

DUMPING OF NUCLEAR WASTE

2953. SHRI T.M. SELVAGANAPATHI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) has been facing a serious problem regarding handling of nuclear waste;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether it is also a fact that the local people have been objecting dumping of nuclear waste in their respective places;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether the NPCIL is considering to adopt any technology to dispose off the nuclear waste; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES & PENSIONS AND PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY) :

- (a) No, Sir.
- (b) Does not arise.
- (c)&(d) In India, nuclear wastes are safely stored and disposed as per the international practices. As a national policy, each nuclear plant in India has a designated storage facility co-located in the plant site and, as needed, such waste is further processed in designated DAE facilities for compaction and immobilisation. There is no objection from the local people about storage and management of waste at such sites.
- (e)&(f) India follows a closed nuclear fuel cycle policy in which the spent nuclear fuel is not treated as waste. It is reprocessed at reprocessing facilities for obtaining valuable fuel for use in the programme. After reprocessing, the small amount of high level waste is vitrified in the waste immobilisation plants co-located with the reprocessing plants and stored in engineered facilities.

Nuclear wastes generated at nuclear power plants are of low to intermediate radioactivity level. These are treated, immobilised in cement/polymer matrices and stored in specially designed double walled, high integrity containers placed in RCC trenches / storage facilities at the nuclear power plant site itself in accordance with the well-established and proven procedures. The area around the waste storage facility is regularly monitored to ensure that there is no effect on the environment. The radioactivity of these wastes reduces to near ambient levels by the end of operational life of the plant.
