

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINES
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2059
ANSWERED ON:02.12.2011
ENVIRONMENT IMPACT OF RAMPANT MINING
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Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Union Government is concerned over the environment impact of rampant mining of minor minerals such as sand and fuller earth;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Union Government has asked State Governments to amend the relevant rules in this regard; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof alongwith the response received from the State Government in this regard so far?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR MINES (SHRI DINSHA PATEL)

(a) and (b): Mining of minor minerals are regulated by the State Government through Rules framed by them for the purpose. Recognizing the impact on environment due to mining of minor minerals, the Government has evolved guidelines for sustainable mining of minor minerals, which inter alia recommends:

- i. Minimum size of mine lease should be 5 hectares.
- ii. Minimum period of mine lease should be 5 years.
- iii. A cluster approach to mines should be taken in case of smaller mine leases operating currently.
- iv. Mine plans should be made mandatory for minor minerals as well.
- v. A separate corpus should be created for reclamation and rehabilitation of mined out areas.
- vi. Hydro-geological reports should be prepared for mining proposed below groundwater table.
- vii. For river bed mining, leases should be granted stretch wise, depth may be restricted to three meter or water level, whichever is less with and safety zones.

Further, the Government has brought mining of minor minerals within the ambit of Environment Impact Assessment Notification, 2006, (depending on the mining area) requiring prior environment clearance.

(c) and (d): The Government had requested State Governments for incorporating the recommendations in the guidelines in their respective Rules for Minor Minerals. Now in consultation with State Governments, the Government has prepared a draft Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Bill, 2011 which prescribes a minimum area 10 hectares for major minerals and 5 hectares for minor minerals. However in case of minor minerals mining lease can be allowed for an area less than 5 hectares for specific minerals in consultation with the Central Government. The draft Bill also provides that minimum tenure for amining lease for minor minerals would be 5 years; and in case of small deposits cluster mining would be allowed.