

Minutes of Environmental Public Hearing regarding Environmental Clearance for M/s. Dighori Kyanite Mine, Khasra No. 155, Dighori (Mothee), Tal. Lakhadur, Dist. Bhandara for expansion in production of Quartzite mineral from 9000 TPA to 84916 TPA (including the existing production of Kyanite, Sillimanite, Corundum, and Pyrophyllite at 4000 TPA and Quartzite at 9000 TPA) having mining lease area of 14.33 hectares, conducted on 11 August 2023 at 11.00 a.m at project site.

Under the provisions of the Environment Impact Assessment Notification of MoEFCC, GOI vide dated 14th September 2006 and amended vide dated 01st December 2009 an Environmental Public Hearing was conducted on August 11, 2023, at 11:00 AM at Dighori Kyanite Mine, Khasra No. 155, Dighori (Mothee), Tal. Lakhadur, Dist. Bhandara for expansion in production of Quartzite mineral from 9000 TPA to 84916 TPA under the chairmanship of Hon'ble Yogesh Kumbhejkar (IAS), District Collector, Bhandara. Mrs. Hema Deshpande, Regional Officer, Nagpur, represented the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) and was a member of the Local Public Hearing Committee. Mr. Kishor Pusadkar, Sub- Regional Officer, Bhandara, coordinated the proceedings. Sub-Divisional officer, Sakoli and Mr. Thavare, District Mining Officer, were also present. The list of attendees' names is attached, along with the minutes of the hearing (**Attachment-1**).

Background:

The existing mining area for M/s. Dighori Kyanite Mine covers 14.33 hectares, where the production of Kyanite, Sillimanite, Corundum, and Pyrophyllite at 4000 tons per year and Quartzite at 9000 tons per year is authorized by the Maharashtra State Environment Appraisal Committee, Mumbai, under letter SEAC-2015/CR-106/TC-2 dated January 16, 2016, for an aggregate production capacity of 14000 tons per year. For the expansion of Quartzite mining, an application was submitted to the Ministry of Environment, Government of Maharashtra. In response, the Ministry provided Terms of Reference (TOR) under letter no. SIA/MH/MIN/71250/2022 dated January 25, 2022.

The increased demand from industries such as Glass, Ceramics, and Electrical necessitated the proposed increase in production from 9000 tons per year to 84916 tons per year.

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification of 2006 and the TOR received were considered, and accordingly, the project falls under Category 'B1'.

Considering the provisions of the EIA Notification 2006 and the TOR received, an application for the Environmental Public Hearing was submitted to the Member Secretary, MPCB, Mumbai, and Sub-Regional Officer, MPCB, Bhandara, on March 21, 2023.

Purpose and Procedure:

Sub-Regional Officer, Bhandara, welcomed the members and attendees of the Public Hearing Committee and initiated the public hearing proceeding with permission of the Chairman.

Firstly, the Convenor of the Public Hearing Committee explained the purpose and procedure of conducting the public hearing. It was clarified that no decision regarding project clearance would be made by committee; instead, objections raised during this public hearing would be noted and conveyed to the authorities. The committee would facilitate the submission of information, queries, comments, requests, and objections from the public on this project to the government.

As per the notification by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, dated September 14, 2006, Sub-Regional Officer, MPCB, Bhandara, shared the detailed purpose of conducting a public hearing. It was informed that public notice about this environmental public hearing was published in two major local newspapers, Daily Times of India (English) and Daily Lokmat (Marathi), on July 9, 2023, with grace period of thirty days. Copies of the published notices are attached (**Attachment-2**).

As per provisions of the Environmental Impact Assessment Notification copies of Draft EIA Report and Executive summary in English and Marathi were placed at various Government offices, as well as Gram panchayat office, for public review & study and invited written concerns, suggestions, comments, and objections related to this project. In accordance with the office order of the Head Office, MPCB dated July 13, 2023, bearing reference number BO/JD/(WPC)/PH/B-230713-FTS-0095, the Public Hearing Committee was formed. The order copy is attached (**Attachment-3**). One written suggestion was received prior to the hearing, and forty-one were received during the public hearing thus total of forty-two objections are received and attached herewith (**Attachment-4**).

The project's details and Executive summaries in Marathi & English were placed at following Offices and Board's website for review & study of people.

