

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA  
FOREST, ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE DEPARTMENT

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Memo No. 4887 /FE&CC Date 16.03.23  
FE-DIV-FLD-0034-2022/ 10F (Cons) 18/2022

Copy of Government of India, MoEF&CC (FC Division), New Delhi e-Mail dt.06.02.2023 along with Letter No.8-96/1996-FC (PT.-I) dtd.28.12.2022 on the matter of proposal for non-forestry use of 194.683 ha of forest land in favour of M/s Odisha Mining Corporation (OMC) involved in total mining lease area of 358.258 ha of Guali Opencast iron Ore Mines located in District Keonjhar (Odisha)-reg. forwarded to the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & HoFF, Odisha for kind information and necessary action.

It is requested to kindly furnish the required information/ documents as sought for in the aforementioned letter directly to the Ministry under intimation to this Department.

*dt 15/3/2023*

OSD-cum-Special Secretary to Government  
Memo No. 4888 /FE&CC, Date 16.03.23

Copy with copy of enclosure forwarded to the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) & Chief Wildlife Warden, Odisha/ Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (FD&NO, FCA) O/o PCCF & HoFF, Odisha for information and necessary action.

*dt 15/3/2023*

OSD-cum-Special Secretary to Government  
Memo No. 4889 /FE&CC, Date 16.03.23

Copy with copy of enclosure forwarded to Steel & Mines Department/ R&DM Department/ Director, Environment-cum-Special Secretary to Government, FE&CC Department/ Member Secretary, SPCB, Odisha/ Collector, Keonjhar for information and necessary action.

*dt 15/3/2023*

OSD-cum-Special Secretary to Government  
Memo No. 4890 /FE&CC, Date 16.03.23

Copy with copy of enclosure forwarded to the Regional Chief Conservator of Forests, Rourkela Circle/ Divisional Forest Officer, Keonjhar Forest Division/ Divisional Forest Officer, Koraput Forest Division for information and necessary action.

*dt 15/3/2023*

OSD-cum-Special Secretary to Government  
Memo No. 4891 /FE&CC, Date 16.03.23

Copy with copy of enclosure forwarded to the General Manager (Geo), OMC Ltd, OMC House, Bhubaneswar for information and necessary action.

*dt 15/3/2023*

OSD-cum-Special Secretary to Government









**Fwd: Sub: Proposal for non-forestry use of 194.683 ha of forest land in favour of M/s Odisha Mining Corporation (OMC) involved in total mining lease area of 358.258 ha of Guali Opencast Iron Ore Mines located in District Keonjhar (Odisha) – reg**

**From :** FC Division MEFCC <fcdiv-mefcc@gov.in>  
**Subject :** Fwd: Sub: Proposal for non-forestry use of 194.683 ha of forest land in favour of M/s Odisha Mining Corporation (OMC) involved in total mining lease area of 358.258 ha of Guali Opencast Iron Ore Mines located in District Keonjhar (Odisha) – reg  
**To :** Dr Mona Sharma <fesec.or@nic.in>

06 FEB 2023 Mon, Feb 06, 2023 03:10 PM 3 attachments

**From:** "FC Division MEFCC" <fcdiv-mefcc@gov.in>  
**To:** "Secretary Forest & Environment" <fesec.od@nic.in>  
**Cc:** pccfodisha@gmail.com, "nodal pccfodisha" <nodal.pccfodisha@gmail.com>, "Artatrana Mishra" <roez.bsr-mef@nic.in>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 13, 2023 2:47:23 AM  
**Subject:** Fwd: Sub: Proposal for non-forestry use of 194.683 ha of forest land in favour of M/s Odisha Mining Corporation (OMC) involved in total mining lease area of 358.258 ha of Guali Opencast Iron Ore Mines located in District Keonjhar (Odisha) – reg

Respected Sir/Madam,

I am directed to forward a copy of letter dated 29.12.2022 along with Report of Subcommittee of FAC. please find attached.

**From:** "FC Division MEFCC" <fcdiv-mefcc@gov.in>  
**To:** "Secretary Forest & Environment" <fesec.od@nic.in>  
**Cc:** pccfodisha@gmail.com, "nodal pccfodisha" <nodal.pccfodisha@gmail.com>, "Artatrana Mishra" <roez.bsr-mef@nic.in>, "FC Division MEFCC" <fcdiv-mefcc@gov.in>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 29, 2022 10:32:14 PM  
**Subject:** Sub: Proposal for non-forestry use of 194.683 ha of forest land in favour of M/s Odisha Mining Corporation (OMC) involved in total mining lease area of 358.258 ha of Guali Opencast Iron Ore Mines located in District Keonjhar (Odisha) – reg

Respected Sir/Madam,

I am directed to forward the letter dated 29.12.2022 regarding the above-mentioned subject for kind information and necessary action.

