



## Industrial disputes settlement mechanism and social security measures in the Singareni Collieries Company Limited – A study

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### Abstract

This paper examines the industrial disputes settlement mechanisms and social security measures implemented by the Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL), a leading coal mining company in India. The research explores the efficacy of grievance redressal systems, bipartite and tripartite negotiation forums, and legal frameworks in resolving labor disputes within SCCL. It also assesses the impact of various welfare initiatives such as health insurance, housing, pension schemes, and employee safety programs that contribute to the social security of workers. The analysis is based on both primary data collected through interviews and surveys, and secondary sources including company reports and labor department statistics. Findings reveal that SCCL maintains a robust industrial relations framework supported by proactive trade unions, which contributes to minimizing disputes and fostering industrial peace. Moreover, the company's comprehensive social security measures have enhanced worker satisfaction and productivity. The paper concludes that an integrated approach combining effective dispute resolution mechanisms with strong social security provisions is essential for sustaining industrial harmony and improving the quality of work life in heavy industries like coal mining.

**Keywords:** Industrial disputes, dispute settlement mechanism, social security, workers' welfare, trade unions, SCCL, industrial relations, coal mining, grievance redressal, labor policy

### Introduction

In this Article, the researcher has discussed "Industrial Relations System" and "Social Security" in The Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) are discussed.

The Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL), is a government-owned Coal Mining Corporation operates mines operates 48 mines in the Pranahita – Godavari Valley of Telangana. These mines are spread across six districts: Bhadradi Kothagudem, Khammam, Jayashankar-Bhupalpalli, Adilabad, Karimnagar, and Warangal. Of these, 29 are underground mines and 19 are opencast mines. The coal reserves belonging to the SCCL stretch across 350 Km of the Pranahita – Godavari Valley of Telangana with a proven geological reserve aggregating to whopping 8791 million tonnes. SCCL is currently operating 17 opencast and 22 underground mines in 6 districts of Telangana with manpower around 42,000. In so far as hiring of manpower in the mines, due to technological advancement and other factors, there is moderate reduction of manpower over the years. At the end of 2022-23, the man power in SCCL is found to be 41837. For administrative purposes, the SCCL, hss divided into 11 Areas viz. (1) Kothagudem (KTB), (3) Yellandu (YLD), (3) Manuguru (MNG), (4) Ramagundam-I, Ramagundam-II, Ramagundam-III, Ramagundam-IV (RG) (5) Belampalli (BPA), (6) Mandamari (MM), (7) Bhupalpalli (BH), and (8) Srirampur (SRP). Again, with the district's reorganisation in Telangana State, coal mining activities of the SCCL are presently spread over six Districts of Telangana State i.e., Komaram Bheem, Mancheri, Peddapalli, Jayashankar Bhupalpalli, Bhadradi Kothagudem and Khammam Districts. There are 40 mines across six districts, within Telangana i.e., (1) Komaram Bheem, (2) Mancheri, (3) Peddapalli, (4) Jayashankar Bhupalpalli, (5) Bhadradi Kothagudem, and (6) Khammam. These mines produce coal from the Godavari Valley

Coalfield. This Company has mining history spanning over 125 years this SCCL is major contributor to India's coal production, accounting for 9.2% of domestic output. The SCCL is a cornerstone of the Telangana region's energy sector. The SCCL is jointly owned by the Government of Telangana (51%) and the Government of India (49%). The company's 'Industrial Relations' framework is critical to its operations, balancing the needs of its large workforce with the demands of a competitive mining industry.

The Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL), a 125-year-old mining company. Presently this public sector undertaking has coal reserves stretch across 350 Km. of the Pranahita – Godavari Valley of Telangana with a proven geological reserve aggregating to whopping 20,016 million tons of verified coal reserves in the Pranhita – Godavari Valley Coalfield. and is presently operating 18 Opencast Mines and 27 Underground Mines in the six districts of Telangana State. The equity share capital of the Company is 1733.20 crores and with manpower of 47,178 at the end of financial year 2018-19. Presently, the Company has 2 X 600 MW Singareni Thermal Power Station is in operation in the Mancheri district of Telangana and proposed to set up 300 MW Solar Power Plant at various locations in SCCL command area in Telangana, which are in addition to Solar Plants which are under way of construction.

