

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4488

ANSWERED ON:21.04.2015

ECOLOGICAL IMPACT OF SAND MINING

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

(a) whether the Government has taken note that sand and soil extraction from the river bed and illegal mining of sand are causing environmental imbalance and affect the ecological system;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the corrective steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR)

(a) to (c): As per section 23C of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) (MMDR) Act, 1957, State Governments have been empowered to make rules for preventing illegal mining, transportation and storage of minerals.

This Ministry had constituted a group under the Chairmanship of Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests to look into the environmental aspects associated with mining of minor minerals vide order dated 24.03.2009. The Group submitted its report with recommendations viz. (i) Minimum size of mine lease should be 5ha; (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 3m/water level, whichever is less, and safety zones should be worked out; and (viii) The present classification of minerals into major and minor categories should be re-examined by the Ministry of Mines in consultation with the States. The report of the Group was sent to all State Governments in June 2010 with the request for incorporating in their Mineral Concessions Rules for mining of minor minerals. Subsequently, the Hon'ble Supreme Court vide order dated 27.02.2012 in SLP(C) Nos.19628-19629 of 2009 titled "Deepak Kumar etc. Vs. State of Haryana & Ors.", inter-alia directed the State Governments to take immediate steps to frame necessary rules under section 15 of the MMDR Act taking into consideration the recommendations of aforesaid MoEF's report and model guidelines framed by Ministry of Mines, Government of India. In addition Ministry of Mines has requested the State Governments to prepare an Action Plan to monitor and curb illegal mining which includes the use of satellite imagery and other intelligence inputs, constitution of State Level Coordination Committee to discuss various issues related to the mining sector and formulation of State Mineral Policy.