

A Report of the Consultation on the Impacts of Mining on Children in India

**Organised by Samata, HAQ Centre for Child Rights, mines, minerals &
PEOPLE and International Women and Mining Network**

With Support from Terr de Homes, Germany

Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, India

15–16 April 2008

Day one-Morning session

Introduction

Bhanumathi Kalluri opened the workshop by explaining its purpose and objectives. Exploring the impacts of mining on children in India includes both children working in the mines and children affected by mining, for example, through displacement due to new mining projects or the effect of mining on their health. Samata and HAQ: Centre for Child Rights have initiated this process of planning for a large scale mapping of the situation and national level campaign as there is currently a large gap between the situation facing children in the mining areas and public perception of the problem. The situation which we saw in Bellary district, Karnataka, must exist in many sites across many states. This introductory session is to look at what is happening in each of the areas where the participants come from. As this is a consultative process, the participants will then break into smaller groups to discuss how to take this forward and explore if there is interest in participating in a larger study and campaign.

Introduction to organisations/attendees (see Annexure 1)

Each participant gave a brief introduction of the work their non-governmental organisations (NGO) were involved with, the situation in their area and their particular interest on the issue of children and mining.

Why focus on children? Presentation by Bhanumathi (see Annexure 2)

Bhanumathi outlined some of the main ways in which children are affected by mining activities in India, including child labour, displacement, and lack of education and health care facilities. She also highlighted the legal framework that is in place but not implemented, as well as the national and international standards that are supposed to govern this sector. Bhanumathi provided an overview of some of the civil society interventions which are already taking place in this area and strategies which can be employed to improve the situation. However, in order to employ these strategies effectively further primary research is necessary in the mining areas to document the full impact of the current 'mining boom' on India's children.

Day one – afternoon session

Findings from small group work

The participants were divided into three groups and asked to discuss four different areas:

1. Specific interventions their organisations are making on this issue
2. The needs of children in mining areas in their region
3. Future strategies that could be employed to address this issue
4. The need for a larger scale national campaign

1. Specific interventions

The groups produced a list of interventions which included:

- Survey on child labour
- National Child Labour Project schools
- Rehabilitation hostels
- Advocacy and lobbying
- Starting of Integrated Child Development Scheme camps and crèche facilities
- Starting of non formal education (tent schools)
- Involvement in rescue and rehabilitation work
- Motivational camps
- Formation of task force committees
- Health camps
- Awareness about child labour through rallies and street plays
- Sponsorship programme for children
- Bridge courses for children
- Monitoring government programmes
- Awareness and action taken through Gram Panchayats
- Public interest litigations
- Unionisation of workers
- Abolition of contract/bonded labour
- Developmental activities (education)
- Develop linkages between police, mine owners and workers union

2. The needs of children in mining areas

The groups produced a list of children's needs which included:

- Ensuring that there are no children working in mining
- Redefine definition of crèches in mines (cluster approach)
- Settlements for mine workers across the country with basic amenities
- Provision of schools in mining areas (pre-primary and primary)

- Space for recreation activity/growth
- Safe drinking water
- Adequate shelter
- Health facilities/treatment
- Ensuring all rights are upheld

3. Future strategies

The groups outlined a number of possible future strategies for tackling these problems:

- Undertake more surveys in the mining sector
- Involve more NGOs as stakeholders
- Use Right to Information Act at state level to demand information on statistics
- Lobbying with the government
- Taskforce with the labour, education and police departments
- Continue awareness about child labour in this sector
- Discussion with companies
- Implement Right to Work Act
- Ensure that laws are implemented properly
- Pressurise the government to work on this issue and ensure that government agencies work properly
- Revisiting acts and policies
- Tracking system at origin of migrant labour
- Track and prepare checklist of all participants in mining/auxiliary industries to hold them accountable
- Introduce certifications from Labour Department
- Leases and entrepreneurial capital for backward communities (currently in Rajasthan)
- Grievance cell for mining sector/workers
- Share of revenue to be spent on welfare (including for migrant workers)

4. National level campaign

The groups highlighted that a larger scale campaign could identify issues and organise state-wise consultations with the Labour Department as well as contribute to better documentation of the issues in different areas.

