

# Vedanta Looks beyond Niyamgiri to get Lanjigarh Plant Supplies

Vedanta is now looking beyond Niyamgiri Hills to supply raw material for its Rs 5,000 crore Lanjigarh alumina refinery in Odisha and is hopeful of securing an alternate mine soon as gram sabhas of Dongria Kondh have discarded bauxite mining in the Niyamgiri hills

In an interview Vedanta Group Chairman Anil Agarwal said "Niyamgiri was a very small deposit and the Odisha government has promised us that they will give this and work on other deposits. They are working on other deposits and I am looking forward if they can take faster decision".

When asked to comment on the complete rejection by the gram sabhas for mining at the Niyamgiri hills, Agarwal said, "it is a small mine. Between government and the gram sabhas whatever has happened, I don't want to comment... As far as we are concerned, we need bauxite".

"If we get bauxite faster, we will be able to run the plant. Huge numbers of people are waiting and it is the right thing in India for revenue and for the employment."

The Lanjigarh alumina refinery and mining in the Niyamgiri hills have been surrounded by controversies since beginning and Vedanta and its partner Odisha Mining Corporation (OMC) have been battling out in different courts to keep the two projects alive in last few years.

"We created huge investment of Rs 50,000 crore in the aluminium sector. Now I am running it (the refinery) at one-third capacity. I leave it to you to see what we have created.

"I need bauxite, which the (Odisha) government has promised. In India, we have third largest bauxite reserves of the world and we have to use it for the human use."

During July-August this year, 12 gram sabhas, selected by the Odisha government for the referendum on mining in Niyamgiri



hills, had rejected the proposal. The tribal villages, located on the hill slopes, are part of Rayagada and Kalahandi districts.

They were selected after a Supreme Court order of 18th April, in which it had directed the Odisha government to conduct meetings of gram sabhas for deciding whether mining will impact the religious, community and cultural rights of the villagers, especially their right to worship Niyam Raja, the deity.

Due to the rejection, the alumina refinery is staring at an uncertain future currently as it does not have any permanent source for securing bauxite. It is currently operating at about 50-60 per cent capacity.

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