

Standing Committee Report Summary

Coal Conservation and Development of Infrastructure for Transportation of Coal across the Country

- The Standing Committee on Coal and Steel (Chair: Mr. Rakesh Singh) submitted its report on the subject ‘Coal Conservation and Development of Infrastructure for Transportation of Coal across the Country’ in March 2021. Key observations and recommendations of the Committee include:
- **Transportation of coal:** The Committee observed that 66% of the total coal in the country is transported through road. It observed that transportation of coal through road adds to dust and air pollution. It recommended that transportation of coal through road should gradually be done away with. It also recommended that Coal India Limited should focus on placing a completely mechanised system for the transportation of coal from pit heads to despatch points through rail or covered conveyor belts.
- The Committee observed that various measures are being employed for controlling the environmental impact of transportation of coal through road. These include: (i) transportation by covered trucks, (ii) regular water sprinkling in critical areas prone to air pollution, and (iii) treating roads with dust suppressant chemicals. The Committee recommended setting up a monitoring mechanism to ensure strict implementation of these measures to reduce the negative impact of coal transportation by road.
- **Central Sector Schemes:** Under the central sector scheme called Conservation, Safety, and Infrastructural Development in Coal Mines, coal companies are given financial assistance for activities including: (i) conservation, (ii) environment management, (iii) safety, (iv) research, and (v) development of road and rail linkages for coal mines. The Committee observed that over the years, under various sub-components of the scheme, there has been a carryover of required reimbursements from the previous year to the next year. The Committee recommended that the present system of scrutinising and settling of claims for this scheme should be reviewed on priority.
- The Committee recommended that the number of road and rail projects under the scheme should be reduced, and only important and large rail and road links should be considered for assistance. This will help in ensuring effective monitoring, quality of construction, and verification of estimates.
- **Utilisation of coal loading capacity:** The Committee noted that the demand for railway rakes is placed by the concerned coal company with zonal railways. The demand is based on factors such as coal production, capacity to transport into sidings, and contractual obligations to customers. The Committee noted the submission of the Ministry of Railways that most of the time, the loading capacity of the coal companies is less than the demand projected by them. The shortfall in loading is primarily on account of less availability of coal at sidings. The Committee recommended that coal companies should analyse the reasons for the shortfall and take corrective measures in this regard.

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