

BHUBANESWAR, April 20, 2013

## **‘Scrap Posco plant on the basis of gram sabha resolution’**

*The state has stifled people's voice to facilitate the project, says PPSS leader*

Hailing the Supreme Court verdict relating to mining in Niyamgiri, Posco Pratirodh Sangram Samiti (PPSS), which spearheads movement against proposed mega steel plant of South Korean Posco in Jagatsinghpur district, demanded that the steel project be scrapped on the basis of gram sabha resolution.

“The Supreme Court has upheld the authority of Gram Sabha to control, manage and use the mineral resources in Niyamagiri hills. This comes as a very welcome judgment where community rights over mineral resources has been protected. This is a victory of long-drawn struggle of the adivasis in Niyamagiri hills and throughout the State,” said PPSS spokesperson Prasant Paikray.

Mr. Paikray said, “Gram Sabha of Dinkia Panchayat of Jagatsinghpur district in Odisha held October 18, 2012 had passed a resolution unanimously against the diversion of forest land for non-forest purposes. With the spirit of the Supreme Court judgment on Niyamagiri hill, the State government should respect the decision of our Gram Sabhha and scrap the POSCO project outright.”

“There are two cases regarding acquisition of land for the steel project pending in the Orissa High Court. Our well-wishers have been fighting the legal battle on it. We hope that the latest Supreme Court verdict would spur them to file additional affidavit in the court,” he said.

Mr. Paikray further said that the PPS had been time and again emphasizing the people's consent for any project and resolution of gram sabha, free from any influences, should be basis of any project.

“The State government has bulldozed every norm and stifled people's voice to facilitate the steel project. We hope good sense should prevail on government in view of the Apex Court verdict,” he said.

PPSS highlighted the latest report of Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) which found the State government guilty of extending large scale undue benefits to steel major POSCO in allotment of a piece of valuable land in the state capital Bhubaneswar.