### Historical Context of The Singareni Collieries Company Limited

It was in the year 1871, Dr. King of the Geological Survey of India discovered coal near the village of Yellandu in Khammam district. The Hyderabad (Deccan) Company Limited incorporated in England acquired mining rights in 1886 to exploit coal found in Yellandu area. The present SCCL Company was incorporated on 23rd December 1920 under the Hyderabad Companies Act as a public limited

company with the name “The Singareni Collieries Company Limited” (SCCL). Subsequently, the State of Hyderabad purchased majority shares of the Company in 1945. In 1949 this function was entrusted to Industrial Trust Fund by the then Government of Hyderabad. The controlling interest of the Company devolved on the Government of Andhra Pradesh in 1956 pursuant to the reorganization of States. Thus, the SCCL became a Government Company under the Companies Act in 1956.

### Industrial Disputes Settlement in India

Industrial disputes may arise due to several reasons, but mostly they arise out of economic, political, social background of the workers. So also, at times the attitude of the employers and employees may also responsible to industrial unrest. The most common causes in emergence of industrial disputes may be demand for higher wages and allowances, personnel policies of a given industry, issues relating to retrenchment, lay off, leave and hours of work, issues relating to bonus, workers indiscipline, violence, and inter-union rivalry. Further, non-implementation of awards or agreements, non-fulfillment of demands on part of workers such as workload, work standards, excess labour, working conditions at work place, variation of manufacturing process, violation of service conditions related rules or codes, working, political motives, closure of industry or lockouts, Inability to communicate refusal to recognize trade unions, autocratic attitude of management and even non-implementation of labour law may result in industrial unrest. Resolution of disputes is essential in the interest of a larger society. Occurrence of such disputes whatever may be ‘industrial disputes’ the consequences are harmful to all stakeholders including management of an industry, employees, economy, and the society. On part of the management, such disputes result in loss of production, revenue, profit and even sickness of the plant and on part of the employed it would be hard hit as the disputes may lead to lockouts and consequent loss of wages and even jobs loss also.

The Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 provides elaborated and efficient machinery for the peaceful and amicable settlement of the industrial disputes. They include:

1. **Works Committees:** Constituted under Section 3.
2. **Conciliation Officer:** Constituted under Section 4.
3. **Board of Conciliation:** Constituted under Section.
4. **Court of Enquiry:** Constituted under Section 6.
5. **Labour Courts:** Constituted under Section 7.
6. **Industrial Tribunals:** Constituted under Section 7-A.
7. **National Tribunal:** Constituted under Section 7B.

The above authorities as provided under the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 are aimed at providing certain statutory mechanism to help in resolving ‘industrial disputes’ at different levels i.e., from the very budding stage to that stage such industrial dispute becomes a national labour management issue. Usually, in order to resolve a persisting dispute, both the management and the union shall have to adjust their attitude and keep their ego aside and resolve the disputes as early as possible, as if a dispute is not settled, the relations further become strained and complicated. It would be ideal to have a win-to-win situation in labour-management matters, and in such situation both management and workers/unions are happy. If one wins and one loses relations do not and can never improve. Further,

pending disputes may lead to loss productivity, industrial unrest which will have adverse impact on both parties. Both the parties as far as possible should resort to negotiations instead of tribunals or conciliation.

In industrial disputes settlement, the role of “appropriate government” is crucial and as such it plays a pivotal and active role in the settlement of industrial disputes under the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947. Section 2 (a) of the Act defines “appropriate government”. This enactment is the cornerstone of industrial relations in India, aiming to ensure industrial peace and harmony by providing mechanisms for the investigation and settlement of disputes between employers and workmen. Depending upon the controlling role of an industry, the “appropriate government” may be either Central Government or State Government. The “appropriate government” has multi-faceted role and encompasses powers to be discharged at various stages of dispute resolution. They include (1) Reference of Disputes to the specified authority under the Act<sup>[1]</sup> (2) Prohibition of unfair labour practices<sup>[2]</sup>, Prohibition of strikes and lock-outs<sup>[3]</sup>, (3) Special provisions relating to strikes, lockouts, lay-off, retrenchment and closure of industry, (4) Publication of awards, (5) Safeguarding publican interests, (6) Enforcement and monitoring of awards etc.

