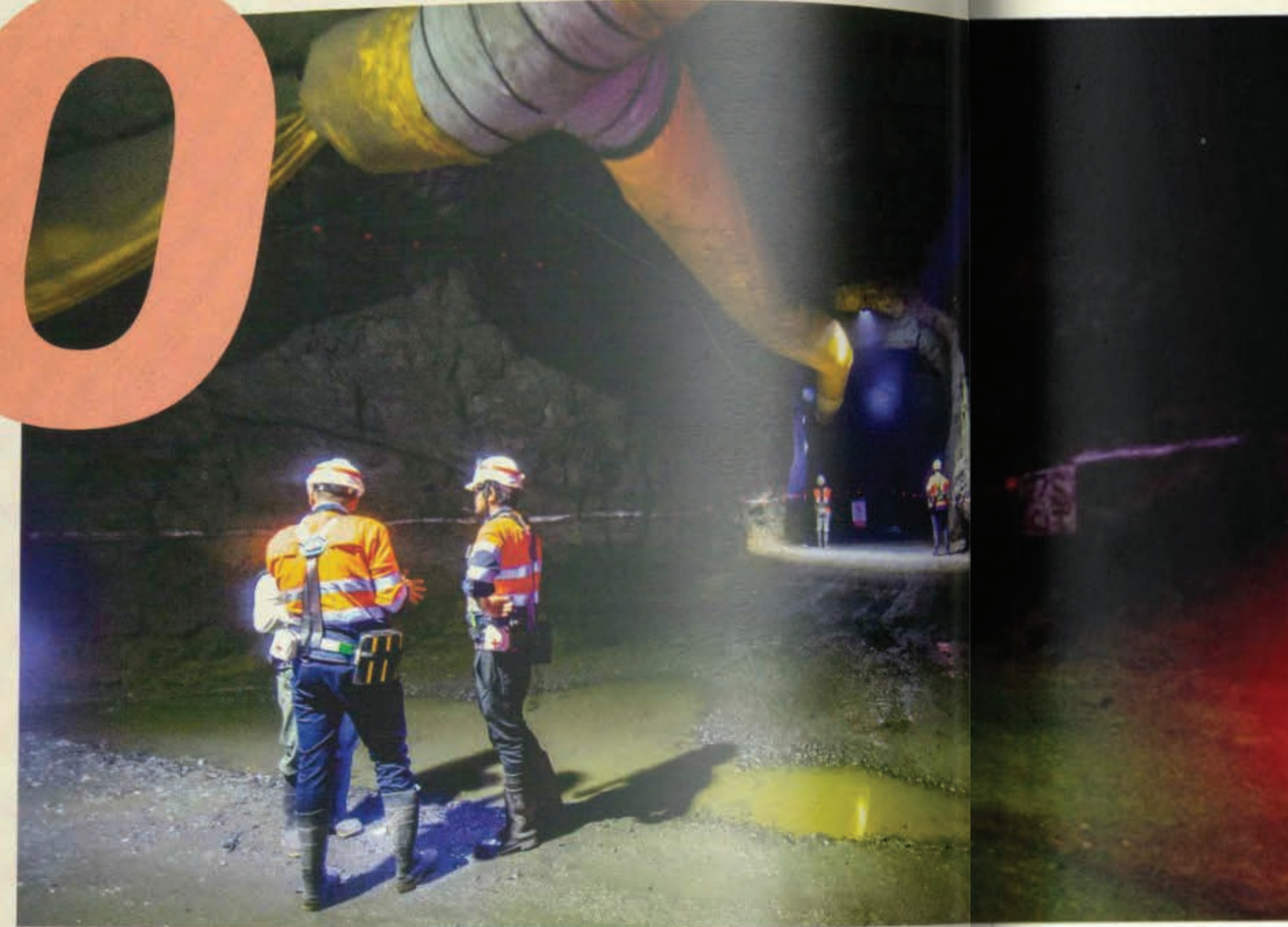


#10

PRIYA AGARWAL HEBBAR, daughter of industrialist Anil Agarwal, holds a rare distinction when it comes to women leadership. The board of the company she heads as chairperson, Hindustan Zinc (HZL), a subsidiary of Vedanta Ltd., has more women than men—five women versus four men. “Our dedication to gender diversity is not rhetoric,” she says.

