

# Parliamentary Consultative Committee of Coal Ministry Discusses Emerging Issue of Coal Mine Closure – Achieving Just Transition for All

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Union Minister of Coal, Mines and Parliamentary Affairs Shri Pralhad Joshi chaired a meeting of Parliamentary Consultative Committee of Ministry of Coal today in Indore, Madhya Pradesh to discuss an emerging issue related to coal sector on Coal Mine Closure - Achieving Just Transition for All.

The members of Parliamentary Consultative Committee, Shri Chunni Lal Sahu, Shri Jual Oram, Shri Krupal Tumane, Shri Santosh Kumar, Shri Suresh Pujari, Shri Ajay Pratap Singh Baghel, Shri Khiru Mahto and Shri Prashanta Nanda participated in the meeting and gave their valuable suggestions and inputs on Just Transition aspect of coal mine closure. CMD (CIL), CMD (NLCIL) and CMDs of CIL subsidiaries were also present during the meeting.



In his opening remarks, Minister Shri Pralhad Joshi informed the Committee members that there is a global thrust on energy transition away from coal. However, for India, coal being an affordable source of energy, holds prime importance for meeting its energy needs being fuelled by rising economy. Coal accounts for more than 51% of country's primary energy requirement and around 73% of power generation. Also, coal is one of the important ingredients in production of steel, sponge iron, aluminium, cement, paper, bricks etc. Coal demand in the country is yet to peak and will continue to play an important role in the energy mix till 2040 and beyond. Thus, no transition away from coal is happening in foreseeable future in India.

Coal Secretary Shri Amrit Lal Meena briefed that the phrase **Just Transition** came in prominence after its inclusion in climate declarations made during **UN Climate Change Conference (COP 21)** held in Paris in 2015. It was emphasised that the transition from a carbon intensive energy source to low-carbon energy

source should not be harsh on the people dependent on that source. It is expected that such people should be compensated for the impact of transition and/or re-trained and re-employed in some other low-carbon economic activities.

During the meeting, a presentation was made by Joint Secretary, Ministry of Coal whereby it was informed that although there are no immediate challenges of coal phase down, the coal companies will have to manage the closure of already abandoned mines and coal mines that will close normally in near future - in a manner aligned to Just Transition principles to ensure repurposing of land and infrastructure assets, sustenance of livelihoods of workers & informally employed people and continuance of support to social infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, community buildings etc.

The existing Mine closure guidelines are still evolving. These guidelines primarily focus on physical and environmental aspects of mine closure and do not address properly social aspects of mine closure and repurposing of land and infrastructure assets. Hence, there is a need for developing a uniform comprehensive sustainable mine closure framework on Just Transition principles along with development of an appropriate institutional arrangement and funding mechanism covering every aspect of mine closure.



During the discussion, the Committee Members appreciated the efforts being undertaken by the Ministry and Coal/Lignite PSUs towards coal mine closure. The members acknowledged the initiatives taken by the coal sector to further develop coal mine closure framework and expressed hope that by adopting best global practices and application of principle of Just Transition to closure of mines will be a big step forward for social equity and justice. The framework will also facilitate capacity building for managing coal mine closures that may happen in long term due to change in India's energy mix. It was suggested by the Committee Members that public representative should be consulted more frequently by coal companies on the issues like environment protection, coal mine closures, social welfare and productivity.

In his concluding remarks, Minister Shri Pralhad Joshi thanked the Committee Members for their active participation and assured that their valued suggestions would be adopted by the Ministry and Coal/Lignite PSUs.

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