### Industrial Relations in the Singareni Collieries Company Limited

Coal plays an importance and prominent role in any economy. Coal being the most abundant fossil fuels in India, this natural mineral resource continues to serve as the backbone of India’s energy sector and is having significant contributor to Indian industrial growth, providing employment, and generating government revenue. In India, coal is the primary source of energy which accounts for nearly 55% of the total electricity power generation. The Thermal power plants in the country depend heavily on coal. With a rising population and rapid urbanization, the demand for electric power is progressively increasing in the country. As a matter of fact, coal ensures a stable and comparatively affordable source of energy, precarious for industrial consumption and domestic, commercial use as well. In addition, coal industry considerably provides huge employment both directly and indirectly and further coal mining contributes considerably to government revenue which generate through royalties, taxes, and dividends which is in addition to helping in in reducing the import burden. Coal being precious, something rightly called as ‘the Kala Heera’, or ‘Black Diamond’.

On historical background of coal mining in India, coal mining is closely tied to the India’s industrial development and economic transformation. From its modest beginnings during the colonial era to becoming a keystone of India’s energy infrastructure, the coal industry has played a dominant role in shaping contemporary India. Early Beginning of coal exploration and mining can be traced back to eighteenth and nineteenth century. For the first time, coal was first discovered in the country in 1774 A.D. by John Sumner and Suetonius Grant Heatly of the ‘East India Company’ at a place close the Damodar River in present-day West Bengal. In so far as initial exploitation, mining began on a insignificant scale in the Raniganj Coalfield during 1820. The early coal mining was mostly manual and unscientific and primarily serving the needs of energy, steam locomotives and in moderate colonial industries. The

expansion of British Rule during mid-nineteenth and early twentieth century and with the expansion of the railway network and growing industries, demand for coal was surged. It was at the end of the nineteenth century, coal had become a crucial resource for providing power to locomotives, ships, and other machinery. During the initial periods, the coal mines in India were owned by private companies or Zamindars under British colonial rule. During this period, coal mining practices were mostly unregulated, leading to hazardous working conditions and further environmental degradation. The production got a sudden boost from the First World War but went through a slump in the early thirties. However, with the advent of Independence, India embarked upon the 5-year development plans which gave a fillip to coal mining in the India.

On the profile of "The Singareni Collieries Company Limited" (SCCL), this coal mining Company Limited is the oldest mining industry operating as a Public Sector Undertaking in Telangana State. The present Singareni coal reserves are spread over 350 Km. of the Pranahita Godavari Valley of Telangana State which stretch across with a confirmed geological reserve aggregating to 8791 million tonnes of coal reserves. It was in 1871, William King Jr., (1887–1894) of the Government Organisation i.e., The Geological Survey of India which was founded in 1851 a Ministry of Mines founded Government of India organisation, discovered coal close the village of Yellandu in Khammam district. The present Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) was incorporated on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1920 under the erstwhile Hyderabad Companies Act under Nizam Rule as a Public Limited Company with the name "The Singareni Collieries Company Limited" (SCCL). This company has acquired all the assets and liabilities of The Hyderabad (Deccan) Co. Ltd., which was a limited company incorporated in England, acquired the mining rights in 1886 to exploit coal found in the area of Yellandu. Another Company by name and style "The Best & Co.," acted as Secretaries and Selling Agents for the company. The earlier Hyderabad State purchased majority shares of the Company in 1945. From 1945 to 1949, "The Hyderabad Construction Co., Ltd.," was acting as Managing Agent. After Operation Polo Operation in erstwhile Nizam State of Hyderabad and on mergng of Hyderabad state in Union of India and further on the States Reorganization in 1956, the controlling interest of the Company transferred on the Government of Andhra Pradesh. Thus, The Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) became a Government Company under the Companies Act in 1956.