Government of India  
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change  
Forest Conservation Division  
Indira Paryavaran Bhawan Jor Bagh Road Aliganj  
New Delhi-110003



011-20819388



वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्  
ONE EARTH • ONE FAMILY • ONE FUTURE

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- **FAC Subcommittee Report Odisha Dec. 2022.pdf**  
2 MB
  - **8-96-1996-FC.pdf**  
80 KB
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Government of India  
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change  
(Forest Conservation Division)

Indira Paryavaran Bhawan,  
Aliganj, Jor Bag Road,  
New Delhi - 110003.

**Dated: 28th December, 2022**

To

**The Addl. Chief Secretary (Forests),**  
Government of Odisha,  
Bhubaneswar.

**Sub: Proposal for non-forestry use of 194.683 ha of forest land in favour of M/s Odisha Mining Corporation (OMC) involved in total mining lease area of 358.258 ha of Guali Opencast Iron Ore Mines located in District Keonjhar (Odisha) - reg.**

Sir,

I am directed to refer to the State Government's letter no. FE-DIV-FLD-0034-2022-8065/FE&CC dated 30.04.2022, seeking prior approval of the Central Government under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and letter no. 21921/9F (MG)-65/2021 dated 29.10.2022 forwarding therewith additional information sought by Ministry vide letter dated 08.06.2022. The proposal was examined by the Forest Advisory Committee in its meeting held on 09.12.2022. The Minutes of the FAC meeting may be accessed at [www.parivesh.nic.in](http://www.parivesh.nic.in). The FAC after detailed discussion and deliberation, desired the following information from the State:

- i. As per the detail provided in the Mining Plan, the forest area has been indicated as 229 ha; the same should be rectified to match to the forest area estimated as per DGPS survey. Accordingly, land use of various components proposed in the forest as well as non-forest land may be intimated by the State.
- ii. Revised Cost Benefit Analysis i.e. 1:1130.46 is still exorbitantly high. The same needs to be revisited to make it more realistic.
- iii. A Site Specific Wildlife Management Plan has been reported to be already in place; the status of progress of its implementation needs to be informed by the State.
- iv. Details of notification of non-forest land identified for raising CA, in lieu of diversion of forest and accorded in the past, as RF/PF under the IFA or local Act may be informed by the State.
- v. The State Government in its letter dated 29.10.2022 mentioned that process for transfer of approval from M/s R.P. Sao (erstwhile agency) to M/s OMC Ltd., in respect of 42.417 ha and 95 ha of forest land approved in the past, is still under consideration in the State. Therefore, on 12.01.2021 the date of execution of lease, no



approval under the FC Act, 1980 was available in favour of M/s OMC. A justification for executing the lease in favour M/s OMC without formal FC approval in their favour needs to be furnished by the State.

- vi. The Committee also desired that issues related to rationalization of project components specially with regards to OB dump and progress made in the implementation of provisions of the Site Specific Wildlife Management Plan prepared in 2009 and its updates proposed in the extant proposal, justification for assignment of lease without prior approval under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, etc. will be examined by the Integrated Regional Office of the Ministry at Bhubaneswar and Nodal Officer (FCA), Odisha and a report on the same will be submitted along for the consideration of the Committee.

2. The Committee also desired that recommendation made by the Committee in the case of Netrabandha Pahar Iron Ore Block allotted to M/s Bhusan Power and Steel Limited (As per agenda items no. 3 in the minutes of meeting of FAC dated 09.12.2022), after examination of the report of the team of officers of the MoEF&CC and Wildlife Institute of India on the elephants habitat, there movement and mitigation measures, shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to the extant case.

In view of the above, the State Government is requested to submit the information/documents, as indicated above, for further consideration of the proposal in the Ministry.

