

Minutes of Environmental Public Hearing

Of

**M/S SHRI VIRANGANA STEELS LTD., COAL BLOCK
II,III & IV**

**at Zari Jamni Tah. Zari- Jamni Dist. Yavatamal,
Dtd. 07/01/2009.**

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The Environmental Public Hearing in respect of M/s. Shri Virangana Steels Ltd., Marki-Mangli II, III & IV Coal Block, Tq. Jhari Jamni, Dist. Yavatmal was conducted on 05/05/2008 under the Chairmanship of the then Shri Dhurjad, Addl. District Collector, Yavatmal at the open ground of Tahsil Office, Zarijamni, Tq. Zarijamni, Dist. Yavatmal as per the provision of EIA Notification dtd. 14th September, 2006, issued by MoEF, New Delhi. During that Public Hearing the representative of the Project Proponent was unable to provide convincing/ satisfactory reply to the objections raised by the participants present for the Public Hearing, hence the participants had demanded to cancel Public Hearing. On this ground, the Public Hearing could not be concluded by that time.

In view of the past incidence, the Project Proponent has again applied to M.P.C. Board and requested for conducting Public Hearing. Accordingly, Board has issued Public Notice in News Papers viz. Daily "Lokmat" (Marathi), Daily "Deshonnati" (Marathi) & Daily "The Hitavada" (English) on 05/12/2008.

A Public Hearing Panel was constituted by Maharashtra Pollution Control Board vide Office Order No. E -109 of 2008, issued vide letter no. BO/RO(P&P)/PH/ B-7765 dtd. 23/12/2008. The said order was amended vide letter no. BO/RO(P&P)/PH/ B-7856 dtd. 29/12/2008. As per this order District Magistrate, Yavatmal was Chairman of the Public Hearing Panel and Shri N. G Nihul, Regional Officer, MPC Board, Assisted the Chairman during the Public Hearing as a Member & Shri S.S. Kotwal, Sub Regional Officer, Amravati-II, worked as a Convener of Public Hearing Panel. A Public Hearing was conducted on 07/01/2009, as per Notification dtd. 14/09/2006 issued by Ministry of Environment and Forest, Govt. of India, New Delhi.

As per the provision of the EIA Notification, the copies of the Executive Summary & draft EIA report both in English & Marathi (hard and soft copies) submitted by the project proponent pertaining to this project were placed at concerned Govt. Offices, Gram Panchayat & Gut-Gram Panchayat Offices to ascertain details of the project and the environment to the public and for their reference.

During the Public Hearing, the Convenor has informed that in response to the Public Notice, the Board office has received 3 nos. of written objections / representations from public regarding this proposed mine project, before the Public Hearing date. He further informed that the project proponent shall give the reply to these representations.

At the start of the Public Hearing, some of the participants present have started shouting and demanding that they don't want this coal mine project and hence the Public Hearing shall not be conducted. Considering the demand from participants, Hon'ble Chairman, Shri Sanjay Deshmukh, District Magistrate, Yavatmal has appealed to the public to observe silence and they should raise their questions /doubts systematically. He further informed that in today's Public Hearing, your opinion / views will be listen and same will be duly recorded and will be forwarded to concerned Ministry. Some of the participants present in the Public Hearing said that they don't want to give their land to this mine project. The Hon'ble Chairman replied that there will be no compulsion for selling of land. He further informed that if you get proper price for the land from project proponent, and if you desire to sell them, then only you can give your land for the project. The Govt. has not adopted any land acquisition procedure to provide land for this project. Hence, you may raise your objections/ suggestions/ opinion related to environmental issues those may be arising due to establishment of this project so that project proponent would be in position to explain what measures they have propose to overcome the issues raised. After Hon'ble Chairman's appeal the participants agreed and thereafter they have raise their opinion / views one by one, their particular is as under:

Shri Bandu Alias Mahadeo Parakhi, At. Marki (Bk), Tq. Zarijamni, Dist. Yavatmal, he said that M/s. Shree Virangana Steels Ltd. has submitted proposal by which more than 62 villages will be affected. For this project agriculture land will be used, similarly water table will be lowered. Due to coal mines in Wani and Chandrapur area there is more pollution and there is no action initiated by concerned authorities. There is irrigated land in this proposed mine area. Due to this mine the land under irrigation will be affected and the said land will become non irrigated, and this will lead to ruin the farmers under debt and in such circumstances they have no other way than the suicide. Most of the people's livelihood is agriculture. He tried to know what kind of benefit / compensation would be provided by project proponent to the said peoples/ farmers. The project proponent has started purchasing land with the help of commission agents. Hence, this Public Hearing is illegal. So this Public Hearing should be cancelled.

