



Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav Join us in Celebrating 75 Glorious Years of India's Independence

A journey aligned to the growth of the nation

he Damodar Valley Corporation (DVC) is almost as old as Independent India, having come into existence in July 1948. With an initial mandate of flood moderation and water supply, and later diversifying into power generation, the corporation has had an eventful journey in these 75 years even as it contributed to the growth of the nation. Mr. Ram Naresh Singh, Chairman, DVC, spoke to The Statesman.

Q. What was the primary objective of setting up DVC as the first multipurpose river valley project of **Independent India?**

A. The impetus for the formation of DVC was the recurrent floods caused by the river Damodar over several years in the Damodar valley region and especially that of 1943 which caused extensive devastation. In 1943, a 10-member flood enquiry committee with the Maharajadhiraj Bahadur Uday Chand Mahtab of Burdwan as Chairman, Dr. Meghnad Saha as member, and Dr N K Bose as Secretary was set up by the Bengal Government. Based on the recommendations of the flood enquiry committee report and with the combined efforts of the Governments of India, Bengal and Bihar (now Jharkhand), DVC was established on 7th July 1948 as independent India's first multipurpose river valley project.

Through the inception of four dams at Tilaiya, Konar, Maithon and Panchet, the primary objective was flood moderation, supply of water for agriculture, industrial uses and for drinking purposes for millions of people of the valley and adjoining areas. In addition, socio-economic development of the inhabitants of the valley was also an important objective. The power plants and the Transmission & Distribution system commissioned in the 1950s and beyond, powered the industrial belts in the eastern region of the country which has created both direct and indirect employment.

Q. What is the total installed capacity of DVC and what is its catchment area? Apart from local requirements who are the primary consumers and are you selling power directly or through the national grid? **A.** Presently, the installed capacity is 6901 MW consisting of thermal, hydro and solar units. The area of operation or command area of DVC is spread over an area of 24,235 square kms in the States

of Jharkhand and West Bengal. Presently DVC supplies bulk power at reasonable rates to about 300 indus-

trial units in its command area. Our consumers include Indian Railways, Steel Authority of India, and Tata Steel apart from others. Apart from its presence in its command area, DVC supplies power to eight State Discoms through long-term power purchase agreements. The states include Kerala, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Delhi. As a part of our international presence, DVC supplies power to Bangladesh which is our first cross border supply contract.

Q. DVC is celebrating its 75th year of operation. Tell us something about the journey of the organisation and highlight some major achievements in these years.

A. Throughout the last 75 years, we have successfully implemented our mandated functions which are diverse unlike other power utilities who normally have a singular mandate. This makes DVC stand out in the energy landscape of the country. We have grown from about 60 MW in 1953 to 6901 MW as of today. With a pan India presence, we supply power to eight states across the country and our T&D network spreads across 8390 kms. We are thankful to our consumers for being our partners in this exciting journey.

Many pioneering feats have been achieved since inception. In 1953, the first pulverized fuel power plant in Asia was installed at Bokaro, the first underground hydel station in India was installed at Maithonin 1957 and the first reheat unit of India was commissioned at Chandrapura in 1963. FY 2021-22 has been a turnaround year for the organisation. Historical records in plant availability, generation, turnover and capital expenditure have been created. DVC thermal units have appeared consistently among the top ten central sector stations in the country. Recently, DVC has forayed into 11 kV power distribution for increasing consumer base and promote industrial growth in its command area.

Q. How did the pandemic hit the balance sheet of the DVC in terms of generation and top line and bottom-line growth? As an organisation, how did you tackle this unforeseen situation to serve the nation at a most critical time?

A. As soon as the pandemic emerged, the immediate challenge was to provide power to the country on a 24x7 basis. Topline and bottom lines were not concerns at such as point of crisis. The challenges included protecting our employees



and contractual workers in our power stations/ sub-stations and townships from getting infected so that normal operations could be continued, ensuring supply of coal to our thermal units and working virtually with the use of technology.

To fight the pandemic, we formed Covid Response Team (CRTs) in all locations. The teams managed the critical work of handling the pandemic at the ground level. Preventive and precautionary measures were put in place and entry at all locations were restricted. Deep sanitisation of power stations, substations and associated offices was carried out. SOPs were issued for enforcement of pandemic related protocols. Health infrastructure was created in all locations consisting of quarantine beds and isolation centres. A 25 bedded Covid Care Centre with oxygen support and 24x7 ambulance was created at Kolkata. Doctors and Nurses were engaged for the Covid centre for round-the-clock medical support. This facility catered to all employees of organisations under the Ministry of Power, GoI and other public sector employees posted at Kolkata. In addition, a 50 bedded quarantine centre for workers and 25 beds for executives for quarantine/isolation of infected individuals was also established at Kolkata.

DVC has implemented a comprehensive Family Welfare Scheme to handhold the families of the deceased employees which includes a range of

benefits for the sustenance of the family members. DVC doctors were deputed to sister organisations in the power sector and to a Covid hospital in Jharkhand. DVC donated an Advanced Life Support ambulance to the Koderma district administration and monetary support was provided to Dhanbad district. The Panchet Hill hospital was converted into a Covid hospital for the general public.

