

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COAL
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2097
ANSWERED ON:14.03.2007
SUBSIDENCE PRONE AREA
Mondal Shri Abu Ayes

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has any reports on coal fields which are prone to subsidence;
- (b) if so, the details of the areas identified;
- (c) whether the Government has conducted any technical survey by experts to scale the depth of subsidence chances;
- (d) if so, the outcome thereof;
- (e) the action taken by the Government to rehabilitate the people and to restructure the high subsidence-prone areas; and
- (f) if so, the action taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO)

(a) & (b): Problem of subsidence in coal mines in Coal India Ltd(CIL) is confined mostly to the eastern sector i.e. in Eastern Coalfields Ltd(ECL) and Bharat Coking Coal Ltd(BCCL). These two subsidiary companies were formed out of fragmented small units worked by erstwhile owners in pre- nationalisation era. These small units worked different coal seams without any scientific planning and with scant respect for conservation and safety. Thus, today there is a legacy of a large number of old abandoned workings, which are mostly waterlogged at shallow depths and inaccessible. Over the years old abandoned workings gradually became more and more unstable with the weakening of the left-out pillars due to aging and also due to occurrence of fire in few of such workings, which were not waterlogged. At many places the pillars got so weakened as to cause collapse leading to subsidence. As per updated Master Plan dealing with fire, subsidence and rehabilitation in the lease hold areas of Jharia and Raniganj Coalfields 595 sites in BCCL and 139 sites in ECL have been identified for rehabilitation of in- habituated areas.

(c) & (d) : Yes, Sir. The various Committees and Sub- Committees constituted by the Government of India submitted their reports and observed that subsidence problems in these two coalfields were caused due to existence of old workings with full height extraction and wide galleries, multi seam and multi section workings under shallow depths, existence of developed coal seams under extracted lower seams with stowing etc. As a sequel to the above studies, Master Plans for both the Jharia and Raniganj Coalfields have been prepared by Central Mine Planning and Design Institute(CMPDI) in 1999 and updated in 2006. On the directions of Supreme Court to monitor the actions taken by Coal Companies in regard to the Master Plans, Directorate General of Mines Safety (DGMS) constituted a committee and submitted its report in August 2005 with the following observations:-

"As there is no scientific method available to check long term stability of the site stabilized by sand stowing, it might not be possible to certify that the areas thus stabilized. The present stabilization work may restrict the effect of subsidence and allow some time. The final and permanent solution is evacuation of the affected area and rehabilitation"

(e) & (f) : The updated Master Plans of 2006 for Jharia and Raniganj Coalfields presently under process for approval of the Government provides for the following:-

1) All the subsidence prone areas where stabilization through hydraulic stowing are being carried are now proposed to be considered for rehabilitation.

2) The execution of the Master Plans of Jharia and Raniganj coal fields is to be completed within a period of ten years (excluding two years of pre-implementation activities).

3)An amount of Rs 8668.87 Crores (Rs 6368.45 Crs for BCCL and Rs 2300.42 Crs for ECL) have been estimated for implementation of the Master Plans.

Moreover, in accordance of the directives of the High Powered Committee in 1996, a number of stabilization schemes in ECL and BCCL have been completed/undertaken. The jobs are entrusted to the Asansol Durgapur Development Authority (ADDA) in case of ECL and Jharia Rehabilitation and Development Authority (JRDA) in case of BCCL. Construction of 1500 houses has been taken up by BCCL and 176 families have been shifted from unstable locations.