
Sukinda chromite mines in Orissa leading to poisoning

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SNS reported that Sukinda chromites mine in Orissa is becoming main threat to the lives of local people as over 0.275 million people in the area have suffering from some form of chromium poisoning because of the untreated water discharged by the mines into the Damasala river. Sukinda contains one of the largest open cast chromite mines in the world.

The report cited a local miner as saying that “Drinking water is a major problem for us. The water here is contaminated and we are all contracting diseases by consuming it. Untreated water is discharged by the mines into the Damasala river the only source of water we consume daily. If we tell our boss he will suspend us from our job.”

Mr Bidyadhar Mohanty a social activist said that “Twelve mines continue to operate without any environmental management plans in the Sukinda Valley. Over 30 million tons of waste rock is spread over the surrounding areas and the Damasala and the Brahmani riverbanks. Untreated water is discharged by the mines into the rivers and over 3 lakh people are suffering due to water contamination.”

A recent study conducted by the US based Blacksmith Institute has pointed out in its report that chromite mine workers residing in the Sukinda valley are constantly exposed to contaminated water and other forms of pollution. The study highlights the fact that despite technological advances, mining and unregulated industrial production continues to be key pollution agents as far as Sukinda chromite zone is concerned. The report also says that the area is also flood prone, resulting in further contamination of the water.

Meanwhile, Mr LN Patanaik chairman of state pollution control board said that “The report by the US based Institute does not hold much water. There is no doubt about the fact that the Sukinda chromite valley is obviously a polluted site. But the valley is not ranked among the four top polluted areas in the world, as reported in the study report by the Blacksmith.”

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