**Encl: As above.**

**Signed by Charan Jeet  
Singh  
Date: 29-12-2022 19:25:43**

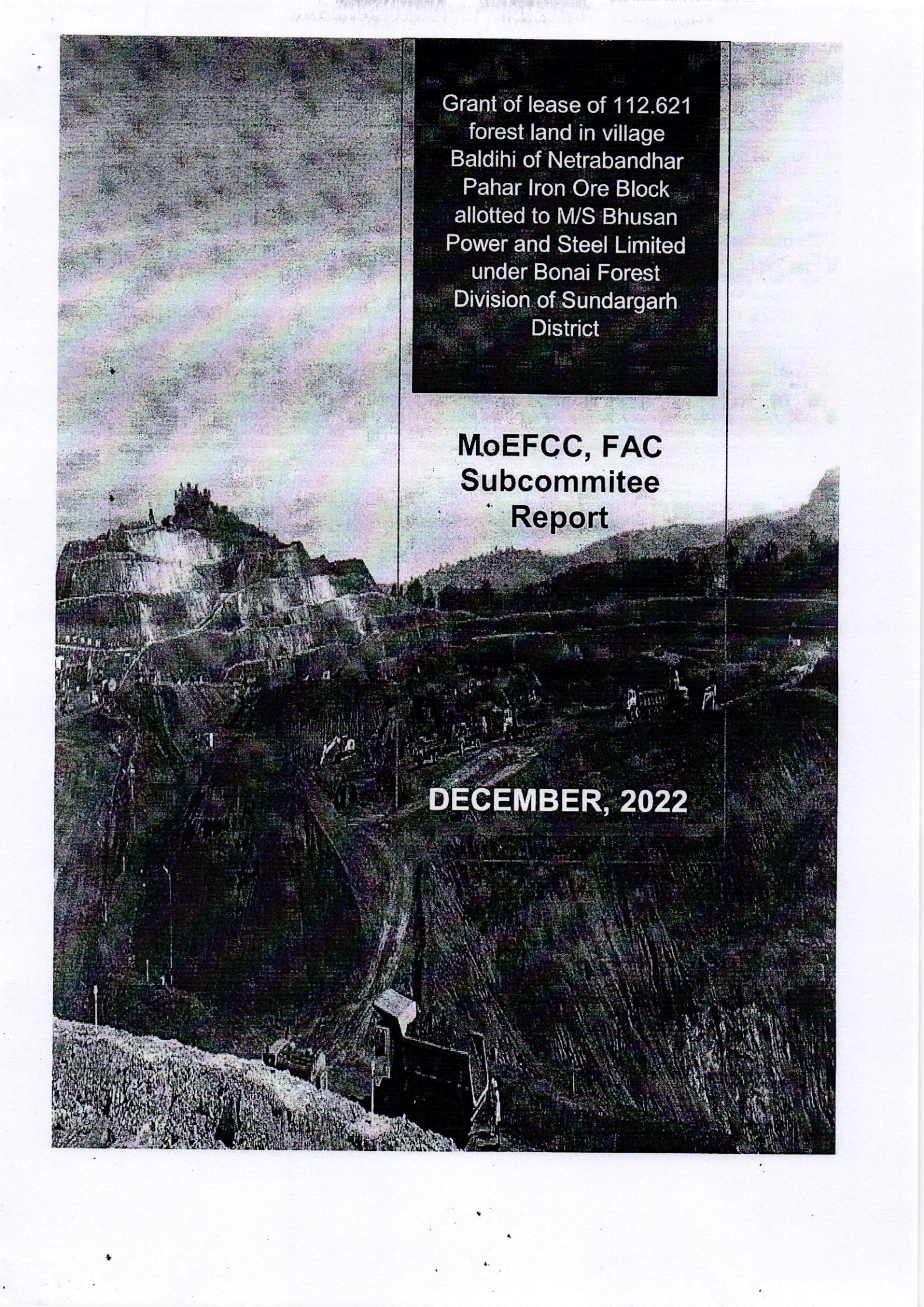
Yours faithfully,

sd/-  
**(Charan Jeet Singh)**  
Scientist 'D'

**Copy to:-**

1. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Government of Odisha, Bhubaneswar
2. Regional Officer (Central), Integrated Regional Office of the MoEF&CC at Bhubaneswar
3. Nodal Officer (FCA), Government of Odisha, Bhubaneswar
4. User Agency
5. Monitoring Cell of FC Divisions, MoEF&CC, New Delhi
6. Guard file.





Grant of lease of 112.621  
forest land in village  
Baldihi of Netrabandhar  
Pahar Iron Ore Block  
allotted to M/S Bhusan  
Power and Steel Limited  
under Bonai Forest  
Division of Sundargarh  
District

**MoEFCC, FAC  
Subcommittee  
Report**

**DECEMBER, 2022**



**Grant of lease of 112.621 forest land in village Baldihi of Netrabandhar Pahar  
Iron Ore Block allotted to M/S Bhusan Power and Steel Limited under Bonai  
Forest Division of Sundargarh District**

**FAC. MoEFCC Subcommittee Report**

**Background:**

The Forest Advisory Committee (FAC) in its meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022 constituted sub-committee Vide Office Order No. 8-03/2022-FC; Dated: 24<sup>th</sup> August 2022 regarding the grant of lease of 112.621 forest land in village Baldihi of Netrabandhar Pahar Iron Ore Block allotted to M/S Bhusan Power and Steel Limited under Bonai Forest Division of Sundargarh District. The ToRs of the committee was to visit the area for ascertaining and reporting on the following:

1. Status of elephant distribution and movement in the area.
2. Holistic assessment of likely impact of mining lease operational and proposed to be granted in the area on the elephant habitat and movement and
3. Mitigation measures, if any, required to be undertaken for the conservation and protection of elephants in the area.

In compliance with this order, the committee members visited the State of Odisha from 16 – 19 November 2022. During the visit, the committee members interacted with the officials of forest department to learn about the elephant distribution and movement in the area, Human-Elephant-Interface, threats to elephant population. The committee members also visited the site proposed for diversion and other existing mining areas in the district.

