

Fourteenth Loksabha**Session : 5****Date : 29-08-2005****Participants : Mehta Shri Bhubneshwar Prasad, Pradhan Shri Dharmendra, Mehta Shri Bhubneshwar Prasad, Reddy Shri Suravaram Sudhakar, Rao Dr. Dasari Narayan, Rao Dr. Dasari Narayan, Acharia Shri Basudeb**

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Title : Situation arising out of recurring accidents in Coal Mines in the Country.

MR. SPEAKER: Now, the House shall take up next Calling Attention, Shri Bhubneshwar Prasad Mehta. We should finish all Calling Attentions within 20 minutes.

श्री भुवनेश्वर प्रसाद मेहता अध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं कोयला मंत्री जी का ध्यान अविलम्बनीय लोक महत्व के निम्न विषय की ओर दिलाता हूँ और प्रार्थना करता हूँ कि वह इस संबंध में वक्तव्य दें:

"देश में कोयला खानों में बार-बार होने वाली दुर्घटनाओं, विशेष रूप से सेन्ट्रल कोलफिल्ड्स लिमिटेड (सी0सी0एल0) के अंतर्गत सौदा कोलियरी में हुई दुर्घटना, जिसके फलस्वरूप चौदह कोयला कर्मचारों की मृत्यु हुई तथा इस संबंध में सरकार द्वारा उठाए गए कदम।"

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO): Sir, coal mining is...

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Mehta, you have got the statement. Have you not?

श्री भुवनेश्वर प्रसाद मेहता : अध्यक्ष महोदय, मुझे स्टेटमेंट मिल गया है।

MR. SPEAKER: Then, we can treat it as laid on the Table.

DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO: Sir, coal mining is considered world over as a hazardous profession. However, with constant stress upon safety, there has been a steady improvement in safety performance over the years. The number of fatal accidents in coal mines in the country has come down from 222 in 1975 to 90 in 2004. Fatalities have come down from 664 to 99 during the same period. In case of Coal India, the fatality rate which was 2.62 per million tonne of coal production

* Treated as laid on the Table

and 0.52 per three lakh man shifts in the year 1975 has been brought down to 0.22 and 0.20 respectively in the year 2004. Number of fatalities has come down from 105 in 2001 to 70 in 2004. In respect of Singareni Collieries Company Ltd., fatalities have come down from 25 in 2001 to 14 in 2004.

In the current year, 54 persons have been killed in accidents till the end of July in respect of Coal India and 9 in case of Singareni.

Partial drowning of underground workings of old Bansgara Incline, Central Saunda Colliery, Barka Sayal Area of Central Coalfields Limited (CCL) occurred on 15.6.05 i.e at the end of night shift of 14th June 05. There had been a roof fall followed by flow of water from the upper seam to lower seam where depillaring operation was in progress. In the night shift of 14th June 2005. 45 persons were working in this mine. While at the end of the night shift all other persons came out, 12 loaders and two supervisors still at work were trapped in the accident and lost their lives.

The Rescue and recovery operations along with action to dewater the drowned area were taken up immediately. Control Rooms were also set up at CCL HQ, CIL HQ and in the Ministry of Coal to monitor the progress of dewatering and recovery of trapped persons. The water level, which had risen to 252m (Reduced level) was brought down to 227.20m (Reduced Level) when all the bodies were recovered. Services of Naval divers for rescue of survivors were also utilized, but the precious lives of miners could not be saved.

Ministry of Coal had constituted a Committee headed by the Chairman-cum-Managing Director, Central Mine Planning and Design Institute Limited for holding a departmental enquiry. The Committee has since submitted its report. The main findings of the report are as under:

- (i) The accident was caused by fall of a large area of standing roof in the decoaled area leading to air blast. The presence of weak zone of strata might have contributed to the fall of roof, which led to inrush of water through the caved area from the water logged old workings of overlying seam. Ineffective dewatering of the overlying seam before and during depillaring is the major cause for inundation.
- (ii) Act of negligence and dereliction of duty have taken place on the part of CCL officials.

