

## **Ministry of Environment and Forest's (MOEF) Roy Paul Committee Report Reveals More Illegalities, Exposes Project's Destructive Potential**

*At a time when our people are facing bombs, lathis and violence in order to defend their basic rights to their homes, lands and livelihoods, yet another official committee has confirmed that the POSCO project is being pushed through without a thought for the welfare of the people of the area or of this country.*

On October 22<sup>nd</sup> 2012, the second official review committee to be constituted on the POSCO project – constituted in May 2012 (this time, on the directions of the National Green Tribunal on March 31, 2012) submitted its report to the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF). This report has not yet been made public but has been obtained by a Right to Information (RTI) request.

The POSCO Pratirodh Sangram Samiti (PPSS) wishes to bring the following key points from the report to the attention of the public in this regard:

- The Odisha government and POSCO are lying when they say they have decided to reduce the project size to 2700 acres and "leave out" most of the private and forest lands in the villages of Dinkia and Govindpur. Till date their plant layout lists the plant's substation, water supply facilities, main office for phase I, two gates, etc. in the land that they supposedly do not want. **The committee has asked POSCO to submit a revised layout and also unambiguously state that this will not affect their expansion plans.**
- The Committee notes that - eight years after signing an MoU to start the project - **the government and POSCO have yet to carry out the following basic studies:**
  - Assessing how much water is actually available in the area and whether this area can support such a huge plant;
  - Impacts on fisheries, which support more than 20,000 people in the area;
  - A plan for management of oil spills;
  - Impact of dredging of material for the private port;
  - Impact on marine ecology and wildlife from the plant;
  - Critical long term study for captive port
- The Committee also says that therefore the project needs to submit a fresh Environment Impact Assessment report for its revised layout. Hence, the entire process effectively has to start again.
- The Committee has also clearly said that expansion of any project in the area (not just POSCO) should be considered only after a carrying capacity study.

**In short, as per the findings of the Roy Paul committee, this project has never been studied properly and could - in other words - pose a serious risk to the entire area. The committee hence confirms the finding of the NGT that "a project of this magnitude particularly in partnership with a foreign country has been dealt with casually, without there being any comprehensive scientific data regarding the possible environmental impacts. No meticulous scientific study was made on each and every aspect of the matter leaving lingering and threatening environmental and ecological doubts un-answered."**

It is a different matter that the Roy Paul Committee has incorrectly limited its own mandate - looking only at "conditions" of the 2011 environment clearance rather than a full review as mandated in their Terms of Reference (ToR) as well as directions of the NGT. It also tries to claim that the revised EIA can be made and the process go ahead without a public hearing or a new environmental clearance - but this is simply illegal. None of this attempt to shield POSCO and their former colleagues changes the facts that the Committee reveals.

**Three of our people have given up their lives to stop this illegal and unjust project. What the Committee report confirms is that no one - including the government that is unleashing brute force against us - has any idea how many more lives will be lost, and how much more damage caused, if this project indeed comes up. It is time that the State and Central government stopped acting on behalf of POSCO as its agent and instead take the serious social, human rights environmental and legal issues on board to reject the project in its entirety.**

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