**Elephants in the State of Odisha: Issues**

The presence of Elephants in Odisha is recorded in the entire State (28 of 30 districts), barring a few Forest Divisions of southern and coastal areas (Figure 1). As per the latest census of elephants done in 2017, the State was estimated to have 1976 elephants, of which 344 are adult males while 1,092 are adult females. The male-female sex ratio of 1:3.2 is said to be one of the best in the country. Odisha's elephant population is more or less stable (Table 1).

The Elephant population in Odisha is estimated to be around 64% within the east-central region; hence, it is the most important elephant bearing State in this region.

During the 1999 census, 28 Forest Divisions had elephants. They spread over to 37 Forest Divisions (Figure 2) during 2017, i.e., in 16 years, because of disturbances in their habitat. Mining, linear development projects, and loss of experienced elephants (in accidents and electrocution) has resulted in dispersion of elephant herds to new areas. The loss of skilled individuals in elephant groups is not just the loss of an individual elephant but the loss of the experience of 20 – 30 years and the ability of the herd to face conflicts and stress. This makes younger elephants more prone to displacement and conflict



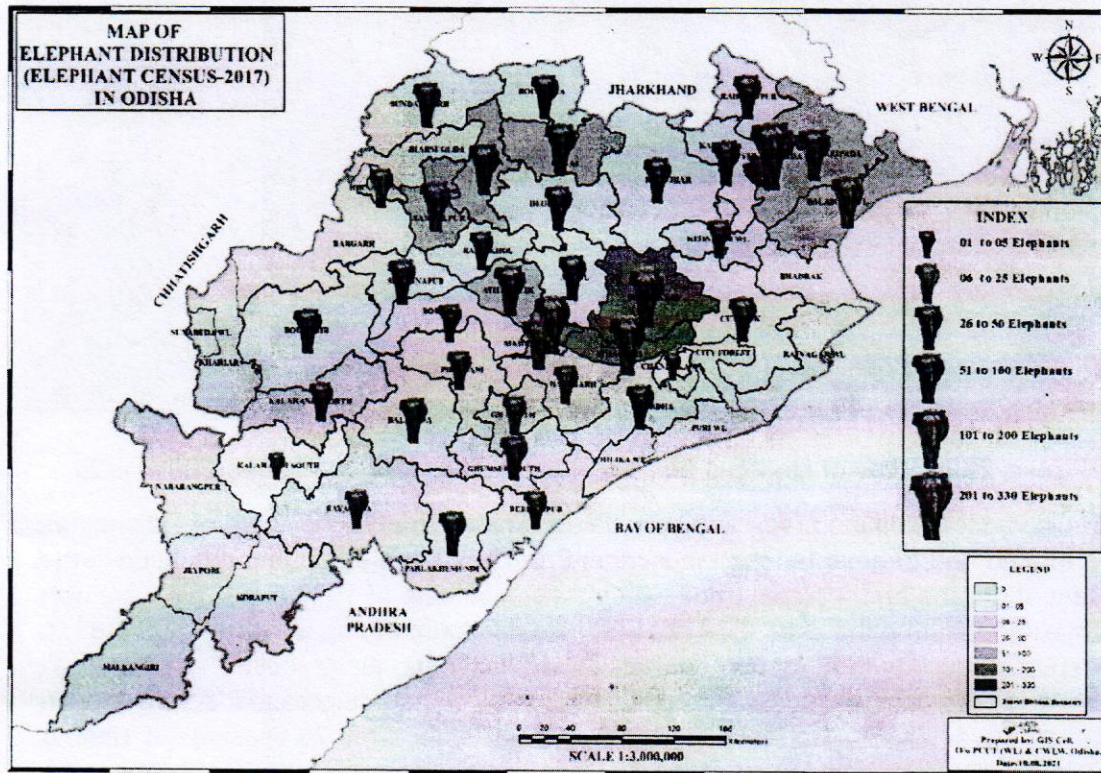


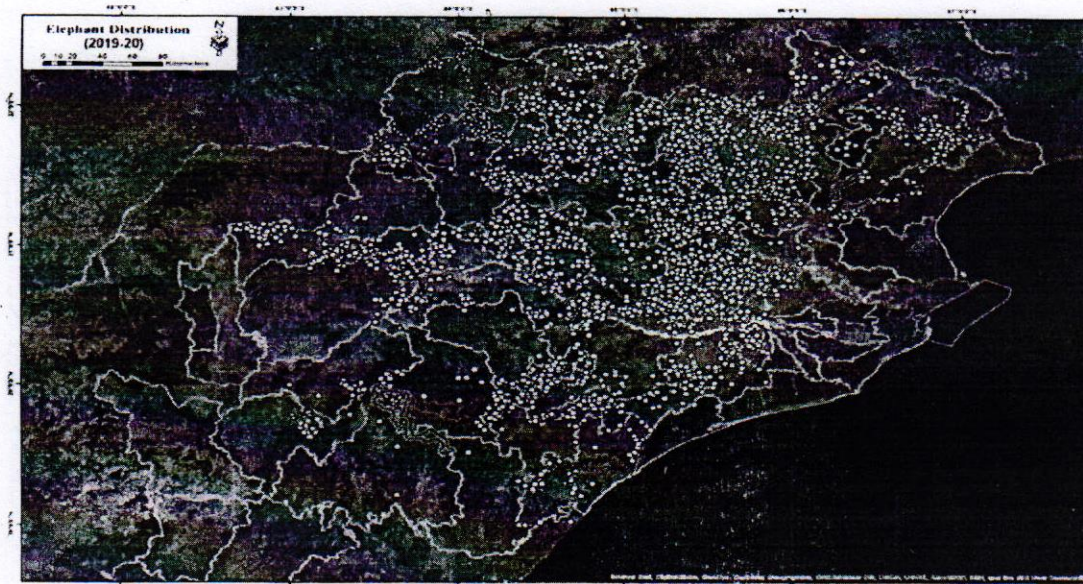
Figure 1: Elephant distribution in the State of Odisha (Census 2017).

Table 1: Trends of Elephant Population in the State of Odisha from 1979 – 2017

Census Year	Male		Female	Male/Female Ratio	Unknown Sex	Young	Total
	Tusker	Makhna					
1979	439	5	1124	2.53	476 (+calf)	-	2044
1999	400	-	1044	2.61	383 (+calf)	-	1827
2002	370	-	940	2.54	531(+calf)		1841
2007	387	16	973	2.41	71	415	1862
2010	332	-	1064	3.2	42	448	1886
2012	334	-	1087	3.25	46	463	1930
2015	341	-	1096	3.21	27	490	1954
2017	329	15	1092	3.17	38	502	1976

Author Note: Prof. R. Sukumar & Team - "About 1700-1800 Elephants can at most be sustained and managed within the larger forested landscapes of Odisha with tolerable levels of Elephant-Human Conflicts" (Published In January 2018)