1. District Collector, Bhandara.
2. Chief Executive Officer, Zilla Parishad, Bhandara.
3. District Industries Center, Bhandara.
4. Sub-Divisional Office, Sakoli, Dist. Bhandara.
5. Tehsildar, Tahsil Office Lakhadur, Dist. Bhandara.
6. Regional Office, MPCB, 5th Floor, Udyog Bhavan, Civil Lines, Nagpur.
7. Sub-Regional Office, Maharashtra Pollution Control Board, Tatyia Tope Ward, Near City Petrol Pump, Miskeen Tank, Mahal Road, Bhandara.
8. Department of Environment, 15th Floor, New Administrative Building, Madame Cama Road, Ministry, Mumbai-32.
9. Maharashtra Pollution Control Board, Headquarters, Kalpataru Point, 3rd Floor, Sion Matunga Scheme Road No. 8, Sion Circle, Sion (East), Mumbai-22.
10. Regional Office (Western Central Region), Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Ground Floor, East Wing, New Secretariat Building, Civil Lines, Nagpur-01.
11. Gram Panchayat Office, Dighori (Mothee), Tal. Lakhadur, Dist. Bhandara.

The Sub-Regional Officer, Maharashtra Pollution Control Board, Bhandara, and convenor of public hearing invited project proponent Mr. Vinod Bhujade, to present the project details. Accordingly, technical consultant of said mine Mr. Rohit Mainkar, has presented power point presentation in Marathi about the environmental aspects of minerals such as Kyanite, Sillimanite, Corundum, Pyrophyllite, and Quartzite, the proposed project site, project benefits, proposed facilities, firefighting facilities, process details, environmental information, and expected outcomes. He has also discussed the components of the land, environment, and climate, atmospheric components, air quality at the site, emergency management plan, sources of air pollution, noise components, water components, water quality assessment, water usage, construction of sand reservoirs, organic components, social and economic factors, and the impact on local basic amenities.

After presentation, Convenor, urged the present community to provide questions, information, annotations, comments, and concerns about the current project. He emphasized that people should provide their names and village names when submitting issues.

During the public hearing, various questions, annotations, comments, concerns, and responses/assurances provided by the project holder about the project were discussed, as follows:

Sr No	Name	Objection/suggestion	Reply of Project proponent
1	Mr. Sachin Barve, Deputy Sarpanch, Po. Sakhra	Requested to prioritize providing ample employment opportunities to local residents and youth and to provide information about regular employment, PF, and insurance benefits.	Project proponent (PP) replied that, priority will be given to local people for employment.
2	Mr. Jayshyam Katre, Mohgaon.	Supported the well-organized commencement of work in the area and stated that everyone is benefiting from the project.	Supportive.
3	Mr. Mangesh, Dighori (Moti)	Assured that there are no risks associated with the project and that it is being carried out systematically.	Supportive.
4	Mr. Prakash Ramteke	Mentioned that he has been working in the area for the past 15 years and has stable, regular employment with proper arrangements.	Supportive.
5	Mr. Sunil Barsagade, Journalist, Lakhadur.	Expressed concerns about rejected minerals, storage and their disposal, the impact on nearby fields, water management, Environmental degradation and the agricultural sector. Raised questions about environmental supervision, dust & water impact to surround and asked about measures taken to control the	Sub-Regional Officer, M.P.C.B, Bhandara, said that grievances related to production or lease agreements & Environmental Issues can be addressed to the District Mining Officer, & MPCB Bhandara, respectively.

		same. Also asked about authority to complain the same.	PP affirmed that assistance is provided to farmers in the surrounding areas and that mine water is not being allowed to flow onto adjacent fields. The PP stated that they follow all regulations and provide full assistance to farmers. He mentioned that rejected minerals are stored according to I.B.M. guidelines and explained their plans for rejected minerals. He highlighted that they provide information about rejected minerals.
6	Mr. Khemraj Ramteke.	I have been working in this mine for 9 years. I receive regular wages and salary increments due to which my household runs smoothly.	Supportive
7	Mr. Vijay Khobragade, Deputy Sarpanch, Dighori (Moti)	Due to increased production in this mine, employment opportunities will rise, and with CSR funds increasing, local employment should be prioritized.	Supportive.
8	Mr. Sunanda Reddy:	<p>I extend my best wishes and blessings to the mining management.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to mining development, employment opportunities will increase. Allow local employment within mining operations. • Mining pits should be backfilled promptly, rainwater harvesting and tree planting should also be implemented. • Study the health of the surrounding community, groundwater, and agricultural productivity. • Prioritize local employment opportunities. • Encourage skill development training for unemployed youth and enhance their employability in your industry. • Coordinate the utilization of CSR funds through local 	Supportive.

