

A- A A+

**BW**People
www.bwpeople.in

Home / Diversity and Inclusion / "We Have 3 Women Working In The Surface Mining; Amongst First In Country, And Shall Be Ra

"We Have 3 Women Working In The Surface Mining; Amongst First In Country, And Shall Be Rapidly Adding More," Munish Vasudeva

sugandh bahl Nov 12, 2024

women employees # mining activity # training # night shift # hindustan zinc

"With more than 600 women employees, including 200 engineers, Hindustan Zinc is pioneering the inclusion of women in the mining sector," Arun Mishra, CEO and Whole Time Director of Hindustan Zinc



By opening doors for women to take on opportunities such as night shifts, India's mining sector is offering women the chance to prove their capabilities.

Hindustan Zinc is proud to be the first underground mining company in India to offer women the opportunity to work night shifts. This step reflects Hindustan Zinc Ltd.'s commitment to redefining industry norms in the mining sector. Supported by a range of measures, this initiative empowers women

to excel in their roles. In a candid conversation with Munish Vasudeva, CHRO – Hindustan Zinc Ltd, BW People publication will delve deep into understanding the company's aim behind setting up such an initiative.

What is the current scenario of women working in unconventional roles at Hindustan Zinc during night shifts?

Hindustan Zinc produces diverse metals, for diverse applications to serve diverse customers around the world. Hence, we need cognitive diversity to ensure our go-to-market strategy is well-rounded. Hindustan is committed to promoting diversity and inclusion within the organisation and at present we have more than 600 women employees working across core functions like mining, smelting, finance, procurement, power, logistics etc. This is a noteworthy achievement as the metals & mining sector globally has the lowest representation of women employees in its workforce. Not so in Hindustan Zinc that has 22% gender diversity due to its technologically advanced operations. We have recently been able to add women in the night shift from 12 AM to 8 AM at our Kayad mine operations in the control room at Ajmer district in Rajasthan.

The journey started by first adding women in the B Shift which is from 4 PM to 12 AM for surface operations in mining. To begin with we have 3 women working in the surface mining control room, who are amongst the first in the country to do so, and we shall be rapidly adding more. Earlier we deployed around 40 women employees at our metal production plants (smelters) in Rajasthan which includes the world's largest single location zinc-lead plant at Chanderiya and flagship Dariba plant in Chittorgarh & Rajsamand districts. Extending the night shift option to our mining operations ensures that women colleagues have equal opportunities for growth that their male counterparts have.

What safety measures are being implemented to ensure a secure working environment for women employees on night shifts in the mine?

At Hindustan Zinc, safety is a key priority, and we believe our people are integral to the growth of the company. Our stringent safety measures include continuous CCTV surveillance, biometric access control at workstations, and more than 100 security personnel per shift. Additionally, we provide security escorts for female employees commuting between the workplace and home during all shifts. Our commitment to safety is demonstrated through well-established policies and the latest technologies and they cater to all our employees across all operations and at all times. Hence, it was only a natural extension of our best-in-class safety practices to add women to the night shift.

How does this initiative align with India's labour laws and gender equity goals within traditionally male-dominated industries?

Hindustan Zinc is at the forefront of adhering to all regulatory guidelines, including provisions for a safe and inclusive workplace. In fact, Hindustan Zinc also supports national initiatives aimed at bridging the gender gap in sectors historically underrepresented by women.

What kind of training and support programs are in place to prepare women employees for the specific challenges of night shifts in underground mining?

Hindustan Zinc is the world's number 1 most sustainable metal and mining company, according to S&P

Global. Our mining and metal production practices are safe and sustainable for all employees - men and women alike – irrespective of the time of day or night. This has been possible in large part to our 'Safety First' culture and advanced use of cutting-edge technologies to run our operations. We have institutionalised various programmes such as skill development workshops, anchoring programs such as 'Guru Chakra', mentor-mentee program, flexible working hours, health & wellness initiatives, self-defence training, family support programs, and a robust feedback mechanism. Alongside the programs outlined, Hindustan Zinc offers a comprehensive suite of supportive workplace policies, including a spouse hiring policy, a year-long sabbatical for childcare, and leave policies prioritizing mental and physical health, flexible working hours. We are committed to promoting diversity across all shifts and ensuring that women are supported at every life-stage.