Shri Narayan Gode, Marki, Tq. Zari-Jamni, Dist. Yavatmal, said that agricultural land Environment in Wani Area is deteriorated due to coal mines. The Environment is spoiled due to coal mines. If this project come up the present status of good environment would be spoiled. Due to this proposed project there will be cutting of trees which result into decreasing present number of trees. There will be inflow of outsiders for project work and thereby there will be increase in antisocial activities in this area. The company will mislead the local people. There will be no employment to local labourers. The land purchased by the project authority through commission agent using deceiving tactics. The trees which are responsible for the environment purification will be vanished. The water table will be lowered and thereby no water will be available to the people in the vicinity of the project. Therefore, in the interest of local people and environment, this project should not be forcibly established in this area.

Shri Ramesh Udatwar, Ex-Sarpanch, Mukutban, Tq. Zari-Jamni, Dist. Yavatmal said that I protest the decision of allotment of coal block to this company by Central Government. Government is encouraging tree plantation, conservation, and rain water harvesting programmes at one side and at the same time by allowing such projects, the Govt. is trying attempt to destroy the forest resources. Hence I

protest the Govt. He further stated that due to this proposed project, the forest trees and environment in this backward area shall not be diminished. In the project EIA Report, there is no provision for the upliftment of Adiwasi Farmers and no provision for further planning for their livelihood. The proposed mine period will be 20 to 25 yrs. The chances of lesser number of employment generation from this project are there, where as in present agriculture sector there is more employment available. The people in this area will not be benefited by this project. Hence, he is opposing to this project & the permission may not be granted to this project.

Shri Bandu Chandekar, Durgapur, Dist. Chandrapur & President, District Environment Friend Multipurpose Organization, Chandrapur, Dist. Chandrapur, said that in the Zari-Jamni forest area there are verity of animals an beautiful birds. The same should not be diminished. The Govt. should think over about their future. The environment in the Taluka should not be adversely affected. The Melghat is very remote area; where there are malnutrition incidences have been reported. The same problem may come up here due to establishing this project. The care shall be taken to avoid destruction of forest resources. There is no planning about livelihood of the peoples whose land will be taken for the project. Due to this mine, the water table in the area will be depleted. Similarly, there will be increase in the dust concentration causing air pollution by this coal mine which adversely affect the agriculture land in the vicinity of the project. Therefore, I myself and my organization oppose this project. He further told that many political agents have been crop up this area.

On this, **Hon'ble Chairman,** appraised that he should talk on the issues of environment only. This is administrative programme. Unnecessary speech be avoided.

Shri Netaji Parakhi, Mukutban, Tq. Zari-Jamni, Dist. Yavatmal & District President, Shiv Rajya Parti, Dist. Yavatmal, stated that he has submitted written objection in response to the Public Notice issued by MPCB regarding Public Hearing of this project. Reply to my objection is not received from the concerned authority. However, imperfect replies received from the project proponent.

The environment around the human being shall not be polluted. The environment topic is not concerned only with the land and water but also includes biological and non biological matters. Due to existing coal mines, rehabilitation problems are arises in the respective areas. It is true that whether to give land to this project is to be decided by us. But, other farmers land adjacent to the land purchased for mining activity, will also gets adversely affected and thereby there will be reduction in the Agricultural yield for which who will pay compensation? At Mukutban village, there is lake (talav) in about 150 acres of area on which about 500 nos. of families are dependent for their livelihood. They are taking crop of Shingada and also doing Fish farming. Due to use of explosives in the mine in Wani Taluka, the lake village Aynak, adjacent to that mine gets adversely affected the “Shingada” crop.