HZL has another feather in its cap. It is the first mining company in India to have an all-women mine rescue team. “The team has seven women officers who underwent extensive training for tackling emergencies. The training was in accordance with international standards, with officers displaying determination and indomitable spirit,” says Hebbar.

In 2019, when law permitted women to go underground, HZL became the first company in the country to have underground women mining engineers. Gender diversity in Vedanta Ltd. is 14%; it’s targeting 20% by 2030. Hebbar, who holds a bachelor’s degree



VEDANTA LTD.

Vedanta Swears By Women Power

India’s first all-women rescue team, flexibility in work hours and focus on employee mental well-being help company stand out as a future workplace.

By **NEVIN JOHN**

in Psychology and Business Management from University of Warwick in the U.K., steers people’s practices across Vedanta group. She is also on board of Vedanta Ltd.

“We believe in creating an environment where women employees feel supported and empowered throughout their professional and personal journeys,” she says. Vedanta recently introduced a new parenthood policy under which women are allowed a sabbatical of up to 12 months; the organisation has promised job security to those who wish to take



“We team up fresh B-School recruits with Vedanta veterans for driving innovation.”

Priya Agarwal Hebbar, head, people practices, Vedanta Group

a break after birth of their child. Under the policy, those choosing to work immediately after maternity leave can work from home or avail of flexible working hours. The policy also ensures career assurance during maternity leave and additional support for career growth. Vedanta has also introduced a one-day monthly ‘No Questions Asked’ work-from-home to ensure physical and mental health of women employees.

The company’s recruitment strategy helps create a diverse and inclusive workforce, ensuring that every individual has access to equal opportunity, says Hebbar. For instance, Vedanta has an Inclusion Policy for LGBTQIA+ community that includes support for gender affirmation surgery with 30

days leave and financial assistance of ₹2 lakh.

One of Vedanta’s core strengths is its multigenerational workforce, says Hebbar. It strengthens employee-management bond, she adds. Vedanta recruits over 1,500 freshers every year. “We team up fresh B-School recruits with Vedanta veterans for driving innovation. We also introduce capable young talent into our decision-making bodies early in their careers,” she adds.

Vedanta management prefers selecting leaders from within the group. For instance, it has a Vice-Chairman Internal Growth Workshop Programme

aimed at identifying hidden talent. The company also has CEO’s monthly townhall with all employees and business partners. Over 18 townhalls were conducted, with more than 3,000 virtual attendees, last year. Its platform, Gurukul, is a digitally driven feedback-centric learning and development initiative, a platform for internal leaders and external experts to share expertise. It is a digital repository of knowledge sessions and emerging ideas. V-Desire is an initiative to capture ground-level insights and ideas. Under this, employees self-nominate for roles or propose ideas/problems. The company also runs Moonshot Project, the central hub for capturing impactful ideas from all businesses and domains.

For physical well-being of employees, the company has initiated flexible work arrangements and set up fitness facilities. It also provides assistance for personal challenges as part of mental and emotional well-being initiatives.

On sustainability, Vedanta aims to be a net zero carbon business by 2050, besides net water positive by 2030. The group is providing skill training to 2.5 million families. It plans to plant seven million trees by 2030. It has reused/recycled nearly 20% hazardous waste generated since FY20. By 2030, the company’s entire light motor vehicle fleet will run on renewable fuels. ■

WHAT WORKED

- ▶ Inclusion policy for LGBTQIA+ community that includes support for gender affirmation surgery with 30 days leave and financial assistance of ₹2 lakh.
- ▶ Hindustan Zinc board has more women than men. First mining company in India with an all-women rescue team.
- ▶ Women are allowed a sabbatical of up to 12 months; job security to those who wish to take a break after birth of their child.
- ▶ One-day monthly ‘No Questions Asked’ ‘work from home’ to ensure health of women employees.