		Grampanchayat and District administration. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement necessary measures for air and water pollution control. • Conduct health camps in the area 	
9	Mr. Dipak Motghare, Dighori	I have been working in this mine for 10 to 15 years, supporting around 20-25 families	Supportive.
10	Mr. Mitaram Bhagat	I have been associated with this mine since last 15 years, and I receive regular employment.	Supportive.
11	Mr. Sunil Nandagavali	I am a laborer and have been working in this mine for three years. When I raised concerns about environmental issues and responsibilities, I was dismissed. This industry involves a lot of illegal sand mining, and sand mafia & mine owners threaten my life. A suitable measure should be taken for my safety. My life is at risk, and if anything happens to me, my family will suffer a loss of one crore rupees. The land has been dug up and left in a disastrous condition, affecting nature and causing harm to organisms. Illegal activities are taking place here as the mine is not following regulations.	
12	Mr. Raju Dhamankar	I have been working as an electrician in this mine for many years. My entire family relies on this mine, and it's functioning systematically	Supportive.
13	Mr. Devendra Chimankar, Dighori (Moti).	In this 35-acre area where minor minerals are extracted, only two percent of the population benefits, while 98 percent suffer losses. The administration should take cognizance of this matter. Significant theft of minor minerals is happening on a large scale. The consequences of the excavation of these minor minerals in this 35-acre plot will affect future generations. No CSR funds have been utilized for projects in our village, and the CSR fund balance is untouched. Even though around 20,000 trees have been promised, the actual number of trees planted	This land is a government-owned property. Around 4,000 trees have been planted so far, and more trees are planned to be planted in the future.

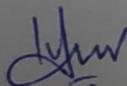
		and the ones that have been removed should be disclosed. Many families rely on gathering tendu leaves in this area, and due to this mining, their livelihoods are at risk. Outsiders come here and engage in nighttime theft of minor minerals, what measures have been taken against this should be known. The work must be done in accordance with the regulations	
14	Mr. Rupchand Deshmukh	I have been receiving work for eight months through this mine, and it supports my family's sustenance.	Supportive.
15	Mr. Shalik Suryavanshi	My farm is near this mine, and I haven't faced any troubles due to this mine.	Supportive.
16	Mr. Chandrakant Kamble, Dighori (Moti).	I worked in this mine until 2008-19. When I raised concerns about the environment and asked for my bonus and job-related issues, the mine owner dismissed me without any prior notice, ending my work abruptly. From 20/12/2019 onwards, I have not been given my regular wages and Provident Fund.	
17	Mr. Harishchandra	I have been employed through this mine for the past five years	Supportive.
18	Mr. Manoj Agashe, Dighori (Moti)	I have found work through this mine.	Supportive.
19	Mr. Manoj Durge, Dighori (Moti)	Those who received work through this mine are happy, while those of us who haven't received work are dissatisfied. The mine has been active for the past 25 years, but trees have not been planted. The mining area has not adhered to agreements, and extensive excavation has taken place within a year. The environment has suffered, and our village council has provided no assistance. All mistakes have been covered up, and many trees have been felled.	
20	Mr. Mahadev Meshram, Dighori	I am physically challenged, and I have found employment through this mine. The mine has not caused any damage to my farming.	Supportive.
21	Mr. Pankaj Parate (Online)	No pollution has been observed related to this mine, and no concerns have been raised.	Supportive.

22	Regional Officer, Maharashtra Pollution Control Board, Nagpur	The transportation of minerals takes place through the village roads, right? And how many vehicles are used for transporting minerals in a day?	PP replied that, transportation of minerals took place through outer roads of the village, and around 2 vehicles were used daily.
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District Magistrate, Bhandara, and Chairman of Public Hearing Committee:

In today's public hearing, we have received questions, verbal and written information. All grievances, suggestions and objections will be thoroughly noted in the proceedings of public hearing. Responses from the mining authorities will also be recorded. The received written and verbal information, complaints, and proceedings of this public hearing, along with video recordings, will be formally documented for onward submission. Mining authorities should be alert to address their responses to the raised issues and ensure that effective measures are taken for environmental protection. Implementation of proposed solutions for environmental preservation should be efficiently monitored.

Meeting ended with thanks.



(Kishor Pusadkar)

Sub-Regional Officer, M.P.C.B Bhandara

&

Convenor of Public Hearing



(Hema Deshpande)

Regional Officer, M.P.C.B Bhandara

&

Member of Public Hearing



(Yogesh Kumbekar, I.A.S)

District Collector, Bhandara.

&

Chairman Of the Public Hearing Committee