The Directorate General of Mines Safety (DGMS) under the Ministry of Labour, which is the statutory body for enforcement of safety statutes in mines in the country has conducted an enquiry into the accident, under the Mines Act, 1952 and submitted its report to Ministry of Labour in this month.

Ministry of Labour has also ordered a Court of Inquiry under Section 24 of the Mines Act, 1952. A formal notification for this will be issued soon.

CCL has paid compensation to the affected families varying from Rs. 10.32 lakhs to Rs. 11.86 lakhs. Employment has also been given to one dependent of each deceased. The families of the deceased have also been allowed to retain the company quarters.

In addition, the Prime Minister has sanctioned an ex-gratia of Rs. 1.00 lakh to each family from the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund. CIL as sanctioned Rs. 1.00 lakh to each family as additional ex-gratia. Families of the deceased are entitled to payment of Provident Fund in the region of Rs. 3 to 4 lakhs and pension.

Safety has been integrated into process of coal mining itself. An institutional arrangement is in place to keep vigil and monitor all aspects of safety in coal mines at various levels. Participation of workers' representatives is ensured at all levels of safety monitoring.

Besides, the Government is promoting a number of other initiatives to promote safety awareness, such as:

(i) Conference of Safety in Mines; (ii) Workers' participation in safety management; (iii) Tripartite and bipartite reviews at various levels; (iv) Training of work force; (v) Observance of Safety Weeks and Safety Campaigns ; and (vi) National Safety Awards.

To reduce accidents in under ground mines, modern technologies are being adopted. These include providing scientific roof support systems, increased use of roof bolting and roof stitching methods, introduction of modern mechanized drilling machines, mechanization of loading operations through introduction of Side Discharge Loaders (SDLs) and Load Haul Dumpers (LHDs) to reduce exposure of workers to mining hazards, introduction of highly capital intensive computerized continuous mine environment tele-monitoring system (ETMS) etc.

Sir, the unfortunate accident at Bansgara Incline was due to human element as was brought out by the departmental enquiry as well as DGMS. From my discussions with the workers when I visited the site the very next day the possibility of human failure was evident to me. I have immediately ordered a departmental enquiry and suspension of concerned officials. In all, 5 officials including the General Manager of the area have been suspended. Appropriate punishment will be given to all the concerned in due course so as to enforce accountability at various levels and eliminate human factors leading to accidents.

Sir, the government is committed to ensure safety of coal miners who are serving the nation braving all odds. I would like to assure the august House that no effort will be spared in this regard. In the end, I would like to thank Shri Buhbaneswar Mehta and Shri S. Sudhakar Reddy for raising this important matter in the august House and also the Hon'ble Speaker for giving us an opportunity of reiterating our commitment our commitment to the safety of our coal miners.

श्री भुवनेश्वर प्रसाद मेहता : अध्यक्ष महोदय, मैंने माननीय मंत्री जी के स्टेटमेंट को पढ़ा है। कोयला मंत्रालय सुरक्षा के मामले में गम्भीर नहीं है। जब कोई घटना घटती है तो नीचे से ऊपर तक, चाहे वह मैनेजर हो, जनरल मैनेजर हो, चाहे कोल इंडिया के चैयरमैन हों, चाहे कोयला मंत्री जी हों या कोयला मंत्री के सचिव हों सभी दौड़ लगाने लगते हैं। पंद्रह-बीस दिन तक तो अफरा-तफरी मची रहती है, लेकिन पंद्रह-बीस दिन बीत जाने के बाद जो सुरक्षा के उपाय करने चाहिए, वह उपाय नहीं किए जाते हैं। इसके प्रति कोयला मंत्रालय गम्भीर नहीं है। साथ ही साथ, मैं आपको बताना चाहता हूँ कि पार्लियामेंट की स्टैंडिंग कमेटी ऑन लेबर ने एक रिपोर्ट कोयला खदानों में लगातार घटने वाली दुर्घटनाओं पर काबू पाने के संबंध में दी है, लेकिन आज तक लेबर कमेटी की उस रिपोर्ट का अनुपालन नहीं किया गया है।... (व्यवधान)

MR. SPEAKER: Quiet please. We are discussing an important matter.