Q. DVC operates both thermal and hydel power plants. Tell us about the major challenges in both these modes of generation.

A. Presently, the energy mix of DVC is skewed towards thermal generation with hydel contributing a very small portion of the installed capacity. While hydel generation is seasonal, thermal generation is the main energy source throughout the year. However, the emergence of renewable energy into the grid has brought a regime of flexible operation of thermal units which includes quick ramp up and backing down of units and often running the units in base load to accommodate RE power. We have tested our thermal units under such stretch conditions, and they have passed the test with flying colours. Accordingly, we are well positioned to manage the demand and supply requirements at various scenarios.

Q. Flood is a major challenge in the DVC catchment area and you have taken umpteenth flood modera-

tion measures. Still, it's difficult to tackle. Are you planning to change the scenario by adopting more aggressive plans?

A. The original plan of the DVC project envisaged seven multipurpose dams, a barrage and a canal system to control the floods in the valley. However, only four dams, a barrage and the canal system could be finally built.

The DVC water system is operated by a committee, namely "Damodar Valley Reservoir Regulation Committee" (DVRRC), headed by Member (River Management), Central Water Commission, New Delhi, with members in the rank of Chief Engineers from Govt. of West Bengal, Govt. of Jharkhand & DVC. All decisions regarding flood operation/release advices are taken by DVRRC in consultation with Govt. of West Bengal, Govt. of Jharkhand & water from DVC dams is released as per the directives of the DVRRC.

All flood events during the last 75 years have been moderated to the extent of 50% of combined inflows into Maithon & Panchet reservoirs through judicious operation despite reduction of capacity of the lower Damodar channel and reduction in storage. To further strengthen our flood moderation capabilities, DVC is a part of the Dam Rehabilitation & Improvement Project and National Hydrology Project, which will extend the life of our dams and enable adoption of technology. DVC has already implemented Real Time Hydro-meteorological Data Acquisition System and has developed flood forecasting & inundation model for prediction at lower valley as an early warning system.

Q. DVC keeps a huge budgetary promost important power utilities of vision for CSR activities and seeks to improve the livelihoods of people and society by infusing money into education, health, infrastructural development, rural electrification, social forestry etc. How would you like to see the DVC working for the people and by the people?

A Our CSR programme started with our inception in 1948. The primary targets for implementation of CSR schemes are villages, where families living Below Poverty Line (BPL) and SC & ST communities are more in number. The CSR schemes cover 629 villages under 73 Panchayats of Jharkhand and West Bengal in the areas of education, healthcare, infrastructure development, skill development and employment generation. The people of our area

of operation are one of our important stakeholders. Our commitment to them is unwavering. In some of recent initiatives we have taken up installation of smart classes in rural schools and small scale renewable energy projects.

8. Is there any plan of going public in the near future by launching an IPO?

A. DVC is a statutory Corporation under the Ministry of Power, GoI formed through a special Act of Parliament. Hence, in its present form cannot launch an IPO.

Q. How is DVC celebrating Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav and how you are contributing to the growth of the nation as part of the agenda of the **Honourable Prime Minister to** celebrate the occasion?

A Our inception and journey are closely aligned to the growth of our nation. On 7th July 2022 we stepped into our seventy fifth year of service to the nation. These two great milestones are being celebrated together in our organisation.

DVC is actively participating in all activities to celebrate AKAM in a holistic manner. As a power organisation we recently organised "Bijli Mahotsav" in 41 districts across Jharkhand and West Bengal. The events helped spread awareness of the Urja revolution that has taken place in the country. In addition, we have conducted a multitude of seminars, conclaves, panel discussions and outreach programmes as a part of AKAM. We also have many programmes coming up till August 2023 to aptly celebrate the mile-

Q.As the Chairman of one of the the country, how do you see the DVC five years from now.

A Sustainable growth and alignment to national energy targets are the primary basis for our future plans. We are planning to install 3700 MW of renewable energy projects in our command area, which includes 2000 MW solar PV and 1500 MW pumped hydro projects. Energy conservation and adoption of technology will be our priority areas.

We are also diversifying into new businesses such as tourism, EV infrastructure and green hydrogen. We welcome all concerned to join us in our future endeavours. Looking forward, DVC is committed to be a customer centric and reliable power organisation with an unwavering commitment to societal development in our area of operations.



- Damodar Valley Corporation was established on 7th July 1948 as the first multipurpose river valley project of Independent India by an Act of Central Legislature.
- DVC meets the power demand of a resourceful and industrialised region through its 6,901 MW installed capacity which includes thermal, hydel & solar generating Units.
- The robust T&D network (8,390 circuit-km) enables DVC to cater to several industries, State DISCOMs as well as supply cross border power to Bangladesh.
- DVC's soil conservation & afforestation program has created precious green belts & modernized farming in its command area spanning around 25,000 sq kms.
- Through its comprehensive CSR program DVC has relentlessly strived for the socio-economic upliftment of more than 600 villages around its establishments, bringing about sea-changes in the arena of primary education, healthcare, sanitation, rural roadways & skill development.
- With its myriad operations, rich infrastructure and trained human resources, DVC is keen to build up on its glorious journey spanning seven & a half decade & continue to contribute its part to the sustainable growth of the nation.











