

● **Lignite Coal**—In India low grade lignite coal ( included in Tertiary coal ) is found in Bikaner in Rajasthan, **Kachchh and Bharuch** of Gujarat and **Neyveli** in North Arcot district of Tamil Nadu. Neyveli coal is used for producing large amounts of **thermal power**.

● **Coal Reserves of India**—According to the last survey of the Geological Survey of India, upto 1st January 2000, India had a total coal reserve of ( upto a depth of 1200 m. with layers of ½ m thickness ) 21,159 crore tonnes, of which **Jharkhand** has 33%, **Orissa** 24%, **Chattisgarh** and **M. P.** 21%, **W. B.** 12% and **Andhra Pradesh** 6%. According to coal reserves India ranks third in the world after USA and China.

● **Coal Production**—In 1950 just after our independence, India produced only 3 crore 28 lakh tonnes of coal. In 1999–00 coal production in India increased to 30 crore tonnes. At present **India ranks fourth in the world in coal production after U. S. A. , China and Australia**. In India, **Madhya Pradesh–Chattisgarh** ranks first, **Jharkhand**—second, **Orissa**—third, **Andhra Pradesh**—fourth, **Maharashtra**—fifth and **W. B.**—sixth in coal production. According to production **Jharia is the largest coal mining centre in India**. ( Ranigunj is a centre of coal mining which lies in the Damodar Coal belt or region ). **Neyveli** in North Arcot district of T. N. is the largest lignite mine in India. In 1998-99 India produced over 2.34 crore tonnes of lignite coal.

● **Development of Coal Resources**—For proper utilisation and development of coal resource from the coal mines in India, all coal mines were nationalised by the Indian Govt. in 1972. All these private coal mines were brought under the **Bharat Coking Coal Ltd.** In 1973, the remaining non-coking coal mines were nationalised and brought under the **Coal Mines Authority Limited**. In 1975, both the companies were merged to form a new company called **Coal India Ltd.** Thus, all nationalised coal mines are being administered by this company. At present the Union government is on the verge of allowing private companies, both Indian and foreign, to own coal mines.

● **Problems**—1. Coal mines in India are not very developed. 2. For the transport of coal from the mines to the market or industries, the required rail wagons are not always available causing shortages in coal supply. 3. The coal is not graded so ordinary coal, coking coal etc. are used indiscriminately for domestic or iron and steel production or for the manufacture of coal by-products. 4. Coal is mainly found in a restricted area or localised area so it takes more time and money to transport it to various parts of India. 5. Inadequate machines in the mines do not allow all the coal to be mined so a lot of waste occurs. 6. Once a fire starts in the coal mine, usually due to the release of methane, there are no proper methods to douse the fire. There are many mines in Bihar that are still burning causing much coal to be burnt and gross failure in environment conservation.