By selling the land for this project, the farmers may get money but they loss their land and jobs. Money received to the farmers by selling of land may not be properly utilized and there are chances of getting them addict.

The life of mine is very limited. There after this land will be barren. He further told that due to this mine project there will be Air & Noise pollution which will have adverse effect on health. Due to noise pollution, study activities of the students and mental balance get disrupted. There is no doubt that coal is treated as national property. Will the student and villagers in the area those getting adversely affect due to mines are not national property? There is no provision for their future in the report. The life of this mine is only 20 years. Therefore, this coal mine area shall be kept reserved.

There is no firm assurance in the report from project proponent for 80% of employment to the locals and also plan programme for rehabilitation and resettlement. The live stock and milk production activities will be affected due to this project. There is dense forest in this area. There is also separate forest office. He has expressed that in the Public Hearing voting system shall be adopted. He said that he has no oppose for developmental activities and appeal to participants to record their oppose to project by peaceful ways and at the same time he demanded to stop the public hearing proceedings and also stated that they don't want this mine.

The Hon'ble Chairman, replied that this Public Hearing committee is not for granting sanction to the mine but to record and note the objections/suggestions/ views of peoples and to forward the same to the concerned authority.

Shri Jugal Loya, Dabha, Tq. Zari-Jamni, Dist. Yavatmal, said that there is more population of Adiwasis in Zari-Jamni. In this area about 75% land is under irrigation. Every year 2-3 times crops are taken. In other parts of Vidarbha Region, the farmers are committing suicides due to scarcity of water. This area is beautiful, decent and having facility of irrigation. Thus, in such area coal mine shall not be established. The forest trees, herbs etc. in this area shall be nourished. He expressed that they should fight against injustice to farmers.

Shri Chandrakant Ghuggul, Paradi, Tq. Zari-Jamni, Dist. Yavatmal, informed that about 50000 population in 62 villages from Zari Jamni Taluka and irrigation land will be affected due to this project. A lower Penganga canal will be passing through this area. Due to this irrigation facilities, the standard of living of the farmers in this area will be raised. The majority of population in this taluka are Adiwasis and establishing the mine in this area will be injustice on their part. There is forest in 99 hectors of project area. The valuable teak wood plantation and wild life will be damaged, hence I am protesting this project.

Shri Vasudev Vidhate, Marki (Bk), Tq. Zari-Jamni, Dist. Yavatmal, said that in this area 4 nos. of Public Hearings were conducted in which our grievances had not been attended properly by anybody, but satisfactory report of Public Hearing had been submitted.

He further state that today's Public Hearing is illegal. The MPC Board has not constituted Public Hearing Panel as per EIA Notification of 10th April, 1997 and therefore this Public Hearing is illegal and hence Hon'ble Chairman of this Public Hearing shall stop the proceedings of Public Hearing.

Hon'ble Chairman of the Public Hearing has brought to the notice of Shri Vidhate that the said notification is already suppressed by the new EIA Notification of dtd. 14th September, 2006 of MoEF, New Delhi and accordingly, the Public Hearing is being conducted.

Thereafter Hon'ble Chairman told to the participants of the Public Hearing that the issues which are being raised by them, their reply are covered in the presentation that is to be given by the project proponent, as per their say. If the participants are ready to listen, the project proponent may be asked to give presentation. On affirmative reply from the participants on this, the representative of project proponent Shri Prashil Shukla has started for giving the presentation. In the presentation details of all the three coal block's area, particulars of Govt., Forest & Agricultural land, present status of environment, estimated impact on Environment by this project, & proposed mitigation measures, mining methodology to be adopted and its details, Employment generation opportunity, rehabilitation and forestation programme, plan for rain water harvesting, mine closure plan, social development programme etc. were covered. He further told that they have incorporated these things in the present Environment Impact Assessment Report.