### **Management of the Singareni Collieries Company Limited. (SCCL)**

The Singareni Collieries Company Ltd, (SCCL) is a Joint venture mining company of both Government of Telangana State and the Central Government the company. On management of the SCCL, the Company is headed by the Chairman & Managing Director (CMD) and heads the organization who is appointed by the Government of Telangana State. The CMD He is assisted with six Functional Directors, two Directors nominated by the Government of Telangana Stae and three Directors nominated by the Government of India. The Functional Directors of the SCCL are (1) The Director (Operations), (2) The Director (Finance), (3) The Director (Planning & Projects), (4) The Director (Personnel Administration & Welfare), (5) The Executive Director (Marketing &

Movement) and (6) The Director (Electrical & Mechanical). The Directors those are nominated by the Government of the State i.e., Telangana Andhra Pradesh are Special Chief Secretary (Energy Department) and Principal Secretary (Finance Department), while the Directors nominated by the Government of India are Ex-officio officials from the Union Government i.e., (1) The Joint Secretary (Ministry of Coal), Chairman-cum-Managing Director (Mahanadi Coal Fields Limited) and (2) The Director Ministry of Coal. Below Chart presents the structure of Management in SCCL., at the time of compilation of the data.

### **Industrial Relations in The Singareni Collieries Company Limited**

Key features of SCCL's Industrial Relations structure include:

- 1. Recognized Unions:** SCCL follows a scheme of recognizing unions through secret ballot votes, ensuring democratic representation of workers.
- 2. Bipartite Committees:** Platforms like Works Committees, Safety Committees, and Joint Consultative Committees are in place to ensure regular dialogue between management and labour.
- 3. Grievance Redressal Mechanism:** SCCL has established formal channels for addressing employee grievances, ensuring quick and fair resolution.

### **Industrial Relations in Singareni Collieries Company Limited**

In an effective industrial relation scenario, the Singareni Collieries Company Ltd., the following Joint bipartite forums are operating at different levels:

1. Joint Bipartite Committee for Coal Industry (JBCCI) at Coal India Ltd.,
2. Apex Joint Consultative Committee
3. Safety Board/ Safety Committee
4. Welfare Board/ Welfare Committee
5. Joint Consultative Committees
6. Industrial Relation Meetings (Structural meetings with union).

On disputes settlement mechanism and the role of Personnel Management Wing in the Singareni Collieries Company Ltd., The 'Personnel Management Wing' of the Company deals with the service matters of employees and workers. The main function of this Wing is redeployment of surplus workmen from surplus mining areas to deficit mining areas. This Wing also undertakes various matters related to placements, promotions in respect of employees who fall in the grade 'C' and above cadres. Besides the above, it takes up various activities such as processing of resignations, anomalies in pay structure, granting of study leave etc. Above all, this Wing submits various Reports to the State Legislature of Andhra Pradesh now Telangana State and to the Union Parliament as directed by the respective Governments. Further, the Singareni Collieries Company Ltd., has evolved standard a system of 'Public Grievances' and 'Staff Grievances Redressal Machinery' also has been developed. The Company follows three level procedures for redressing the grievances of employees. It is observed that due to well-educated disciplinary proceedings and impartial implementation of the certified Standing Orders and other procedure. In the Singareni Collieries there operates three methods for resolution of disputes which are (1)

Conciliation, (2) Arbitration and (3) Adjudication which methods are being followed for the settlement of industrial disputes apart from the system of collective bargaining.

In the Singareni Collieries Company Ltd., a separate ‘Grievance Procedure’ has been evolved earlier and is being followed since a long time now. The Singareni Collieries Company Ltd., Industrial Relations Wing Corporate Personal Department has issued circular and communicated all Pits and Departments, collieries, stating that there is a need to educate the workmen on grievances redressal machinery for solving the genuine grievances. The salient features of the grievance redressal procedure in the SCCL is peculiarly as follows:

On receipt of Grievance to the below mentioned officials, necessary prescribed procedure is being followed in handling grievances of the employees.

1. **At the mine level:** Manager
2. **At the area level:** Area Personal Dept. Head
3. **At the corporate level:** Dy. General Manager (P) I.R. Wing)

On Arbitrator method of settlement of disputes, the Singareni Collieries has also adopted the arbitration method according to which the settling dispute are arrived at through third-party intervention. In compulsory arbitration which is also referred as adjudication, the Government in fact selects the Arbitrator. The awards of such Arbitrators are legally binding on both the parties.

