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Title: Need to resolve issue of Koodankulam Nuclear Power Plants in Tamil Nadu .

SHRI THOL THIRUMAAVALAVAN (CHIDAMBARAM): Hon. Chairman, let me thank you for giving me this opportunity. I would like to draw the attention of this august House and through you the Government that the people living around Koodankulam in Tamil Nadu have resorted to peaceful agitation, which is going on for the past three months against the commissioning of Nuclear Reactor there. This opposition to set up a nuclear power plant there is found in Jaitapur in Maharashtra. There also the local people are against the nuclear power plant. This has become one among the most vexing issues facing the country. There is no two opinion about our country emerging as a super Power in the comity of nations. It is true that power generation has to be augmented to give a boost to agricultural and industrial production. The Government has entered into cooperation treaties with countries like Russia, France and United States of America to set up nuclear power plants, as the Government feels that they can generate the needed power from nuclear sources. The reactors that are there already are not generating adequate power. That is the ground reality. What we get with the existing nuclear power plants all put together are not even 5000 MWs. Now, the Government has envisaged a plan to generate 2000 MWs of power through the two nuclear reactors that are to be commissioned soon. In 1988, we entered into an agreement with the then Soviet Union and later on with Russia to set up this Koodankulam Nuclear Power Project. At a time when the first nuclear reactor is go to critical, the local people around the place are greatly agitated and have resorted to peaceful agitation and they do not want the nuclear power plant to function there. The agreement we have entered into with the imperial powers, I am afraid may enslave and subjugate us to other powers when we want to emerge as a power ourselves. In fact, this plant was originally planned to be set up in Kothamangalam near Kochi in Kerala. The then Russian Government wanted to set up that nuclear power plant there in Kerala, as they had great regard for the

* English translation of the Speech originally delivered in Tamil

communists and communist government in Kerala. It is a point to be noted that the first communist government in the country came to power in Kerala. When the local people raised serious objection to the setting up of nuclear power plant there, it was proposed to be shifted to Kasargode district in Northern Kerala. There also there was objection from the local people of the area. Hoping that enough awareness is not there in Tamil Nadu and with the hope that people of Tamil Nadu may not resist, the Government of India shifted the venue of the nuclear power plant to Koodankulam. I would like to point out that the people of the area have serious apprehensions leading to objections to commission the nuclear power plant there. There are three major apprehensions that needs to be allayed. When there is a requirement that no inhabitation of people shall be in the vicinity of the nuclear reactor to a radius of about 5 kilometers, this plant has in its surroundings lakhs of people living. All these people are greatly agitated about the possible imminent displacement. The Government is also saying that the nuclear waste from the reactors would be buried deep down and there may not be any threat of radioactivity. Whether there is any threat to safety of people around due to the reactors or its possible explosion is one thing but the threat caused due to the burying of nuclear waste is always there, because it is like a ticking nuclear bomb.

The third great threat is the possible wiping out of fishing activity which are being carried out from time immemorial there. The traditional rights of fishermen is seriously threatened due to the setting up of desalination plants in the vicinity of the nuclear reactor in order to get continuous water supply for coolant purposes. The earlier plan to draw water from Pechiparai had to be shelved because of the objection and opposition from the stakeholders of Pechiparai Dam for both irrigation and drinking water uses. The life and livelihood of the fishermen have to be protected. The Government must respect the sentiments of the people there.

The Government of India which says that the nod from the Kerala Government is necessary to deploy CISF personnel in Mullaperiyar Dam has deployed such paramilitary forces on its own in Koodankulam ignoring the plea of the Tamil Nadu Government that is urging upon the Union Government to take steps to remove the lurking fears in the minds of the people of Koodankulam and take them into confidence. Even the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Selvi Jayalalitha insisted on deploying CISF in Mullaperiyar. But all these have been ignored in a discriminatory way.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude. I am calling the next Member.

SHRI THOL. THIRUMAAVALAVAN : The Union Government is firm about going on with its scheme of things and even before

convincing the local people, it has been announced in Russia by our Prime Minister that the reactor will function soon. Hence, I urge upon the Government to see that the commissioning of nuclear power plant does not happen. So, it would be better to give it up once and for all. Instead of nuclear energy we can go for other sources. Let us free ourselves from the clutches of imperialism.