श्री भुवनेश्वर प्रसाद मेहता : मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से जानना चाहूंगा कि लेबर कमेटी की उस रिपोर्ट की सिफारिशों पर कहां तक अमल किया गया है? स्टेटमेंट में बताया गया है कि घटनाओं में कमी आयी है। यदि दुर्घटनाओं की संख्या 100 में से 90 रह गयी है तो इसका मतलब यह नहीं है कि दुर्घटनाएं बिलकुल बंद हो गयी हैं। जिस कोलियरी में ये घटना घटी थी, उसके बारे में मैं आपको और माननीय सदन को बताना चाहता हूं कि वह मेरे ही निर्वाचन क्षेत्र में पड़ती है। वहां दुर्घटना के पश्चात माननीय मंत्री जी के साथ मैं भी गया था। वहां के हजारों मजदूरों ने कहा था कि आज से नौ साल पहले जो कांठडारी कोयलरी बंद की गयी [\[MSOffice10\]](#), सेंट्रल सौंदा की बंसगारा कोयलरी, एक दुर्घटना के चलते, आठ साल पहले बंद कर दी गई थी। सन् 2004 में सुरक्षा महानिदेशक से निर्देश लेकर कोयला खदान को फिर से चालू किया गया। उन्होंने कहा था कि इसे निर्देशों के मुताबिक ही चालू किया जाए, लेकिन उस पर कोई ध्यान नहीं दिया गया। जब कोयला खदान चालू की गई, तो मजदूरों को काम पर भेजा गया। मजदूर लगातार हड़ताल करते रहे, वहां जाने से कतराते रहे, लेकिन वहां के मैनेजर, प्रोजेक्ट ऑफिसर और जीएम द्वारा धमकी देकर उनको खदान में भेजा गया। मई में श्री सुरेश मेहता, माइनिंग सरदार ने मैनेजर और प्रोजेक्ट ऑफिसर को लिखकर दिया कि यहां कोई घटना घट सकती है, इसलिए इसे बंद कर दिया जाए।...(व्यवधान)

अध्यक्ष महोदय : आप प्रश्न पूछिए।

...(व्यवधान)

श्री भुवनेश्वर प्रसाद मेहता : अध्यक्ष महोदय, पहले मेरी बात सुन ली जाए, उसके बाद मैं प्रश्न पूछूंगा।...(व्यवधान) घटना के बाद वहां कोयला राज्य मंत्री गए। मैं और कई माननीय सदस्य भी गए थे। वहां के तमाम मजदूरों ने एक-एक करके घटना का जिक्र किया।...(व्यवधान) श्री सुरेश मेहता ने घटना से एक महीने पहले मैनेजर और प्रोजेक्ट ऑफिसर को लिखकर दिया था कि वहां की चांदनी गर्म हो रही है, जो हाथी दाडी खान बंद की गई है, उसके बीच की दीवार कमजोर हो गई है, इसलिए वहां कभी भी घटना घट सकती है, लेकिन उस पर भी पदाधिकारियों ने ध्यान नहीं दिया। घटना से तीन दिन पहले तमाम मजदूरों ने मैनेजर से कहा कि बीच की चांदनी गर्म हो रही है।...(व्यवधान)

MR. SPEAKER: Five officials have been suspended. Inquiry is going on. What more do you want?

श्री भुवनेश्वर प्रसाद मेहता : अध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं बता रहा हूं।...(व्यवधान)

अध्यक्ष महोदय : यहां भाण देने का समय नहीं है, आप प्रश्न पूछिए।

...(व्यवधान)

श्री भुवनेश्वर प्रसाद मेहता : पदाधिकारियों ने इस पर कोई ध्यान नहीं दिया। वहां एकाएक घटना घटी, जिसमें 14 मजदूरों की मृत्यु हो गई। वह कोयलरी जो एक घटना घटने के बाद नौ साल बंद रही, फिर उसे किस परिस्थिति में चालू किया गया। घटना घटने का कारण यह है कि उसमें जो बालू की भराई होनी चाहिए, वह नहीं होती, पिलर ठीक से नहीं लगाए जाते।...(व्यवधान)

MR. SPEAKER: I will have to stop in future all Call Attentions, if it is not being used properly. Senior Members are also not using it properly. You are going much beyond that. It was done my Malhotraji also.

