

**Title:** Regarding need for early construction of Sethu Samudram Project in Tamil Nadu - Laid.

SHRI P. MOHAN (MADURAI): The completion of Sethu Samudram Project in Tamil Nadu has been pending for the past 140 years even after 12 of the 13 Committees to study the feasibility have okayed it pointing out that it is essential.

Presently, even Inland Shipping Carriers from the Western Coast to Eastern Coast have to go round Sri Lanka. The distance between Tuticorin and Chennai is 404 kms. but this circuitous route in the absence of Sethu Samudram Project entails an additional surface distance of 803 kms. consuming more time, energy and cost involved in paying at Colombo Harbour. But we could earn foreign exchange through arrival of more foreign ships by completing the Sethu Samudram Project. Experts have also pointed out that this would help developing about 15 harbours in West Bengal, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu in the Eastern Coast. Our fishermen have to go to *Katcha Tivu* to get quality fishes and they are also shot at by Sri Lankan Navy every now and then. But the Sethu Samudram Project would help our fishermen to get quality fishes in our own waters.

I urge upon the Union Government to set apart the entire sum that would cost the Sethu Samudram Project and to include it in the ensuing Budget for the year 2001-2002 so that both Tamil Nadu and our great Nation India are greatly benefited.

\*Treated as laid on the Table of the House.