

Justification for locating the project in forest area.

- The North Koel project was conceived in 1960s by the Govt. of Bihar and the project was started in 1970s. It was envisaged to construct a masonry Dam in Kutku village and a Barrage near Mohammadganj village 96 km downstream of Mandal Dam and two canals emanates from the barrage to irrigate 72,157 hectare of land in the States of Jharkhand and Bihar.

The project is located in the most drought prone area of Jharkhand and Bihar States. The area has witnessed 10 major famines since 1935. The construction work of Dam and Barrage has been completed except the installation of gates in the Dam. Also, some work of spillway and deck slab and installation of low level construction sluice and irrigation sluice is yet to be completed. The right main canal and 40 % of its distributaries have been completed and 90 % of left main canal have been completed. This partially completed project is presently irrigating during Kharif season nearly 50, 000 ha and 6,000 ha of land in States of Bihar and Jharkhand respectively. After the fully operation of project, the irrigation potential will reach upto 72,157 hectare of land as targeted in the project. Also, after the operation of the project, water will be available for drinking purpose to the local inhabitants of Palamau, Latehar and Garhwa District of Jharkhand State as well as for industrial purpose. The water will also be available to wildlife of the Palamau Tiger Reserve which has been facing severe scarcity of water. Hence the migration of wildlife will stop in nearby human settlements. It is also estimated that the fully operation of the project will generate revenue of approximately Rs. 24,337 lakhs annually.

As the project was started in year 1970, there was no such provision for forest clearance and hence the project didn't require forest clearance. Therefore, the present site was chosen for the project location at that time as it was very ideal location for reservoir project having two firm Granite and Granite-gneiss hillocks on both banks of North Koel River. But after the enactment of the Forest (Conservation) Act in 1980, the Water Resources Department has been in contact with Forest Department and sent proposal to MoEF&CC in 1982 for diversion of forest land and also paid compensation for acquired forest land. Since the project is almost 40 years old and almost 90 % work is completed and approximately Rs.800 Crores of expenditure has been incurred so far on the project till March, 2016. So, in present situation looking for other alternative or the shifting of project site is not possible.

Hence the location of the project is completely justified.