with the conditions that (i) there is no increase in area for the proposed expansion vis-a-vis the area in EC, wherein last public hearing was conducted; (ii) coal transport is through conveyor system upto the silo and loading to railway wagons, and not by road; and (iii) periodical air quality parameters are within the prescribed norms. During the Covid pandemic, on request of Ministry of Coal, MoEF&CC, vide OM dated 07.05.2022, provided a special dispensation to coal mining projects which have been granted expansion of EC upto 40% of original EC capacity, to increase their production capacity to 50% of Original EC capacity, within the same mine lease area without requiring revised EIA/EMP report for additional capacity and public consultation. However, to ensure no further impact on environment, Certified Compliance Report of the EC granted for 40% expansion, along with EIA/EMP report, prepared based on standard ToRs for the additional capacity of 10% was mandated to be submitted on PARIVESH portal within six months of enhancement of production beyond 40%.

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