Table 1: What the documentation could involve

Sectors	Issues	Impacts
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - direct - indirect - short term - long term

Our advocacy work needs to cover these four different situations.

Enakshi suggested that we have two options for approaching this work, 1) mapping the impacts of children by their location, OR 2) mapping the nature and form of mining and locating children within this. The work has to really be done state-wise in order that groups in each state can use the information collected.

The discussion progressed to incidences people have observed in their localities. Arun explained that in Jaduguda, Bihar, where uranium mining is taking place, all the big offices bring in their vegetables from another town, as they don't want to eat contaminated food. However, families living there don't have a choice. We need to forget the legal/illegal aspects for a moment and instead focus on the impacts on people. Vijaikumar explained that they have done a survey on child labour in the granite mines in the Cuddapah and Chittoor districts of Andhra Pradesh. They spent three days gathering information there, focusing on the illegal mines, as that is where the child labour is rampant. This was just a preliminary mapping to look at child labour, it did not cover issues such as health, education, etc. Yousuf Beg explained that they did a survey of 182 school dropouts in Panna, Madhya Pradesh, to find out why they've dropped out of school. Some of the children were working in the mines, often because their parents have fallen sick and are now unable to work. Arun described a 14-year-old girl who was loading coal into trucks in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh. When she was questioned as to why she had taken up this work, she said that her father was a permanent employee of the company but he had become an alcoholic. Her mother too had passed away. Owing to the father's absence from work he was dismissed from his job. So while this girl wanted to study she instead had to support her brother and sister (who are studying). Her father takes half the money that she earns so she has to work extra hard and has taken up additional work as a domestic help and agricultural labour. She has also indicated of having been exploited sexually at work.

Table 3: Information that groups already have

Area	Resource	Type of labour	Specific issues looked at
Cuddapah and Chittoor, Andhra Pradesh	Granite	Child labour	Illegal
Kota, Jodhpur, Rajasthan	Sandstone	Migrant workers	Labour conditions Children's problems Trade routes
Panna, Madhya Pradesh	Diamonds Flagstone	Child labour	School drop outs Family situation
Bellary, Karnataka	Manganese Iron ore	Child labour Migrant labour	
Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh	Blackstone	Child labour	
Rajamandu, Andhra Pradesh Brahimpatham,	Stone quarries Granite	Child labour	

Area	Resource	Type of labour	Specific issues looked at
Andhra Pradesh			
Haryana	Stone quarries	Workers' conditions	
Guntur, Andhra Pradesh	Quarries	Child labour	
Pune, Maharashtra	Quarries	Child labour	

Bhanumathi highlighted the need to carry out further case studies to fill in gaps in existing data.

Day two – afternoon session

Moving forward – action plan

It was decided that Seema and Emily would circulate their report from the workshop within a few days. The nine reports (see Table 3) that groups already have should be sent within one week (these can be shared in any language). Once the nine reports are received, we will develop the framework for a larger mapping, collate the reports and circulate along with the framework to all participants. Then each group will do their primary data collection in their locations. Seema and Emily will be available to provide support with this. Sreedhar shared the standard framework questionnaire that his organisation uses when they visit a mining area.

Conclusions

Many people felt that if we work together in a committed way, we can do much more about these issues. People seemed keen that this work moves forward and felt that this should be seen as the start of a process rather than a one-time event. Subash Ray said that he was very pleased with the fact that we've taken up the children's angle to this issue and would be happy to explore with Save the Children ways in which they might be able to support this work further. Several participants mentioned that they used to think of mining as the major issue, but now they will start to think more specifically about how children are affected by mining. The workshop has also made people realise the need for documenting their individual work in order to feed into the process of a larger campaign across the country.

Enakshi explained how it had taken two years to organise this meeting, from their initial work in Bellary. We need to escape this jargon that children are our future—they should have a present first, before a future. This meeting has been a good beginning for this work. Bhanumathi said that the issues are very complex and diverse, but hopefully we can take this work forward with as many groups as possible and do justice to the children affected by mining. HAQ and Samata will continue to work hard to push this important issue.

Photos



Day 1 – Introductory session



Participants of the consultation



Presentation on child labour in mining



Group discussions and presentations