Proceedings of the Workshop on Mineral Sector of India – Post MMDR Amendment Act, 2015 – T.N. Venugopal and Subhajyoti Das, Geological Society of India, Bangalore (*E: gsocind@gmail.com*)

The Amendment to MMDR Act in 2015 has changed the way in which minerals are administered. It was almost two years the amendment was brought in. In order to know its impact on Mining in India. SGAT organised a day's workshop on 17th December, 2017. In the Inaugural Session, Mr. B.K. Mohanty, Advisor, SGAT briefed about the background and necessity of conducting such workshop. The workshop was inaugurated by Shri Deepak Mohanti, IFS, Director, Department of Mining, Government of Orissa. In his inaugural speech, he highlighted the main features of amendment, some judicial pronouncements specially the orders of Supreme Court dated 2nd August 2017, and the way in which the State of Orissa is proactively preparing to face the situation post 31st March 2020.

In the workshop, there were in all nine presentations. Dr. M.R. Mohanty, DDG, Geological Survey of India, Bengaluru in his paper titled "Mineral Exploration: Future Strategy" indicated the future plans and activities of the Geological Survey of India in mineral exploration in potential areas, National Mineral Exploration Policy 2016, necessity of integration of regional data and delineation of the prospects. In this connection he also showed a video clipping of aero geophysical survey programme. Dr. V.P. Upadhyay, Adviser, MOEF&CC, Shillong made a presentation about Evolution of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in India, several notifications issued by MOEF&CC from time to time, categorization of projects, handling of different projects by MOEF&CC and State Environment Impact Assessment Authorities, recent Supreme Court Orders covering even the minor mineral quarries whose extents are less than 5 ha. and need for compliance of the statutory provisions. Dr. Umesh Chandra Jena, Jt. Director, Directorate of Mines, Government of Orissa spoke about salient features of the amendments, status of mining leases of Odisha, production and despatch trend of minerals for the last 8 years and Integrated Mines and Minerals Management System (i3ms) followed by Government of Odisha for on-line administration. Mr. R.N. Sahu, Mining Law Consultant spoke on the MMDR Amendment Act, 2015 and its impact on Mineral Development in Odisha. In his presentation, he spoke about ineligibility of pending MC applications, lapsing of leases, Grant of MCs through auction, assessment of mineral potential in these areas, impact on mineral based industries, litigations and multiplicity of Mining Legislations. Dr. T.N. Venugopal, Council Member, Geological Society of India presented a paper titled "Status of Mineral Industry Post Amendment – a Case Study of Karnataka". In this presentation, he highlighted the background for amendments, role of State DMGs, number of blocks so far auctioned in Karnataka,

their present status, need for proactive support from the State Government and Central Inter-ministerial Group, loss of revenue to the State Exchequer for delay in starting production from auctioned mines and support from National Mineral Exploration Trust in handholding State DMG's in exploration and preparation of auctionable blocks for sustainable mining in the State. Mr. A.B. Panigrahi, Former Controller of Mines, IBM spoke about Star Rating of Mines in Metalliferous Mining Sector under Sustainable Development Frame Work. He dealt in detail about how the mines are evaluated and marks are awarded for efforts and initiative towards sustainable development, and stressed the recognition of good performers and motivate others to reach at least up to 4 star level. Dr. Khageswar Mahanta, Vice President, Essel Mining and Industries Limited., spoke about "Final Mine Closure Plan Culmination of the journey with MMDR (Amendment) Act, 2015". He dealt on the provisions of Mine Closure Plan, the domain of SDF and Star rating system which is quite comprehensive and need for clear definition of criteria / indicator for mine closure considering all the provisions under law. Mr. S.K. Rout, Assistant Executive Director, OCL India Ltd., spoke on "Post MMDR Amendment Act, 2015 – Effective Steps, Need of the Hour". He highlighted their experience with auction rule, DMF, Infrastructure requirement in mining areas, negative impact created by PESA Act. He requested Government attention in finding permanent solutions. Mr. Pramod Kumar Patra, Associate Vice President, Jindal Steel & Power Ltd., spoke on "A Review of MMDR Amendment Act, 2015 – A Few Concessions". In his presentation he dealt with the evolution of Mining legislation in India, the focus of MMDR Amendment Act, 2015, issues bothering the industry like high taxation, raw material requirement for steel industry post 2020 and problems of land acquisition for compensatory afforestation.

After these presentations, Panel discussions and summing up of the deliberations were conducted. The Panellists included Mr. B.K. Mohanty, Mr. A.B. Panhigrahi, Dr. T.N. Venugopal and Mr. S.K. Mohanty. The Panellists suggested the salient points for recommendations to be submitted to Government of India. Mr. S.K. Mohanty, General Secretary, SGAT & Convenor proposed the Vote of Thanks.

In the evening, SGAT conducted its Annual General Meeting. In the meeting Mr. Subhajyoti Das, Former Director, Central Ground Water Board, now Member of Editorial Board, Journal of Geological Society of India was awarded prestigious SGAT Excellence Award – 2018 for his outstanding contribution in Hydrogeology.