

"Harmonizing Growth and Responsibility" - The Role of Coal CPSEs in Service of Humanity

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In the intricate tapestry of energy production, coal provides a significant portion of the India's power needs. At present, 55 % energy needs are met from coal sector. Within this sector, Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) primarily Coal India Limited (CIL), NLC India Limited (NLCIL) and Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) in coal mining bear the responsibility of not just fuelling economic growth but also ensuring that their actions are aligned with the broader interests of humanity. Coal CPSEs, operating at the nexus of energy and environmental concerns, face a dual challenge: meeting the escalating energy demands of a burgeoning population while acknowledging the imperative of sustainability. In navigating this delicate balance, these enterprises have emerged as agents of positive change, contributing significantly to the well-being of society.

Coal CPSEs play a pivotal role in ensuring energy security. The uninterrupted supply of coal is vital to sustaining the energy needs of nations, especially in regions heavily dependent on coal-fired power plants. This stability contributes to economic growth, offering a lifeline to industries and households alike. The narrative of coal CPSEs in service of humanity transcended mere economic metrics. Embracing Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), these enterprises become architects of positive change. By investing in community development, education, and healthcare, CPSEs forged lasting partnerships that extend beyond the perimeters of mining sites, leaving indelible footprints of progress. Coal PSUs unveiled several initiatives in the domain of education, health, nutrition, environment and sustainability, livelihood and supports activities to empower the local communities.

Job creation stands as another hallmark of the coal sector's impact on humanity. Coal PSUs has undertaken plethora of initiative ranging from skilling local community, establishing Multi-Skill Development Institutes, collaboration with premier institutes in field of footwear's designs, agriculture, and engineering to impart skills. To provide impetus, Coal India Limited (CIL) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in January 2024 with National Skill Development Cooperation under the aegis of Ministry of Coal to establish multi-skill development institute in each subsidiary of CIL - to impart various skills to augment employability. At the outset these institutes have been established in two subsidiaries on pilot basis. Further, another MoU has been signed with Tata Strive to skill 655 candidates from peripheral area of coal mines. Thus, such initiatives beget employment opportunities that resonate in local communities. This not only addresses unemployment but also sparks economic development in regions historically tethered to coal reserves.

Environmental conservation emerges as a pivotal frontier for coal CPSEs committed to service. Sustainable mining practices, technological innovations, and investments in clean coal technologies are essential steps toward mitigating the industry's impact on the environment. As stewards of natural resources, these enterprises hold the key to unlocking a future where coal can coexist with environmental consciousness. In this regard, NLCIL has emerged as a champion to bolster the cause of environmental safeguards and established a dedicated "Corporate Planning and Environment Cell" to coordinate activities for ecological balance, horticultural development, pollution control in tandem with Centre for Applied Research and Development (CARD).

Health and safety measures are non-negotiable in the coal mining landscape. By prioritizing the well-being of their workforce through stringent safety protocols and comprehensive health initiatives, coal CPSEs contribute to not only a safer work environment but also the broader health infrastructure of surrounding communities and chart a way to accomplish global benchmarks in health ecosystem. For example, CIL

provides financial support of up to 10 lakh per patient to thalassemia patients and so far, 1000 persons have been benefited up to 2022-23, with total outlay earmarked 70 crores. Upon similar trajectory, NLCIL collaborated with government hospital in Cuddalore to establish dialysis centre with outlay of 2.5 crore.

In charting a course toward responsibility, coal CPSEs have been scouting energy alternatives to contribute to the global imperative of renewable energy transition. Diversifying operations to include investments in renewable energy projects showcases a commitment to a sustainable energy future and a willingness to adapt to changing global dynamics. To actively participate in reduction of carbon footprints, Coal India has set a target of 5 GW renewable energy aiming to bolster its energy matrix with renewable energy, to be achieved by 2025-26.

By harmonizing growth with responsibility, coal CPSEs can emerge as pillars of progress, ensuring that their legacy is not just measured in tons of coal extracted but in the positive impact left on the communities.

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