Shri Mehta, he has given an elaborate reply.

... *(Interruptions)*

श्री भुवनेश्वर प्रसाद मेहता : मैं प्रश्न पूछ रहा हूं।...(व्यवधान)

मैं कहना चाहता हूँ कि ऐसी घटना दोबारा न दोहराई जाए, उसमें हर साल सैंकड़ों मजदूरों की जान जाती है, कोयला मंत्रालय द्वारा इस बारे में कौन से उपाय किए गए हैं? जिन लोगों के चलते दुर्घटना हुई, जो इसके लिए जवाबदेह हैं, यह ठीक है कि उन्हें सस्पेंड किया गया है, उन्होंने अपनी रिपोर्ट में स्वीकार किया है कि वे जिम्मेदार हैं।... (व्यवधान) मैं कहना चाहता हूँ कि जो लोग 14 मजदूरों की हत्या के लिए जिम्मेदार हैं, उन्हें डिसमिस करके उन पर हत्या का मुकदमा चलाया जाए।

हमने दुर्घटना के समय मांग की थी कि इसकी कोर्ट ऑफ इन्क्वारी की जाए।... (व्यवधान) जो कहा गया कि कोर्ट ऑफ इन्क्वारी करने का प्रस्ताव है, कोर्ट ऑफ इन्क्वारी कब की जाएगी और इस तरह की व्यवस्था कब तक की जाएगी ताकि ऐसी दुर्घटना फिर से न घटे।... (व्यवधान)

अध्यक्ष महोदय : आपको एक मिनट की जगह दस मिनट दिए गए हैं।

... (व्यवधान)

SHRI SURAVARAM SUDHAKAR REDDY Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister of Coal very rightly pointed out that coal mining is considered as a most hazardous profession in the world. In the last few years, undoubtedly, the accidents have come down but very serious and fatal accidents are still taking place. In Singareni Collieries and in other collieries, very large number of people are getting killed. It is not the question how many accidents were there in 2001, and how many were there in 2004. In the modern world, with the modern equipment, it is necessary that all the modern equipment should be there. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether we have the modern machinery to tackle the rescue operations and dewatering of the coal mines when such an accident takes place.

Secondly, it is true that substantial compensation is being given, but compensation certainly cannot bring back a husband and a father to the families. We should see to it that no accident takes place [r11]. [r12]

I would like to know whether any steps have been taken by the Government in this regard.

As regards punishment, the Minister has said that punishment will be given. What is the punishment given to those officers who are held responsible till now?

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour appointed a Sub-Committee in 2002 with Shri Gurudas Dasgupta as its Chairman, and certain recommendations for preventing accidents in mines had been made. I would like to know whether any steps have been taken on the recommendations of that Sub-Committee.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Dharmendra Pradhan. Please put only one question.

श्री धर्मेन्द्र प्रधान महोदय, मैं आपके माध्यम से एक स्पेसिफिक प्रश्न पूछना चाहता हूँ। जब ये पुरानी कोयला खदानें और छोटे-मोटे दूसरे काम चल रहे हैं, उस बीच में, उसी स्थान के ऊपर प्रदेश लेवल पर कैनल वर्क होता रहता है। जब आप सेफ्टी और सिक्योरिटी के लिए चिन्तित होने की बात कह रहे हैं, तो क्या प्रदेश सरकारों से आपने अपने मास्टर प्लान के बारे में कुछ चर्चा करने का प्रयास किया है? यदि नहीं, तो क्या उस विषय पर आप प्रकाश डालेंगे? क्या प्रदेश सरकार और केन्द्र सरकार, दोनों के सेफ्टी विभाग मिलकर उस इलाके की सेफ्टी के बारे में सोचेंगे?

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Basu Deb Acharia. Please put only one question and nothing more.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA Sir, accidents in coal mines particularly in the underground mines rarely take place. It has taken place in one of the underground mines in the Central Coalfields Limited, where 14 miners have lost their lives. There is a shortage of safety category staff in different subsidiaries. I would like to know whether the Government has taken steps to fill up those vacancies of safety category staff. This is number one.