How is the company addressing transportation, healthcare, and emergency protocols to support women working night shifts in the mine?

Hindustan Zinc provides full-time, dedicated transport with security personnel for female employees working all shifts. We offer on-site healthcare, a 24/7 emergency hotline, rapid response protocols, and ambulance services if required. Additionally, we have a 24/7 wellness platform, for employee well-being. Beyond that, employees live in world-class colonies offering all modern amenities in proximity to the plants. These townships include schools, hospitals, daycare centres, creches, places of worship, sports and recreational facilities like swimming pools, golf courses, among other amenities which fosters a vibrant social life. To balance personal and professional life, Hindustan Zinc also offers no questions asked leave policy and non-quantitative assessments (NQA) for women employees alongside flexible working hours. Our medical team offers one-on-one consultations on health-related subjects to ensure the overall safety and well-being of our female employees.

What are the anticipated impacts of this initiative on gender diversity and inclusivity within the mining workforce?

India has a vast and deep pool of qualified and skilled women. They can bridge the emerging talent gap in the metals & mining space which is set to grow with the ongoing energy transition and India's rapid economic development. Hence, with more than 600 women employees, including 200 engineers, Hindustan Zinc is pioneering the inclusion of women in the mining sector. This initiative is expected to break traditional gender barriers, attract more female talent, and create a more equitable and supportive work environment. In fact, operations at Hindustan Zinc are highly digitalized therefore eliminating the need for manual labour, making the sector more welcoming to new-age job seekers. Also, India's first all-women underground mine rescue team from Hindustan Zinc recently represented the country on an international stage and won the second place globally, exemplifying the excellence of our women in mining. We hence believe, this initiative will foster long-term gender diversity and inclusivity, benefiting the broader industry and making role-models for young women to emulate.

How will the company monitor and evaluate the success and well-being of women employees working night shifts in the mine?

The well-being of women employees is monitored through regular check-ins, feedback sessions, and anonymous surveys. We evaluate the success of the initiative based on productivity scores, employee feedback, retention rates, and overall job satisfaction, ensuring that we can make any necessary recalibrations to support our female workforce.

What technological innovations, such as surveillance and communication systems, are being utilized to ensure the safety of women in night shifts?

Hindustan Zinc has deployed advanced surveillance and communication technologies, including real-time location tracking for commuting, emergency communication devices, and 24/7 CCTV monitoring. These technologies ensure that women working in night shifts are always connected to support and security personnel, enhancing their safety throughout their workday and commute, thus also giving their families peace of mind.

How might this decision to deploy women in night shifts impact the perception of mining as a career option for women in India?

Hindustan Zinc is cultivating a dynamic work culture that attracts and retains top talent, ensuring the success and well-being of our workforce. This initiative aligns with a broader shift toward gender inclusivity across industries like construction, defence, and manufacturing, where women are increasingly taking on roles once considered off-limits. By offering equal opportunities to women in all shifts, Hindustan Zinc is helping to normalize gender diversity in metals & mining, making it an even more attractive career choice for women across India.

How has the company engaged with stakeholders, including employee families and local communities, to build support for women working night shifts underground?

Hindustan Zinc actively engages with stakeholders in the normal course of operations. The local communities are appraised about this development too by engaging with local village heads. They are used to seeing women working in the night shift for the past few years in our metal plants and are used to seeing women take up progressive and unconventional roles, hence are not really surprised.



sugandh bahl

BW Reporters

The author is working as Sr Correspondent with BW Businessworld and BW People

Share



Also Read



DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION Nov 18, 2024

Intel Announces Equal Pay Based On Gender, For All Their Workers

🕒 1 mins read