



Sukla Mistry





Sukla Mistry is the first woman Functional Director on Indian Oil Board. The life journey of Sukla Mistry speaks of the strength and indomitable spirit of a girl who has risen from the hardships of living under humble circumstances in a remote village called Basanti in Sundarbans, West Bengal, to emerge as a strong corporate leader in the oil & gas sector of India. She took over as Director (Refineries), Indian Oil Corporation Ltd., the flagship energy enterprise of India, in 2022.

Born in a humble family, she is the eldest daughter of Kshirode Mistry and Bela Mistry. Her formative years are marked with trials of walking miles through muddy kachha roads in the island village to reach school and spending nights studying under kerosene lamps, as there was no electricity. With scant family resources, shared between her younger brothers Malay and Sumay, Sukla Mistry would often borrow study material. She completed her primary and secondary schooling in the village and joined Lady Brabourne College based on her good academic performance in high school. Those days, it was a tough task to even travel to Kolkata from her village. She used to take a three-hour boat ride on the Matla river, and then hop on to a train from the Canning town to reach Kolkata.

She became the first girl from her village: to step out to study; to get admitted in one of the top institutions of the country; and to become an engineer in Metallurgy stream from Bengal Engineering College, Calcutta University. She acquired Advance Diploma in Business Management from ICFAI and certifications in Industrial Radiography & Ultrasonic Non-destructive Testing. Sukla joined Indian Oil's Haldia Refinery as Inspection Engineer, the first women inspection engineer not only in Indian Oil but also in the Indian hydrocarbon industry. She is also among one of the first women engineers to work in shift duties and grassroots projects in the oil & gas sector.

Sukla Mistry is also the first woman in Indian Oil to head a Refinery Unit. She headed Indian Oil's Digboi Refinery (Assam), which is the oldest operating refinery in Asia, where she played a key role in maximization of value-added products like Rhino Wax brand and commissioning of IOC's Golai Marketing Terminal. Under her tenure, Digboi Refinery became the only and first-ever refinery in the country to bag the Special TPM Award from the Japan Institute of Productive Management. She then went on to lead Barauni Refinery and played a pivotal role in ensuring completion of projects associated with the roll-out of BS-VI grade fuels as per the mandated deadline.

Sukla Mistry has been a key part of teams that set-up India's largest Naphtha Cracker Complex, including its captive power plant and Styrene Butadiene Rubber Project of Indian Synthetic Rubber Private Limited at IndianOil's Panipat Refinery. Sukla Mistry's rich contribution to the oil & gas industry has earned her prestigious awards like the recent ET Prime Women Manufacturing & Operations Leadership Award-; SCOPE Excellence Award for Outstanding Woman Manager among PSEs; Petrotech Ojaswini Award; Petrofed Best Woman Executive Award; and National Petroleum Management Programme Best Woman Executive Award. A motivational speaker and an ardent sports lover, Sukla Mistry is not only an inspiration for the young women in the oil & gas industry, but also for professionals across the country. •

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