

# ACTIVISTS FLAG POLLUTION THREAT OF JSW PROJECT IN ODISHA

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Environmental Conservation, Sustainable Development, and EIA

Women of Dhinkia village are seen in their village meeting, protesting against the police forces and other government officials to not enter their village for the land acquisition to settle JSW plant. | Photo Credit: [Biswaranjan Rout](#)

At a time when villagers of Dhinkia — the epicentre of [resistance against the](#) proposed mega steel plant near the port town of Paradip — are up in arms over land acquisition, activists termed the environmental impact assessment (EIA) report prepared for the project fraudulent.

Environmentalists and members of the Sanyukt Kisan Morcha, Odisha on Thursday urged the Environmental Appraisal Committee (EAC) not to appraise JSW Utkal Steel Limited's proposed integrated steel plant (ISP) near Paradip.

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They also appealed them to conduct comprehensive studies to understand the existing pollution load and the carrying capacity of the region around the Paradip Port and Dhinkia village.

The JSW Utkal Steel Limited rejected the allegations saying all efforts are being made to minimise pollution and the project will be operated as per guidelines of the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).

Addressing a press conference here on Thursday, Prafulla Samantara, recipient of Goldman Environmental Award, said he had written to members of the EAC explaining the findings of the New Delhi-based Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA) on potential pollution and health hazards to be caused by the project.

“The EIA report has made deliberate attempts not to acknowledge the impacts of any further pollution load on the environment of the area. The EIA consultant, in a duty bound fashion, has toiled to justify the proposed project, rather than scientifically assessing the impacts on the environment,” Mr. Samantara pointed out.

“The total emission load was at 12,700 kg/day for PM; and 43,600 kg/day for SO<sub>2</sub> for the entire industrial cluster of 15 Red category industries in the area at Paradip. On the other hand, the emission load from the proposed ISP is estimated at ~25,800 for PM and ~31,900 kg/Day for SO<sub>2</sub>, respectively, making the project a highly polluting source within the same district,” says the letter addressed to EAC members.

Quoting the CREA study in his letter, Mr. Samantara said, “the air pollutant emissions would be responsible for an estimated 94 deaths per year. Air pollution would also lead to a projected 180 emergency room visits due to asthma, 160 preterm births and 75,000 days of work absence per year.”

[Villagers of Dhinkia](#) and other human habitations would bear the brunt of dangerous cumulative emissions of greenhouse gases along with scarcity of clean drinking water, said Suresh Panigrahi, member of the Sanyukt Kisan Morcha, Odisha. They demanded the withdrawal of the proposed project near the Paradip port.

“A coast-based steel plant like this at Paradip offers several advantages in seamless movement of large volume of raw materials and finished products by sea. The iron ore for the steel plant is being transported in slurry form from mines head to steel plant over nearly 300 km distance. These measures will ensure that only 10% of material transport is by road, a major source of air pollution with commensurate reduction in dust and carbon emissions,” said a JSW Utkal spokesperson in response to criticism.

She said the EIA report for the proposed project had been prepared based on the guidelines issued by the MoEFCC for environment appraisal. The CREA opinion that EIA should be prepared based on one year data was not aligned with the guidelines issued by the MoEFCC for EIA reports.

The JSW Group has come up with proposal to set up 13.2 mtpa capacity steel plant on the land acquired previously for POSCO. Apart from the steel project, a 900 MW captive power plant and a 10 MPTA cement grinding and mixing unit are part of the project.

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