On adjudication of disputes, the Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) is a Government coal mining company jointly owned by the Government of Telangana and Government of India on 51:49 equity bases. In the SCCL, reference of industrial disputes shall be made to the Central Industrial Tribunals. Accordingly, the Central Government Industrial Tribunal-cum-Labour Courts (CGIT-cum-LCs) are set up under the relevant provisions of Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 for adjudication of such industrial disputes arising in Central Sphere. In Telangana State, a Central Government Industrial Tribunal-cum-Labour Court is situated at M-2 Block, Manoranjan Complex, M.J. Road, Hyderabad - 500001.

There are various stages for redressal of grievances relating to the workers as provided for under the SCCL under Grievance Redressal Procedure and they are:

1. First Stage (Mine/Department Level)
2. Second Stage (The Manager/Head of the Department level)
3. Third Stage (Appellate Authority - Corporate Level)
4. Fourth Stage (Adjudication level)

**Role of Trade Unions in the SCCL**

1. Trade unions at SCCL, including INTUC, AITUC, BMS, and others which are actively involved in:

2. **Collective Bargaining:** Negotiating wages, working conditions, and welfare measures.
3. **Dispute Resolution:** Participating in conciliation proceedings and promoting peaceful settlement of disputes.
4. **Safety and Welfare Advocacy:** Engaging with management on issues related to mine safety, health, and employee welfare.

The following is the list of trade unions active in the Singareni Coal fields. (Political affiliation of the union within brackets)

1. All India Federation of Trade Unions.
2. Godavari Loya Boggagani Karmika Sangham, (Indian Federation of Trade Unions (Communist Party of India (Marxist- Leninist) New Democracy)
3. Godavari Loya Boggu Karmika Union, (Indian Federation of Trade Unions (Communist Party of India (Marxist- Leninist) Pratighatana)
4. Singareni Collieries Employees Union, (Centre of Indian Trade Unions Communist Party of India (Marxist)
5. SCMK Sangh, affiliated to Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (Bharatiya Janata Party)
6. Singareni Coalmines Labour Union, a (Indian National Trade Union Congress (Indian National Congress)
7. Singareni Collieries Labour Union, (Telugu Nadu Trade Union Council (Telugu Desam Party)
8. Singareni Collieries Mine Workers Union
9. Singareni Collieries Workers Union, (All India Trade Union Congress (Communist Party of India)
10. Singareni Ghani Karmika Sangham
11. Singareni Karmika Samakya (Communist Party of India (Maoist))
12. Singareni Workers Union (Unity Centre of Communist Revolutionaries of India (Marxist-Leninist) (D.V. Rao))
13. SM&EW Union, affiliated to Hind Mazdoor Sabha
14. Telangana Boggu Ghani Karimka Sangham (Bharat Rashtra Samithi)

**Wages fixations and associated issues in Singareni Calories Company Limited**

In the Singareni Collieries Company Limited, the wages are determined by various Wage Boards duly constituted for the determination of fixation and revision of wages in coal mines in India as uniform manner. The operative Wage Board as applicable to the Singareni Collieries Company Limited is as determined by ‘The Wage Boards for Coal Mines in India’ which is evolved by a memorandum of agreement in the Joint Bipartite Committee for Coal Industry in India (JBCCI).

**Strikes and bandhs details of SCCL**

The following is the strikes data relatino to SCCL for the periods from 2016 - 2023-24

Particulars	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
No. of Strikes	1	1	-	2	2	2	-	1
Man, days lost	40,785	2,06,200	-	52239	7,82,308	166548	-	1212
Production lost	88,554	2,15,570	-	98755	43,99,437	555290	-	2801

On resolution of strikes in the Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) which is a major public sector undertaking (PSU) in India, jointly owned by the Government of Telangana and the Government of India, the settlement of strikes is primarily governed by the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, and involve a combination of internal mechanisms, negotiations with powerful trade unions, and intervention by the appropriate government.

Strikes are typically settled in SCCL - In SCCL, Strikes and absenteeism are recurring issues which are often driven by disputes over wages structure, working conditions, and job security. In the absence of not properly and timely addressing the workers' grievances, they may escalate into collective action resulting halting production and affecting the ability of the Company to meet coal output targets

### Collective Bargaining and Internal Mechanisms

1. **Strong Trade Unions:** SCCL has a long history of strong and active trade unions. Several national and regional unions operate in the Singareni coal fields, including.
2. **Negotiation with Management:** The primary mode of dispute resolution in SCCL, as in most large industrial units, is through direct negotiations between the recognized trade unions (or a Joint Action Committee of unions during a strike) and the SCCL management. These negotiations often cover many issues such as wages, working conditions, bonus, incentive, recruitment, promotion etc., through various statutory mechanism provided under the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 and other mutual Agreements.

