

Auction for new mining in virgin forests like Gandhalpada and Karlapat will make the state resource less and lead to ecological disaster. We demand to cancel auction of 7 virgin mines and conserve virgin forests for intergenerational equity and justice. Let a deep study report by the environment and sociologist experts on impacts by mining be done.

Bhubaneswar : 30 July :-

Prafulla Samantara, President, Lokshakti Abhiyan, Dr. Biswajit Mohanty, Secretary Odisha Wildlife Society and Kirankumar Sahu, President of Keonjhar Citizen forum in a press meet have appealed the State government specially the Chief Minister Mr. Naveen Pattnaik to reconsider to cancel the auctions of seven virgin mines of which six virgin iron ore mines of which Ghandalpada as the biggest will kill nine lakh trees of which 73% are sal and one bauxite mine in Karlapat which has more than 300 perinneal streams, elephant corridors and rich wildlife sanctuary.

Since decades unmindful mining of iron ore, manganese and other ores, people of Keonjhar and Sundargarh districts have lost huge forests and water resources and ultimately tribals as well as wild animals like elephants lost natural habitats and are leftout without economic and social justice. Gandhalpada forest in Joda block of Keonjhar is pristine and natural sal forest whose sustainability is inevitable specially for environmental justice not only for the present generation but for intergenerational equity. A sal tree takes 25 – 30 years to grow with 30" girth and its life span is more than 100 years. So to have such dense forests of 73% sal trees we have to wait for 500 years. This forest is also source of livelihood of tribals who have community right over natural resources according to the 5th schedule of the constitution.

Again there is no emergency need of iron ore for industries already existed in Odisha as they have captive mines to produce steel. These auctions to handover resources to private companies at cheaper rate to sell in open market for profits leaving future generations resourceless, So there should be ban to sell iron ores in open market.

All these virgin iron mines in Gandhalpada in Keonjhar district, Kasia, Jhumuka Pathari pisi, Chendoposi will destroy more than 4000 acres of green forests at the time of climate crisis depriving thousands families of tribal and forest dwellers from livelihood.

Karlapat forest is equally sensitive forest like Niyam giri in Kalahandi district having more than 300 perrinial streams and deep forest with huge flora and fauna along with various wildlife animals like elephants who have corridors for their movement. Thousands of families of forest dwellers including Kutia tribals depend their livelihood system there. This forest has to be protected and conserved for future generations.

The State government has pushed the State Wildlife Board to lessen the area of wildlife sanctuary in Karlapat forest to get environmental clearance easily. This is undemocratic and unlawful. The board has no right to take such illegal decision. All these unwanted and necessary auctions of mines are to allow illegal mining by lease holders for huge funds for political party in power.

To protect non renewable resources like iron ore and bauxite as well as rich forests and perinnial streams which are necessary for sustainable development we demand to ban on mining in these virgin forests in the interest of ecological justice and intergovernmental equity.

We demand for a deep study by experts on enviromental and socio-economic impact on loss of such resources.

We also appeal to all political parties and concern citizens of Odisha to oppose such unmindful and destructive mining.

All Alumina industries NALCO, Vedanta and Utkal Alumina have captive mines of bauxite is injustice to allow mining to sell in open market. The government gets only small amount of royalty not big market price. We can not allow the government to finish everything as gifts of nature at cheaper price for political funds.

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