

SHRI RAMAVATAR SHASTRI (Patna): Sir, Kolhan, the land of the Kol tribe as it is traditionally known, comprises of Chaibassa, Khunt-pani, Jhinkpani, Tonto Jagannathpur, Noamundi, Majhgaon, Kumardungi, Manjhari and Tantnagar Development blocks of present Singhbhum, the southern-most district of Bihar. This area is spread over 3,107.8 kms. and has a population of 5,23,488 according to 1971 census. The percentage of Scheduled Tribe population of Kolhan is 66.83.

Kolhan is extremely rich in mineral deposits. Iron ore, China clay, limestone, chromite, managanse, etc., are available in enormous quantities. Besides, one-third of Kolhan consists of forest of a very high quality.

In spite of the fact that Kolhan is one of the major depository of such national wealth, the inhabitants of Kolhan, the Hos, Mundas, Gopes, Tantis and other Scheduled Tribes and backward classes have been the worst hit in the process of mining and Commercialisation of the forest.

The entire area of Kolhan is extremely backward. It has only 1344 kms. of roads. Of the total number of 783 villages, hardly fifty are electrified. Schooling is a mere formality gone through by those who have cash income. Agriculture is the sole livelihood known to these tribals. With their lands being taken away progressively from them for mining operations, more inhabitants of this area are becoming paupers or at the most coolies.

Kolhan is a part of Chhotanagpur where Chhotanagpur Tenancy Act 1908 is the law of the land. This law was enacted to give special protection for tribal lands. Accordingly, no tribal land in Chhotanagpur can be alienated without the written permission of the Deputy Commissioners and this too

for limited purposes of industries, education, mining and religions.

Kolhan has roughly 250 mines most of which are privately operated by contractors. In blatant contravention of the explicit provision of the law laying down the procedure to acquire land for mining purposes from the tribals, these contractors drive out the tribal *railyats* from their agricultural lands, destroy the worshipping and burial places, give a nominal sum as compensation and start mining often with the help of the local police.

The labour situation of these private mines is horrible and inhuman. The Central Government which is the appropriate authority, has notified that in China Clay and Limestone mines the minimum wages for the unskilled labourers should be Rs. 6.65 per day, except for a handful mines. This minimum wage is not implemented in this entire region. By many dubious methods the labourers are forced to accept Rs. 3 or Rs. 3.50 as the wages.

The iron ore mines have no minimum wages notification in their favour, hence they are left to their bargaining power. The average weekly income of these labourers is Rs. 15 only. Even this meagre payment is withheld in some of these mines for as long as two or three months.

Other provisions like provident fund, holidays, bonus, gratuity, maternity benefit, sick leave, compensation for injuries, etc. are unheard of in the above mines.

Hapazard mining and illegal mining have become the order of the day in Kolhan. West and numerous areas of tribal agricultural lands have been dug up and are lying idle all over Kolhan and the *railyats* are still paying the land tax on these and the lands under mining operation, causing encormous loss to the national exchequer and irreparable damage to the tribal agriculturists.

[Shri Ramavatar Shastri]

Thus the tribals, illegally dispossessed of their sole source of livelihood eventually become coolie in the mines itself or migrate to the brick-kilns and stone quarries of North Bihar, West Bengal or Uttar Pradesh.

The situation demands immediate intervention by the Government and all democratic and progressive minded people of the country to abolish completely private ownership of the mines and to set up a corporation directly under the management and ownership of the Central Government to run the mines, not with the sole intention of commercial profit making but also with an eye to the welfare of the local tribals whose land and labour contribute so enormously to the nation's progress.

I demand of the Government to intervene immediately in this matter.

(xi) FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO
ORISSA GOVERNMENT FOR UNDERTAKING
SOIL CONSERVATION MEASURES

SHRI LAKSHMAN MALLICK (Jagatsinghpur): Soil erosion has created a serious problem in Orissa. According to an estimate about 47 per cent of the total land surface of the State suffers from soil erosion of some kind or the other. Although erosion through wind is mostly confined to the coastal areas, erosion through water is the problem for the entire State. About 31 lakhs hectares of agricultural uplands which are mostly cultivated without bunds and terraces, suffer from sheet erosion. Stretches of waste lands (28.8 lakhs hectares) devoid of adequate vegetation are also affected by soil salinity or water logging.

In the coastal regions the cultivated lands adjoining about 550 kms of the sea coast are affected by drifting sand dunes through wind erosion. Moreover, shifting cultivation is causing serious problem which has been affecting about 12,770 sq. miles in Koraput,

Kalahandi and other inland districts of the State.

Agriculture plays an important rôle in the economy of Orissa. About 75 per cent of the working force of the State earn their livelihood from farming. But soil erosion has created a serious threat to their cultivation. Therefore, it is necessary to solve the erosional problem. Unless some immediate measures are taken for the conservation of soil and moisture the farming community of the State will continue to suffer. Soil erosion will run the economy of the State.

In view of this, I urge the Government of India that approved soil conservation practices like tree plantations, contour bunding, construction of soil conservation structures and stream bund erosion control measures should be taken up in that largely affected regions. The Government of India should augment the fund allocation for implementing these soil conservation measures in Orissa without any further delay.

13.56 hrs.

DEMANDS FOR GRANTS

MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS-Contd.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now we go to the next item - Discussion and Voting on the Demand for Grants of the Ministry of Communications.

SHRI SUSHIL BHATTACHARYA. Your party has been allowed 22 minutes.

SHRI SUSHIL BHATTACHARYA (Burdwan): Mr. Deputy-speaker, I am expressing my happiness in seeing you in the Chair now. I am saying so because you were an ex-employee of the Posts and Telegraphs, Communications Department and, we are discussing here the Communication Ministry's Demands.