**Figure 2:** Records of elephant presence in the State of Odisha during 2019 – 20.

The increase in mining areas and associated infrastructure in the State of Odisha has perforated and fragmented the landscape. From 1979, the elephant population in the State of Odisha had a stable trend with a mean estimate of 1877.5 (SE = 41.04) with a maximum during the year 1979 (2044) and a minimum during the year 1999 (1827). In spite of stability in numbers, conflict-related incidents, electrocution, road and rail hits, diseases-related deaths, and poaching incidents have increased. As mentioned earlier, the extent of elephant occurrence has increased from 28 divisions in 1999 to 37 forest divisions as of 2017. With elephants spreading over large landscapes, the chance of encountering humans, infrastructure, and active poaching functionaries is bound to increase. Based on an interpretation of the satellite data for Oct. – Dec. 2015, the forest cover in the State is 32.98 % (51,345 sq. km), with 6,967 sq km as dense, 21,370 sq km as moderately dense, and 23,008 sq km as open forest (Figure 3). Within the State, the 37,175 forest patches are  $\geq 0.01 \leq 1.0$  sq km in size, covering 1,338 sq km followed by 1,344 forest patches  $>1.0 \leq 10$  sq km in size, covering 3,690 sq km. The details of different sizes of forest patches as per FSI report are given in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Forest Cover in different Patch Size Classes in the State of Odisha (FSI – 2017 Assessment)

S. No.	Patch Size Range (sq km)	No. of Patches	Area (sq km)	% age
01	$\geq 0.01 \leq 1.0$	37,175	1,338	2.61
02	$> 1.0 \leq 10$	1,344	3,690	7.19
03	$> 10 \leq 100$	174	5,158	10.05
04	$> 100 \leq 500$	22	4,511	8.79
05	$> 500 \leq 1000$	6	4,461	8.69
06	$> 1000 \leq 5000$	5	14,580	28.40
07	$> 5000 \leq 10000$	1	5,480	10.67
08	$> 10000$	1	12,127	23.60
	<b>Total</b>	<b>38,728</b>	<b>51,345</b>	<b>100.00</b>



As is evident from the Table 2, the 51,345 sq km of the forest land is present in 38,728 patches, with 38,519 patches only covering 5,028 sq km (10%) of the forest cover. This configuration has allowed elephants to exploit much larger landscapes but the level of interactions with humans has increased. Any mitigation plan or management intervention should consider the spatial distribution of forest fragments within the landscape.