**Role of the "Appropriate Government"** (Telangana State Government and Central Government)- Since SCCL is a joint venture, both the Telangana State Government and the Central Government (being a controlled industry under the Mines Act, 1952, and the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947) have a role. In practice, the Telangana State Labour Department and the Regional Labour Commissioner (Central) are usually the first points of contact for dispute resolution which include

1. Conciliation (Section 12 of ID Act).
2. Failure of Conciliation and Reference to Adjudication (Section 10 of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947).

### Key Issues Leading to Strikes in SCCL

Strikes in SCCL often stem from a combination of factors:

1. Wage Revisions and Allowances.
2. Working Conditions and Safety.
3. Bonus and Welfare Schemes.
4. Union Recognition and Rights.

General pattern of a Strike Settlement Process in SCCL

1. Strike Notice.
2. Conciliation.
3. Negotiations.
4. Agreement/Failure.
  - Agreement.
  - Failure.
5. Government Intervention (Reference).
6. Adjudication and Award.

In essence, strike settlements in SCCL involve a dynamic interplay between the powerful trade unions, the SCCL management, and the legal framework provided by the Industrial Disputes Act, with the appropriate government playing a crucial role in facilitating conciliation and, if necessary, mandating adjudication to restore industrial peace.

### Health Safety and Welfare Measures in The Singareni Collieries Company Ltd

In labour jurisprudence, statutory welfare measures can be classified into two parts, firstly those which are to be provided irrespective of the size of the organisation or the number of people employed therein, such as drinking water facilities, conservancy, first-aid, and secondly those which are to be provided subject to the employment of specified number of people, such as canteens, rest shelters, and crèches. Further, the International Labour Organisation has also provided sufficient space on the issue relating to social security and labour welfare as applicable to the working class throughout the world.

Chapter V of the Mines Act <sup>[4]</sup> and Mines Rules, 1955 <sup>[5]</sup> prescribe principal legislation and Rules respectively which governs the health, safety and welfare of workers in factories. These include. drinking water, separate conservancy such as sufficient number of urinals and lavatories in the mines at suitable and accessible convenient places, medical appliances in mines at both below ground and above ground including first aid during all working hours and power to inspect the mines, notice of accident and notice and investigation of certain diseases and finally publication of reports. Hours and limitation of employment in mines are provided under Chapter VI of the Act which prescribe weekly rest, hours of work both above and below ground, extra wages for over time and exemption of employment of young person's subject to certain stringent conditions. On the provisions relating to First Aid equipment etc., Section 21 of the Mines Act, 1952 deals with the provision of medical appliances including first-aid boxes which are to be readily accessible during all working hours. Chapter VI of the Mines Rules 40 to 44-A deals with details on the medical aid. The SCCL is paying adequate attention this and the Company has provided first aid boxes at required places and also provided 29 ambulances to meet the health needs of its employees.

The Mines Act, 1952 and the Rules framed there under lays down that in every mine, adequate and suitable facilities for washing shall be provided and maintained for the use of miners and all such facilities shall be conveniently accessible and shall be kept clean. The SCCL has no water problem as it gets abundant water from the nearby Godavari River On providing drinking water, the company is complying strictly the provisions of the mines Act by providing drinking water facilities at various junctions or districts in underground mines for every 500 metres in underground mines. The Company is providing drinking water facilities in all the open cast mines as well. The management of SCCL provided adequate washing facilities separately both for men and women. Further, mine water is being used to cater to the washing needs of employees. On conservation facilities, the study reveals that the SCCL is lagging behind in providing conservation facilities strictly in accordance with the Mines Act in both underground and open cast mines. The Mines Act prescribes for provision for

suitable shelters, rest rooms and lunch rooms in a mine, if more than 50 workers are employed <sup>[6]</sup>. As per the statutory requirements of the Act and Rules <sup>[7]</sup> SCCL has to provide rest shelter facilities to its employees. But studies reveal that the rest shelter facilities are absent in underground mines and in case of open cast mines; they are inadequate in number of requirements.

