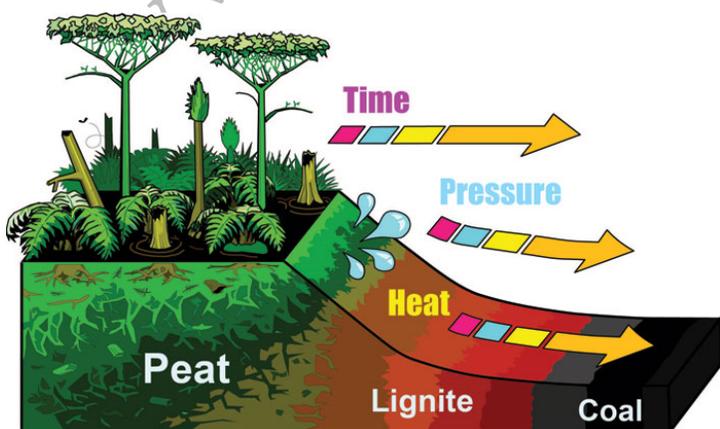


Did you know that coal contributes approximately 40% of the world's electricity production? In other words, the world relies on this fossil fuel for energy production more than any other energy source, including oil, natural gas, nuclear sources, the sun, water, and the wind. As of now, a number of coal deposits present will last for another 300 years, but after that, as it is an exhaustible natural resource, there will be none of this fossil fuel left.



How is coal formed?

- The formation of coal takes millions of years, which is why it is an exhaustible and non-renewable natural resource.
- It was formed around 300 million years ago when the earth was covered with swampy forests.
- When plants in these forests- mainly trees, mosses, ferns, and reeds died, they fell into the swamps.
- Thus there was a thick layer of dead vegetation in the swamp formed.
- As years passed, more and more plants died and many such layers were formed, one above the each other.
- The topmost layers compressed the layers below. Heat and pressure caused some physical and chemical changes and eventually, some carbon-rich deposits were formed.



How is coal obtained?

- It is obtained from the underground seams, which are the layers of ores and are thick enough to be mined with profitable results.
- There are two ways in which mining can be done- underground and open-pit. Determining the type of mining depends on the depth of the deposit.
- Vertical shafts are dug to access the deposits through underground mining, whereas in surface or open-pit mining, soil and rocks that lie on top of the mineral deposits are removed.
- The cost of the surface mining is lesser than that of the underground mining. This is why the surface mining is more dominant.
- What are the uses of coal?
- It is mainly used to generate heat and electricity.
- It is used in the households and in the industries to accomplish various tasks.
- It is the cheapest source of power fuel.
- The iron and steel industry depends heavily on this fossil fuel for energy.
- It is also used to produce useful products such as coke, tar, and coal gas.
- This fossil fuel was responsible for the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century.

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