

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:976

ANSWERED ON:27.07.2015

Fire Accidents in Coal Mines

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Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) the reasons repeated of fire accidents in the coal mines and remedial steps taken by the Government in this regard;
(b) the funds spent by the Government for safety of coal mines especially of those situated in the State of Maharashtra during the last two years and the current year; and
(c) the measures taken/proposed to be taken for improvement in the fire-resistance system of coal mines and factories particularly of Maharashtra State?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (IC) FOR LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT
(SHRI BANDARU DATTATREYA)

(a) to (c): The reasons of fire accidents/incidents in the coal mines is spontaneous heating/auto-oxidation. Spontaneous heating of coal starts as soon as coal is exposed to the oxygen of the air in the course of mining operations. When the heat generated by the reaction of oxidation of coal is not dissipated at an adequate rate rise in temperature occurs. This rise in temperature leads to a rise in the rate of oxidation, which can ultimately lead to an outbreak of fire. Spontaneous heating of coal occurs sometimes due to fallen coal in UG workings which are not sealed-off, coal left in goaved out area and coal heaps in stockyard as coal by nature itself is susceptible to spontaneous heating.

Standards safety protocols in the Mines Act, 1952 and rules and Regulations made thereunder are followed for safety in coal mines. Besides coal industry specific remedial measures are adopted towards fire safety these inter-alia are:-

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Sealing off fire zone by constructing isolation stopping/fire stopping to prevent entry of air into the fire area so as to extinguish the fire by depletion of oxygen,

Surface blanketing of the cracks developed over the old underground workings is being done to prevent breathing,

Continuous monitoring of the atmosphere inside the sealed off area as well as working environment with the help of adequate instruments,

Regular water spraying over stacked coal in large heaps in coal stockyard,

Fallen coal is removed regularly from workings which are not sealed-off,

Sectionalisation of all unused underground workings is being done in a time bound manner,

Regular underground inspection and old working inspections are done by mine officials and supervisors,

Periodic special safety drives and inspections are conducted from time to time to improve and ensure safety status of the mine, Emergency Organization Plan for dealing with fire exists and in operation in every mine as per statute.

Money spent for safety by the different subsidiaries of Coal India Limited for 2013-14 and 2014-15 was Rs. 8708.97 lakh and Rs. 8762.31 lakh respectively.

As regards safety in the factories, provisions in the Factories Act, 1948 and rules made thereunder especially, Section 7-A, Section 38 and Section 41B are helpful preventive measures.