The Mines Act prescribes for providing canteens wherein more than two hundred and fifty persons are ordinarily employed <sup>[8]</sup> and accordingly the Mines Rules provide for the same <sup>[9]</sup>. On providing canteen facilities, depending on the requirements, the SCCL has provided 47 canteens in all the mining areas such as Yellandu, Kothagudem, Manuguru, Ramagundam-I, Ramagundam-II, Ramagundam-III, Ramagundam-IV, Mandamarri, Bellampalli, Srirampur and Bhoopalapalli with required amenities and modern cooking facilities as well. The food is served at highly subsidized prices to the workers.

### Statutory provisions

1. Drinking Water.
2. Facilities for sitting.
3. First aid appliances.
4. Canteen facilities.
5. Lighting.
6. Washing places.
7. Changing rooms.
8. Rest rooms.

### Non-Statutory Welfare Facilities

Many non-statutory welfare benefits may include the following schemes:

1. Medi-claim Insurance Scheme
2. Free medical facility
3. Free Children Education
4. Free housing/quarters
5. Recreation facility
6. Consumer Co-operative stores
7. Credit Society

### Workplace Safety and Accidents prevention in SCCL

As is obvious that coal mining is inherently hazardous occupation, and SCCL is no exception. The mining operations are in challenging geo-mining conditions exacerbate risks. Therefore, in mines, workplace accidents remain a significant concern. Studies revealed that inadequate safety training and outdated equipment are contributory factors for accidents in mines.

### Quality of Work Life of the workers in SCCL –

According to a study, the quality of work life of workmen in SCCL during 2023 on employees' perception revealed mixed results. While the SCCL is being implementing welfare measures such as housing, healthcare, and educational facilities, employees often report dissatisfaction with career development opportunities and work-life balance. The demanding nature of coal mining, coupled with limited avenues for skill enhancement appears to be contributing to low job satisfaction.

### Training and Human Resource Development

The Singareni Collieries Company Limited is being investing considerably in human resource development (HRD) programmes to improve employee performance,

but their impact, according to certain studies is inconsistent. Research indicates that while training programs exist, they are often not tailored to the specific needs of workers, particularly those in lower horizons of coal extraction. Moreover, the integration of employees into the organization's broader objectives is weak, leading to a disconnect between management's goals and workers' aspirations.

The mandate on employers to provide crèche facilities to their employees was made effective from July 1, 2017 following the amendments made to the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961. The extension of the Crèche Rules to mine establishments under the MB Act shall however be subject to certain changes. The Mines Crèches Rules <sup>[10]</sup> deals with provisions relating to crèches and its maintenance. On providing of crèches, as per the norms and the provisions of law, the SCCL provided crèches, headed by women employees known as Ayaas who take care of the children with provision for milk, biscuits and toys etc.

The Human Resource Planning Initiative of the SCCL is highly commendable and the Company is spending annually over Rs. 14 Crores on this, aiming at Training and development of all its human assets. With a well-established HR Department and 10 Vocational Training Centers and the Nargundkar Institute of Management at Ramagundam (a full-fledged training institute) <sup>[11]</sup>, imparting of in-house training and skill up gradation is a constant activity at SCCL.

On non-statutory social security related requirements, the SCCL is providing Medical and health care facilities for its mining workers, which form a major component of the welfare approach. Further, the company provided 6 Area hospitals, 1 main hospital at Kothagudem and 26 dispensaries with a capacity of around 1000 beds. Additionally, the company is also providing a separate wing for leprosy patients at the main hospital in Kothagudem with facility of providing medicines and household provisions such as rice, pulses, oil etc to all the patients free of cost once in a week.

