DVC: Seven decades of commitment to progress

Q1. Have all the promises that were made to DVC been fulfilled? If not, how do they affect the working of the corporation? What is the way out of the impasse?

A: DVC is a statutory body owned by three participating governments: the Central Government, Government of West Bengal and Government of Punjab. DVC has certainly fulfilled its promise. With the cooperation of the participating governments, DVC has been growing in all spheres of its mandate. Our present power generation installed capacity is 7,137 MW. We have always received assistance from the participating governments especially while acquiring land for our new projects and power at competitive tariff.

Q2. How sustainable are DVC's operations? What have been your major CSR activities?

A: Despite of difficult challenges in the power sector, our operations are sustainable. Most of our customers have been with us for a very long time and are happy with our services. We supply power to more than eight states and major industries such as SAIL, ISPCL, TATA Steel and Indian Railway. Our tariff is also one of the lowest in the country.

As mentioned earlier, CSR is in our DNA. Socio-economic development activities in the DVC command area has been synonymous with DVC. Our CSR activities include education, infrastructure development, health care, soil conservation, afforestation, vocational training, pisciculture and job creation through income generating activities. These
Q1. Once the premier multi-purpose project on India, built on the lines of the famed Tennessee Valley Corporation, where does DVC stand today? Especially in view of rising concerns about the alleged environmental degradation brought about by such projects?

A: DVC, established in 1948 by an Act of the Constituent Assembly with the objective of carrying out, in the 24,235 sq. km area of the Damodar Valley, activities relating to flood control, irrigation, socio-economic development, education, health, afforestation, power generation, etc. DVC has lived up to this mandate in full measure. In the course of 68 years, since its inception, DVC has built four dams at Tilaiya, Panchet, Madhuban and Kusum in Jharkhand and the Durgapur Barrage in West Bengal, creating a flood reserve capacity of 1,350 million cubic metres and irrigation potential of 4 lakh hectares through a network of 2,500 lms of canals. DVC has carried out afforestation activities in over 4 lakh hectares and built 16,000 check dams. In addition, DVC runs a network of hospitals, clinics, mobile medical units, schools and industrial training institutes, all of which have immensely benefited the local populace living in the Damodar Valley area falling in Jharkhand and West Bengal. It should be appreciated that DVC has achieved all this in spite of the difficult challenges it faced, particularly in its formative years. Today, DVC is one of the largest integrated power organisations in the country and a pioneer in CSR long before the term gained currency in the Indian corporate world.

A major part of the DVC generation mix is thermal generation. Our focus has always been strict adherence to environmental norms in all our thermal plants. For instance, ash utilisation at our power plants was 95% in 2014-15 and 96% in 2015-16 compared to the national average of around 57%.

We have installed Ash Water Recovery systems for most of our plants in order to minimise discharge of pollutants. Regular monitoring of all plants emissions are carried out and all parameters are within norms set by the Pollution Control Board.

other project related clearances. There is no “impasse” as you put it.

Q3. What is DVC doing to align its functioning to the realities of the times? What steps are you taking to reinvent yourself as an organisation that is future proof?

A: The presence of DVC primarily depends on the profits generated from the sale of power. All other activities such as flood control, irrigation and CSR etc. are cost centres. The power market in India is at a crossroads. Today supply greatly exceeds the demand and the era of long-term Power Purchase Agreements is, in my view, well and truly over. Power is available at extremely cheap rates and there are more sellers than buyers. Buyers are calling the shots. DVC, on its part has adjusted to this new dynamic. We are extremely conscious of the fact that we have to supply reliable power at competitive tariffs to our consumers. To this end, we are constantly taking steps to ensure the cost efficiency of our operations. We have adopted the best technical practices in power plant operations and implemented an Enterprise Resource Planning system to integrate all functional areas. Special emphasis within the organisation is being given to faster decision making and timely execution of all ongoing projects. We are encouraging green culture, an integral part of our employees’ performance evaluation. We have introduced Ash Water Recovery systems in all our thermal plants in order to keep water clean and to ensure compliance with environmental norms.

Q4. Where do you see the organisation in 5 years’ time?

A: As with any other organisation that has been around for seven decades, we do have our share of internal constraints which came in the way of DVC achieving its full potential. In the last two years, we have resolved most of these issues and have taken hard decisions that were required. As a result, today, DVC enjoys a renewed sense of purpose, commitment and optimism across DVC and employee morale is at an all-time high. DVC is well on its way to charting another glorious chapter in its storied history. Five years down the line, we will be viewed as a professionally run integrated power organisation offering competitive tariffs to our customers.