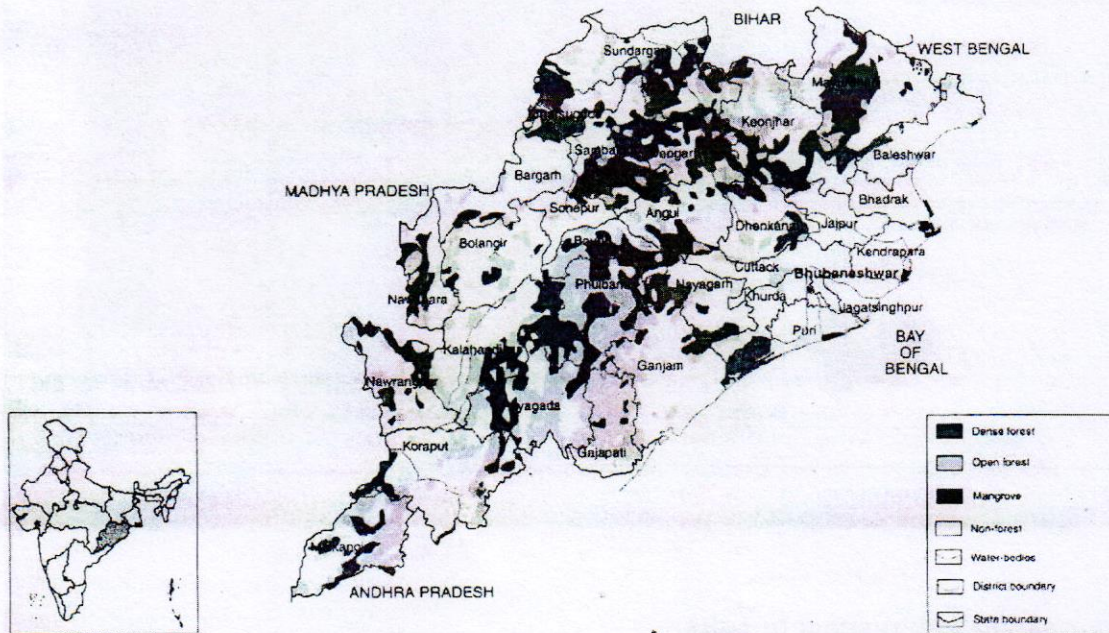
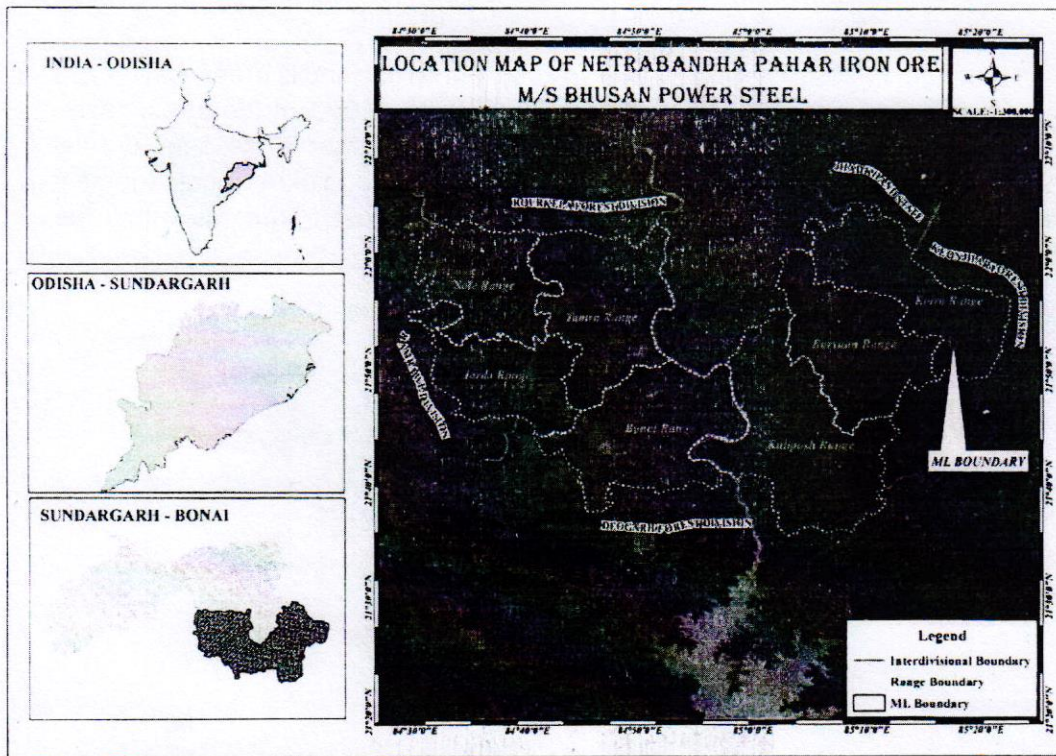


Figure 3: Forest cover map of Odisha (FSI – 2017)