During presentation some of the people has started interruption in the presentation. Due to this Hon'ble Chairman has asked the participant of the Public Hearing that whether the presentation be continued or not? He further told that if the project proponent have specific replies on the issues raised by the participants during the Public Hearing of the same project which was held on 05/05/08 be given. On this, the representative of the project proponent told that those points have already been attended while preparing fresh EIA report for the present Public Hearing.

Hon'ble Shri Vishwasrao Nandekar, MLA, Wani, Dist. Yavatmal, told that views of participants shall be put forth by democratic way. The present Public Hearing of this project is for the second time. In the Public Hearing held on 05/05/08 of the same project wherein it was demanded to modify the EIA report. But, it has been observed that no appreciable modification has been undertaken while preparing the present report. He appraised that he has demanded in the State Assembly that there should be inclusion of local representatives in the Environmental Public Hearing Panel as they are well versed about the local issues of the area related with the project. He further told that this is Environmental Public Hearing. Because of this project there will be impact on existing social work of villages in this area. He told that the report should have detail information regarding generation of employment, provision

of alternative land in lieu of 99 hectors forest land that will be used for mining where there shall be tree plantation. The other relevant data in the report shall be produced properly and correctly. The proposed mine project is a matter of existence of farmers in this area. About 62 nos. of villages will be affected due to this mine and as against this, how many people will get employment? He further told that there is need to check the Fluoride concentration in the water in the area of village Mukutban. The drinking water is very important as far as life is concerned. There is no information in the report regarding Lower Penganga Irrigation Project, which is of very much important. The present EIA report is not modified to the desired level. To protect the forest is a need of the day. We have bad experience of coal mines, those are existing in the Wani Area. We use to give representations to various authorities to that effect. But, there is no appreciable improvement. He further told that everybody should express their views in the Environmental Public Hearing. Incorrect information is given in the present EIA report. He further demanded for arranging the Public Hearing again.

Shri Nandkumar Baghele, Mukutban, Tq. Zari-Jamni, Dist. Amravati, told that because of this project, we loose our land, which is very precious for us and it the only source of our livelihood and hence he strongly oppose the said project.

The Convener has reported that during this Public Hearing 7 nos. of representations were received. Similarly, 3 nos. of representation received at the office of MPCB, Amravati. The particulars of which are as under:

Sr. No.	Representation received from	Letter address to
01	Shri Netaji Parkhi, Mukutban, Dist. President Shivrajya Paksha, Dist.Yavatamal	MPCB Amravati
02	Shri Sunil Dhale, President Dr. Punjabrao Krushi Vidyanan Mandal, Mangli	MPCB Amravati
03	Villagers Mangali	MPCB Amravati
04	MLA, Shri Vishvasarao Nandekar	Collector, Yavatamal
05	Sarpanch, Gat Grampanchyat, Marki(bu),	Tahasildar, Zari-Jamni

06	Shri Bandu alies Mahadeo Parkhi President Shetkari Sanghatna Zari-Jamni	MPCB Amravati
07	Shri Kshirsagar Zolba Sonone, Mangli	Collector Yavatamal
08	Villagers Bhendala	Chief General Manager Virangana Steels Ltd., Nagpur.
09	Shri Vasudeo Vidhate, Marki (bu)	Chairman Public Hearing Committee
10	Shri Balu Chandekar President, Paryavaran Mitra Bahuuddeshiya Sanstha, Chandrapur	MPCB Amravati

Hon'ble Chairman told that Public Hearing is for listening the views of all concern persons. All objections, suggestions raised during Public Hearing has been duly noted and video recording of this programme has been carried out. All these objections / suggestions and video film along with the minutes will be submitted to Expert Appraisal Committee, MoEF, New Delhi though the MPC Board, Mumbai for further necessary action. The copies of minutes of Public Hearing will be sent to the concerned offices of Grampanchayat. If you have objection on minutes of meeting then you can directly write to the MoEF, New Delhi as well as to the Project management.

After that Hon'ble Chairman asked people if anybody wanted to record any objections. But, nobody came forward to record further objections. So with the permission of Hon'ble Chairman, conveyor of Public hearing concluded the public hearing with vote of thanks to all the present.

(Sanjay Deshmukh)
District Magistrate
&
Chairman
Public Hearing Panel