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Title: Problems being faced by the people in Chitradurga district of Karnataka due to excessive mining activities in the area.

SHRI G.M SIDDESHWARA (DAVANGERE): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to draw the kind attention of the Government, through you, to the problems being faced by the people of Chitradurga District in Karnataka due to excess mining activities in the District.

The IBM and Karnataka Pollution Control Board have recently issued a public notification to conduct a public hearing call on 19.8.2010 to enhance the capacity from 6 million tonnes per annum to 10 million tonnes per annum of M/s Sesa Goa Mining Company Limited, which is running its mining activities in Chitradurga and Holakere Taluks in Chitradurga District of Karnataka since several years. I would like to mention that M/s Sesa Goa Mining Company Limited is not a local mining company but only the exporting company. When the observation is made on this company's mining, it has increased drastically in recent years. For example, the company had transported 1.6 million tonnes per annum in 2004-05 and it has reached 6 million tonnes per annum in 2009-10 and they are now proposing to increase it to 10 million tonnes per annum. As such, the allocation is enhanced year by year. But the infrastructure facility remains the same as in the year 2004-05. Due to such drastic increase in mining activities, we have lost trees and forests in the mining areas. Now, again, M/s Sesa Goa Mining Company Limited has proposed to expand the existing mining capacity from 6 million tonnes per annum to 10 million tonnes per annum. As per the rules, after the proposal is submitted by the company for capacity enhancement, the mining area must be inspected by higher officers of IBM and Environment Ministry, but till now no IBM or Environment Ministry higher officers visited the area to find out the factual position in this region.

Sir, in this connection, I would also like to mention that the companies, which are mainly engaged in mining export activities, failed to provide even the basic infrastructure facilities to the public and environmental facilities like growing of trees etc. in the mining region. Due to the loss of trees, plants and other natural resources, the rainfall in this region is also drastically reduced and the people are facing drought-like situation every year. This has caused great inconvenience to the public at large which made public to protest against these companies.

MR. CHAIRMAN : It is not a debate. Please conclude now.

SHRI G.M SIDDESHWARA : Sir, if the Sesa Goa company Limited would get the order to extract 10 million tonnes per annum, it requires to transport more than 33,000 tonnes iron ore per day. Ten wheeled one truck is supposed to carry up to 16 tonnes and to transport 33,000 tonnes iron ore per day, it would require more than 2,000 trucks per day.

Due to heavy mining activities and truck movements a lot of accidents are taking place in this region and more number of people have lost their lives and in some cases serious injuries have also occurred to the accident victims. If the present proposal of the company is accepted then the truck movements in this region would be increased very much and the chances of accidents would also increase subsequently, which puts the life of the common man at the mercy of truck drivers and which I think we should not allow.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please wind up now.

SHRI G.M SIDDESHWARA : Sir, one more important point that is to be considered is that Bheemasamudra is a well known arecanut market in Karnataka and daily a considerable number of vehicles from various districts arrive at Bheemasamudra to sell the agricultural products. Due to these agricultural businesses, there is always a heavy intensity of traffic on this road. But because of the heavy mining transport on this road, the farmers are compelled to sell their products through middlemen at their places only instead of bringing the agricultural produces to the market for higher prices. This causes huge losses to the farmers.

When the roads are not specially designed to withstand the heavy loads of iron ore, the capacity enhancement of M/s Sesa Goa Company's proposal will adversely affect the conditions of these roads in the District.

Keeping all these things in view, I would urge upon the Union Government to obtain factual position report of this region from the higher IBM and Environment Department officers. After obtaining the factual position only the capacity of M/s Sesa Goa Company Limited or any other company should be taken. I would request the Union Government to restrict the mining of M/s Sesa Goa Limited and other companies to 1.6 million tonnes per annum till then. This was the level in 2004-05 and this is for the benefit of the farmers, school going children and other general public in the region.

