

Iron ore deposits in Kozhi kode in Kerala

*94. SHRI YOGENDRA SHARMA :
 SHRI B. V. ABDULLA KOYA :
 SHRI INDRADEEP SINHA :†
 SHRI S. KUMARAN :

Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that a survey in Kozhikode region of Kerala has revealed large deposits of high quality iron ore ;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard; and

(c) what action Central Government propose to take to exploit these deposits?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI CHANDRAJIT YADAV): (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) A total reserve of 44.00 million tonnes of iron ore with 31.46 to 41.24 per cent iron has been estimated in the four blocks comprising Cheruppa, Nonminda, Nanduvallur and Elliyettimala in Kozhikode district of Kerala. Investigation for iron ore in the fifth block Alempara has also been completed and a report incorporating the reserve and grade of iron ore available in this area is being finalised.

(c) Any decision on exploitation of these deposits can be taken only after the finalisation of the report on Alempara deposit and overall assessment of the area as a whole in the context of infrastructure availability and economic feasibility of exploitation for internal consumption or export

SHRI INDRADEEP SINHA : Now from the Statement it appears that some of the deposits are reported to contain 30 to

41 per cent iron. Will the hon. Minister be pleased to state whether this percentage of iron in the iron ore is considered to be economically exploitable?

SHRI CHANDRAJIT YADAV : Sir, the statement makes it very clear that the total reserve in this area is only 44 million tonnes of iron ore with Fe. content of 31 to 41 per cent. Therefore, according to the present survey and estimate this is not economically feasible to explore these mines at the present stage. But the investigation is going on and may be, at a later stage we find more reserves and of better quality. At this stage we can only think of that.

MR. CHAIRMAN : And also some more report is awaited, you said.

SHRI CHANDRAJIT YADAV : Yes, Sir, investigation is going on. May be later on when we get the final report, we may be able to do that.

SHRI INDRADEEP SINHA : May I know to what depth the drilling has been done and whether all the reserves are found out or some more reserves are expected to be found still deeper.

SHRI CHANDRAJIT YADAV : As I said earlier, in four areas the survey has been completed and in another area which is adjacent, to, only 25 kilometers north east of Kozhikode, that is Alempara, the survey is still continuing. According to the present report the estimated reserve of 4.7 million tonnes of iron ore with 34 to 40 per cent of total iron has been obtained in this additional area and that is only a part of the Alempara deposit. As I said earlier, the survey is still continuing and, therefore, we will be able to say more on this when we get the final report.

SHRI INDRADEEP SINHA : My question has not been answered. My specific question was whether any drilling has been done and if so, to what extent and depth the drilling has been done.

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Indradeep

SHRI CHANDRAJIT YADAV: Sir, as I said, in this area we are thinking of a possibility of having a detailed bore-hole sample which can go in for a deeper drilling. That is still to be done and only when we get complete picture, we will try to see that deeper drilling is done

SHRIMATI SUMITRA G. KULKARNI: The hon. Minister has just now stated that this area has got 31.46 to 41.24 per cent iron content. If this is not an economical project for carrying out further development of the area, would you please inform the House as to what is considered to be a feasible percentage? What are the percentages which are considered to be economical in other parts of India and what is the quantity of iron ore available in the other mines which are being mined today? This is a relevant and pertinent question. Here it is categorically stated that 41 per cent is not necessarily the economic percentage as of today. What is the economic percentage as of today?

SHRI CHANDRAJIT YADAV: We have mainly two types of iron ore, viz., hematite and magnetite. We consider hematite above 60 per cent as economical. In our country it varies from 60 to 68 per cent. Here it is magnetite kind of iron ore and when we consider the economic feasibility we have to take into account both the quality and quantity. As I told you earlier, the quality is very low. The quantity is only 44 million tonnes. We have found that so far as the magnetite ore is concerned, the percentage is the same. It varies from 31 to 36 per cent. For example, in the case of Kudremukh, which is the biggest magnetite order, we have found the percentage to be 39. In comparison to that, it has a very low percentage.

SHRI HAMID ALI SCHAMNAD: The Minister said that a survey is going on as far as the Kozhikode region of Kerala is concerned. This survey was started so many years ago. Will the Government definitely say how long it will take them to survey it completely and take a decision on this matter?

SHRI CHANDRAJIT YADAV: As the hon. Member must be aware, luckily we have in our country a big reserve of iron ore. We are trying our best to make a proper survey throughout the country, but in other parts we have found bigger reserves with a better percentage. Naturally we give priority to those areas. Even then in Kerala the survey in this area was partly completed in 1971 and in the Alempara block it is going on. I can assure the hon. Member that every effort will be made to find all possible reserves and we will see that the work, which is going on in the Alempara area, is also completed as quickly as possible.

95. [*The Questioner (Shri V. V. Swaminathan) was absent. For answer vide col. 119 infra.*]

Investment in iron ore mines

*96. **SHRI KALYAN ROY:** Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether any survey of the investments made by the private sector for the development and conservation of iron ore mines during the last three years has been made;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have directed the mine owners to invest more money for the development of iron ore mines; and

(d) if so, what is the reaction of the mine owners thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI CHANDRAJIT YADAV): (a) and (b) Though no such survey has been made by Government, a committee set up by the Iron Ore Board has recently submitted its report covering, *inter alia*, the development and conservation requirements of iron ore deposits in Barajamda sector. A similar study with regard to Bellary-Hospet sector is in progress.

(c) and (d) Government have issued no such directive but the Iron Ore Board is