Secondly, sand stowing is not properly done. This happened because of de-pillaring in that particular coal mine. I would like to know from the Minister whether the Government is contemplating to take certain measures, which are required to be taken particularly in the underground mines like sand stowing, de-pillaring and enough protection of roof fall, in order to have a foolproof system particularly in the underground mines.

MR. SPEAKER: Now, the hon. Minister will reply.

DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO: Sir, the hon. Member, Shri Bhuvaneshwar Prasad Mehta was very much there on the spot. The very next day, I visited the spot and I was completely in touch with him throughout the rescue efforts made. Immediately on the spot we suspended five officials and immediately the Ministry of Coal constituted a Committee headed by CMPDI Chairman. That Report has also come. DGMS has also constituted a Committee. The Ministry of Labour has asked for a Court of Inquiry and the notification is going to come. These two Reports have come. Based on both the Reports, whatever decision we are expected to take in the beginning, has been taken. Their findings are also with me.

The accident was caused by fall of a large area of standing roof in the decoaled area of Panel 11 in Bansgara, where de-pillaring with caving was in progress. This has happened – it is already mentioned in the Report itself – due to the negligence on the part of officers from CCL. DGMS Report has to be implemented by the Ministry of Labour. As soon as the Court of Inquiry is over, whatever punishment is going to be given, that will be considered[[lh13](#)].

He has said that it is a closed mine. But it is untrue. It is not a closed mine.

MR. SPEAKER: That is not correct.

DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO: Yes. It is one Panel. It is one area because the de-pillaring of Panel A was done from 18th November, 2000 to August, 2004. In the same mine, depillaring of Panel B was done from September, 2002 to 2004. About Panel 11, they had taken stock of the de-watering situation, and in November, 2003 they had applied for permission to the DGMS and obtained the permission. They had started the work on 13th of December, 2004. But what happened is that while in the other sectors, in the other panels, the work was going on, it was interpreted that this is a closed mine. On detailed verification, they have said that the work is on in some areas of the same mine.

Regarding the second thing which our hon. Member said, they had predicted that some accident was going to take place. *Chandni garam hua* is the word they use. Whenever some collapse or some sound will come, that will be called *Chandini garam hua*. So, they had said that it was intimated to a Sardar but unfortunately that Sardar was also there among the people who were killed. So, I cannot find out what happened there.

Shri Suravaram Sudhakar Reddy has said about modernisation. He is right. You know very well that coalmine is especially an accident-prone area. If you go into the details, for three lakh man-shifts, in the forward countries, in the developed countries like the USA, 0.47 is the accident death rate. In France it is 0.32. In Australia, it is 0.44. In China, series of accidents are taking place. But so far as India is concerned, the accident rate is 0.29. It does not mean that we should not take care. Still we have taken all the measures.

SHRI BRAJA KISHORE TRIPATHY (PURI): Are you satisfied with the accident rate?

MR. SPEAKER: No, Mr. Braja Kishore Tripathy, then I will not give you a chance.

DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO: How can you say that we are satisfied? Will anybody be satisfied with an accident? We are taking all the measures. It is an accident-prone area. There are 305 mines with the Coal India, out of which, 96 mines were mechanised and 80 mines have been taken up for mechanisation during the Tenth Plan at a cost of Rs.455 crore. The remaining mines will be taken up for mechanisation in the next Plan. Check services are being implemented totally. This was not there earlier. After the accident, it has been implemented. I would like to discuss this matter with the union leaders to prevent recurrence of accidents. I have conducted a meeting on 4th of this month with all the union leaders and the management of Coal India. On 13th of September, I have called for a meeting of the Standing Committee to discuss all these things.

There is another thing. Both Shri Dharmendra Pradhan and Shri Basu Deb Acharia have asked for taking up safety measures, which I am taking. I am going to discuss safety measures in the Standing Committee meeting to be held on 13th of September. We are going to take care of the workers. You know how both myself and this Government are acting for the workers. We are more concerned about the safety of the workers.

MR. SPEAKER: What about the canal? He has asked about the canal. You consult the State Government before canals are dug. You look into it.

DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO: All right, Sir.

11.59 hrs.

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