#### Project Site:

The project area is located in Village Baladihi, Tehsil Koira, District Sundargarh of Odisha State and is covered under Survey of India Toposheet No.73 G/5 and is bounded by the geographical coordinates ranging from 21°52'05.242" N to 21°52'54.542" N and 85°17'10.449" E to 85°17'56.810" E. Netrabandha Pahar Block lies in southern continuation of Bonai Keonjhar belt of Ranchi plateau. In general, the Bonai- Keonjhar belt is deeply dissected giving rise to a rugged topography with high & narrow hill ranges interspersed by broad valley. It is a discrete physiographic unit marked by wide, flat, soil and alluvium covered tracks separated by low lying hills. The high hills are, in fact, long ranges controlled by the outcrop pattern of the Banded Iron Formation (BIF). The Netrabandha Pahar Block is located on a hill area with undulating topography. At places flat topped low mounds are noticed with general gradient to NE and SE. The area is rich in minerals especially iron ore. The location map of the project site with respect to surrounding landscape is shown in Figure 4.





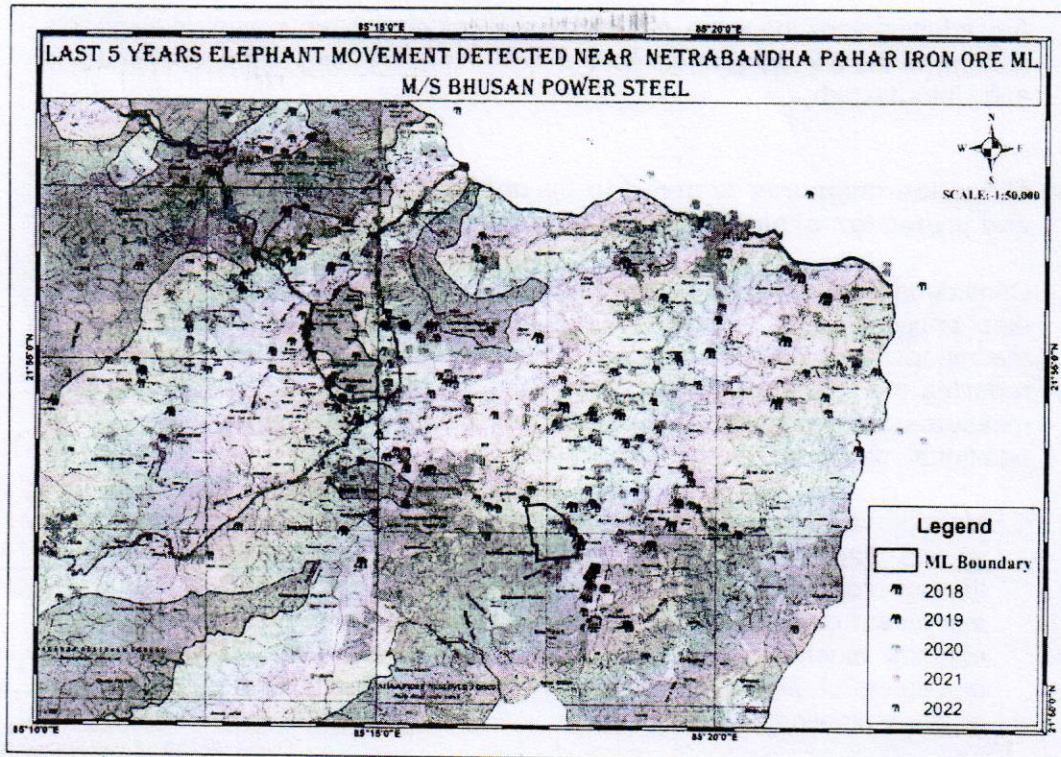
**Figure 4:** Location map of the proposed site with respect to adjoining landscape

**Information with respect to ToRs:**

**1. Status of elephant distribution and movement in the area:**

Based on available information, the area is one of the prime elephant habitats. As elephant are large bodied species with large home ranges, they keep on moving from one part of the habitat to other (Figure 5). The district shares its boundaries with Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. The elephant population found in this area is part of the larger elephant population moving across three states namely, Odisha, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. Any adverse impact on this population will result in more dispersal into human habitation and human-elephant conflict not only Odisha but across all the three states.





**Figure 5:** Elephant records from the proposed mining lease area and surrounding landscape from 2018- 2022

**2. Holistic assessment of likely impact of mining lease operational and proposed to be granted in the area on the elephant habitat and movement:**

Being one of the rich mineral districts in the state of Odisha, there are many mines in the landscape. Based on information provided, 26 mines are functional in Bonai Division, 50 are non-working mines and there are 72 proposals at different stages (Pipeline and Stage – 1). The mining areas have negative impact both on elephants and other wildlife and their movement. The instances of man-animal conflict are on the rise in spite of a marginal decline in the elephant population. Cases reported include human kill, human injury, cattle kill, house damage & crop damage by wild animals while retaliatory killing of wild animals are also being reported. During the 6-year period of 2004-05 to 2009-10 there was a total of 352 cases of human death, 132 cases of human injury, 3863 cases of house damage and 21768 acres of crop damage due to elephant depredation, and 75 human death cases and 671 human injury cases due to other animals like bear, crocodile, wild pig, wolf and gaur. On the other hand, 331 elephant death cases were also reported during the same period, which include 55 deaths due to poaching for ivory, 96 cases due to accidents (mainly electrocution), 49 natural deaths, 82 due to diseases and 49 for unknown reasons.

