

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE INDIAN MINES ACT, 1923, WHICH CAME INTO FORCE ON THE 1ST JULY, 1924.

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The Indian Mines Act, 1923, applies to British India only.

There are 49 sections of this Act, six of which are concerned with the appointment, functions and powers of the Inspectorate. Four sections relate to the formation and activities of Mining Boards and Committees, while three sections refer to the duties and responsibilities of owners, agents and managers. The health and safety of workers are provided for in six sections of the Act and provision is made for hours of work and limitation of employment. The powers of the Central Government to make regulations and of the Provincial Governments to make rules are laid down and penalties and procedure are embodied in the Act.

Indian Coal and Metalliferous Mines Regulations were formulated under Section 29 of the Indian Mines Act, 1923, and gazetted in the year 1926. These regulations are prescribed for the safe working of mines and for the submission of the various notices to the District Magistrate and the Chief Inspector of Mines.

Rules for Coal and Metalliferous Mines are made under Section 30 of the Indian Mines Act by the various Provincial Governments. These rules provide for:—

- Sanitary and Health provisions;
- Ambulance, First-Aid and Rescue work;
- Registration of work-persons;
- Safety of surface;
- Abandonment of mines;
- Inquiry in the case of accidents;
- Certificates of fitness for employment underground of persons who have not completed 17 years of age.

Bye-laws for mines.

Bye-laws made under section 32 of the Indian Mines Act are framed by the owner, agent or manager of a mine with the approval of the Chief Inspector of Mines or an Inspector for the control and guidance of the persons acting in the management of, or employed in, the mine, to prevent accidents and to provide for the safety, convenience and discipline of the persons employed in the mine.

For the administration of the requirements of the Indian Mines Act the following staff is at present employed:—

- One—Chief Inspector of Mines.
- Three—Inspectors of Mines.
- Four—Junior Inspectors of Mines.
- One—Electric Inspector of Mines.
- One—Assistant Inspector of Mines.

For inspection purposes British India is divided into two circles, details of which are given below:—

No. 1 Circle.

1. All mines in Baluchistan.
2. All mines in Bihar except mines in the District of the Santhal Parganas and such mines in the District of Manbhum as lie east of a line drawn from mile 175 on the Bengal Nagpur Railway to mile 169 on the Grand Trunk Road and continued in a straight line across the District.
3. All mines in Orissa.
4. All mines in the North-West Frontier Province.
5. All mines in the Punjab.
6. All mines in Rajputana.
7. All mines in the United Provinces.

No. 2 Circle.

1. All mines in Assam.
2. All mines in Bengal.
3. Such mines in Bihar as lie in the District of the Santhal Parganas and in the District of Manbhum west of a line drawn from mile 175 on the Bengal Nagpur Railway to mile 169 on the Grand Trunk Road and continued in a straight line across the District.
4. All mines in Bombay.
5. All mines in the Central Provinces.
6. All mines in Madras.

Management.

Every mine is required to be under the supervision of a manager who has the prescribed qualifications, and who is held responsible for the control, management and direction of the mine, and the owner or agent of every mine is required to appoint himself or some other person having such qualifications to be manager of the mine.

The owner, agent or manager of every mine is responsible that all operations carried on in connection therewith are conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Act and of the regulations, rules and bye-laws and of any orders made thereunder.

The following mines are worked in British India and are regulated by the Indian Mines Act:—

Coal, iron-ore, manganese ore, gold, chromite ore, copper ore, mica, salt, magnesite, steatite, slate, limestone, stone, sand-stone, fire-clay, china clay, clay, barytes, asbestos, ochre, kaolin, gypsum, beryl, graphite, bauxite, felspar, kyanite and tantalite.

Coal is the principal mineral mined and the output for the year 1937 was 22,335,528 tons of a declared value of Rs.6,98,79,139. The statement below gives the output from the various provinces:—

				<i>Output of coal in tons in 1937.</i>
Assam ..	..	..		243,650
Baluchistan ..	..	..		19,624
Bengal ..	..	..		6,527,820
Bihar ..	..	..		13,835,516
Central Provinces ..	..	..		1,504,159
Orissa ..	..	..		47,127
Punjab ..	..	..		166,632
TOTAL ..				22,335,528

During the year 1937, the daily average number of persons working in and about mines regulated by the Indian Mines Act was 267,858. Of these persons, 122,807 worked underground, 72,747 in open workings and 72,304 on the surface. Since October 1937 the employment of women has been prohibited underground in mines.

