

>

Title: Issue regarding recommendations in the Kasturirangan Report regarding ecologically sensitive areas.

SHRI J.M. AARON RASHID (THENI): Mr. Chairman, Sir, in my Constituency, a few thousand acres of land has been declared ecologically sensitive area in Kasturirangan Report. Kasturirangan Report is based on aerial surveys and not on ground survey. About 50,000 labourers are going every day from Theni District in Tamil Nadu to Kerala traveling in about 2,500 vehicles. Every day one accident is imminent. Seventy-five per cent of the land belongs to Tamilians. These are all ecology-friendly people, they are not against ecology. They never cut trees because cardamom plantations grow under the shade of trees only and not in direct sun like tea plants. Kasturirangan Report says that they have to evict Udumbanchola, Devikulam, Peermedu in Idukki District. That is an area which runs into a few lakh acres. If that is done, many people will have to commit suicide, many labourers will starve to death. The Report is not based on human survey, and they agree on that.

They said that if the number of inhabitants per acre is less than 100, then only they will take it. But the number of inhabitants per acre there is more than 500 in general and in some places it is even 1000. So, my prayer through you to the Government is that the Report be reconsidered. In Karnataka, in Gujarat, and in Maharashtra, some areas have been excluded from ecologically sensitive areas. The same way Idukki District should also be excluded in the larger interest of the farmers and the labourers from my Constituency. Seventy-five per cent of the landowners are from Tamil Nadu. The Government should not take the Kasturirangan Report as the basis, and these places should be excluded from the ecologically sensitive areas.

Another issue I would like to raise is that there is railway work pending in my Constituency. They have removed all the railway lines but people say that I have taken them away. आरुन भाई थंडवालम लेकर गया, लोग ऐसा बोलते हैं, रेलवे लाइन को लेकर चला गया, चोरी कर लिया, ऐसा बोलते हैं, They removed those lines in 2010-11. In the first year they gave Rs.15 crore, next year they gave Rs.10 crore, in 2012-13 they gave only Rs.3 crore. People have agitated. They have locked the gate of my house. They threw stones at my house. I am scared to even go to my Constituency.

On the 30th of last month there was a strike which paralysed the entire District. For the first time in Theni District the fish market was also closed. I am sorry to say that being a Congress Member in this august House, my requests have not been considered. But hon. Minister for Railways has at last agreed to come to my Constituency. I pray that he should come and make announcement and see that the work is done there.