Total number of humans killed during the 6-year period of 1998-99 to 2003-04 due to elephant attack was reported to be 228, wherein Keonjhar district alone reported 93 numbers followed by Sambalpur & Sundargarh that reported 28 &



23 respectively. Only five forest divisions of Keonjhar and the adjoining Sambalpur, Sundargarh, Bamra and Bonai account for 57.8 % of the total depredation instances due to elephants in the state of Odisha.

Any additional mining lease in the area shall impact the movement of elephants not only in the Sundargarh district but also in the adjoining states of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh.

**3. Mitigation measures required to be undertaken for the conserve action and protection of elephants in the area:**

Considering the present situation of mining in the area and rise in human-elephant conflict, the committee is of the opinion that the possibility of mitigating the impact is not foreseen. However, following are some recommendations for reducing the impact of the ongoing mining on elephants. If these mitigation measures are implemented, in future, the government may consider for the additional mining lease after due evaluation.

1. Most of the mining areas are point locations with area ranging from 0.5 – 3 sq. km. Once the mining commences, most of the ore evacuation happens through road. The heavy movement of ore laden trucks hinders free movement of elephants across the landscape. Thus, the impact of mining extends much beyond the actual mining lease area. To facilitate free movement of elephants, the transfer of ore may be through conveyor belts or slurry pipelines.
2. There are a large number of mines (26 functional, 50 non-functional, and 72 in various stages of consideration/approval) in Bonai Forest Division alone. The aggregate impact of these mines at landscape level, including adverse impact caused by road transportation also needs to be studied. Once the mitigation measures are implemented, the possible reduction of the impacts on the larger landscape may be evaluated for further decision making.
3. A 50-year perspective plan at Elephant Landscape level may be prepared by the State Wildlife Department, keeping in view the impact of ongoing mining and future mining plans in the area.
4. The status of 50 non-functional mines may be examined to ascertain why these mines are non-functional in the first place. Attempts should be made to revive these mines or these mines (if established over forest areas) should be handed back to the forest department if no mining is envisaged. The FC approvals for new mining permissions should duly take into consideration the reasons for 50 mines being non-functional/ non-productive.

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*Annexure - I*



Government of India  
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change  
(Forest Conservation Division)

Indira Paryavaran Bhawan,  
Aliganj, Jor Bag Road,  
New Delhi - 110003.  
Dated: August, 2022

Office Order

**Sub: Constitution of a Sub-Committee of FAC to visit the area pertaining to the grant of lease over 112.621 ha of forest land in village Baldihi of NetrabandhaPahar Iron Ore Block allotted to M/s Bhusan Power and Steel Limited under Bonai Forest Division of Sundargarh District.**

The undersigned is directed to inform that based on the recommendation made by the Forest Advisory Committee (FAC) in its meeting held on 01.08.2022, a Sub-Committee, consisting of the following members, has been constituted to visit the forest area of mining lease mentioned in the subject above :

- i. Shri Preet Pal Singh, Dy. IGF, MoEF&CC, New Delhi
- ii. Dr. Bilal Habib, Faculty, Elephant Cell, WII, Dehradun
- iii. Dr. K MuthamizhSelvan, Scientist 'E', Project Elephant Division, MoEF&CC, New Delhi

The Committee will visit the area to ascertain and report the following:

- i. Status of elephant distribution and movement in the area;
- ii. Holistic assessment of likely impact of the mining leases operational and proposed to be granted in the area on the elephant habitat and movements; and
- iii. Mitigation measures, if any, required to be undertaken for the conservation and protection of elephants in the area.

This issues with the approval of competent authority.

Sd/-  
(Charan Jeet Singh)  
Scientist 'D'

**Distribution to:**

- i. Shri Preet Pal Singh, Dy. IGF, MoEF&CC, New Delhi
- ii. Dr. Bilal Habib, Faculty, Elephant Cell, WII, Dehradun
- iii. Dr. K MuthamizhSelvan, Scientist 'E', Project Elephant Division, MoEF&CC, New Delhi

**Copy to:**  
PPS to DGF&SS/PPS to Addl. DGF(FC)

Digitally Signed by Charan  
Jeet Singh  
Date: 24-08-2022 14:30:32  
Reason: Approved



(07)55-400-750