On educational facilities, the Singareni educational society is managing one Degree and one Junior College, one Polytechnic college and 9 schools in coal belt areas. The Company is supporting four special schools Adilabad, Karimnagar and Khammam Districts, maintaining ST homes at Manugur, Bellampalli and Kothagudem and 3 special schools are assisted for the benefit of 300 differently abled children. Of the two Colleges, one is Degree and P.G. college for women and another Junior College. The Company is also running one polytechnic college. Besides the above, it established an engineering college during the academic year 2010-11 with affiliation to Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, Hyderabad (JNTU). The company in order to encourage the children of employees to excel in their studies started granting scholarships for each student from 1998 onwards. On educational mutual tie up, the SCCL also entered into an agreement with SRKM College of Nursing, Mancherla for their mutual benefit. The SCCL is also striving for achieving 100 per cent literacy among the employees and their family members. The Company is also spending considerable amount of money on sports and recreational facilities and holding Tournaments.

Special mansion is needed to be placed that the SCCL has provided as many as 50,540 quarters in all its mining areas

to the extent of around 78 per cent of employees. Additionally, The Singareni Collieries Company Limited has established "Singareni Collieries Cooperative Central Stores Limited" popularly known as Singareni Super Bazar which are more than 40 depots and also gas godowns. The required infrastructure and other facilities are provided by the company itself in which the workmen of SCCL are members.

In addition to the above, the SCCL makes it mandatory that all the employees should possess LPG connection for domestic use to discourage use of coal for cooking purposes. The company is reimbursing the cost of 12 LPG cylinders in a year in 19 gas distribution points in the residential areas of the company. Employees Cooperative Credit Society is another facility to develop thrift among the workers and as of now, it is learnt that 49 cooperative credit societies functioning in the mines with a maximum of Rs. 1.25 lakhs to the member employees. According to coal wage agreements, ex-gratia also known as distress relief and cash benefits is also being aid to the employees.

The SCCL is also providing Special Welfare Amenities Program (SWAP) to the workmen colonies, which include provision of water, power, street lights, drainage facilities, sanitary lines, removal of garbage, replacement of doors and windows, construction of roads, establishment of sulabh toilets etc. The special welfare measures also include voluntary sweeping, development and maintenance of parks and playgrounds. In addition to these, the Company is also providing coaching camps and vocational training to the employees' children. In order to address the problems and issues of women, the SCCL has constituted "Women's Cells" with the women employees for effective functioning and also to redress their problems relating to their employment.

The Policy on Corporate Social Responsibility Policy of the Singareni Collieries Company Limited which has been framed in accordance with the provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 and the Rules made hereunder. The major thrust areas under the CSR scheme include (1) Basic Services (Drinking Water supply, Sanitation etc.), (2) Health, (3) Education, (4) Livelihood and Local Economic Development, (5) Interventions for marginalized communities such as SCs and STs and (6) Other related activities. As a matter of policy, a substantial portion of CSR Budget i.e., to the extent of 80% shall be spent on CSR activities in all the four districts of Telangana State *viz.*, Khammam, Warangal, Karimnagar and Adilabad where the coal fields are located and 20% may be spent outside the aforesaid four districts of Telangana State.

On environmental protection, the SCCL formulated corporate environmental policy and its objectives as a part of corporate environmental responsibility and accordingly, major measures include prevention and control pollution, water pollution control, Noise and Vibration control measures, undertaking massive plantation in the company areas and many other innovative measures in environmental protection. The Company has bagged several awards for its performance, production, service, commitment on welfare measures, environmental issues etc.

### Conclusion

The study of industrial disputes settlement mechanisms and social security measures in The Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) reveals that the company has

made significant efforts to promote harmonious industrial relations. Through structured mechanisms such as collective bargaining, conciliation, and arbitration, SCCL has managed to address workers' grievances and minimize disruptions. The active involvement of trade unions and management in dispute resolution fosters a collaborative approach, contributing to industrial peace. Equally important are the comprehensive social security measures implemented by SCCL. The provision of benefits such as provident fund, gratuity, health care, insurance, housing, and educational support reflects the company's commitment to employee welfare. These measures not only enhance the quality of life of workers but also improve their morale and productivity, leading to overall organizational stability. Despite occasional challenges, SCCL's integrated approach to industrial relations and employee welfare serves as a model for public sector undertakings in labor-intensive industries. Continuous improvement in grievance redressal systems, transparent communication, and engagement with employees and unions are essential to further strengthen industrial harmony. The study concludes that a balanced focus on dispute resolution and social security is vital for sustainable growth and a motivated workforce in the mining sector.

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