

# III CONFERENCIA INTERNACIONAL "MUJER Y MINERÍA"

III INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE "WOMEN AND MINING"



Conference  
Report

THEESARI ANTHARASHTREEYA MAHILA EVAM KHANAN SAMMELAN

1 - 9 de octubre del 2004 Visakhapatnam - India  
"DEFENDEMOS NUESTRAS VIDAS, EXIGIMOS NUESTROS DERECHOS"



## **III International Women & Mining Conference**

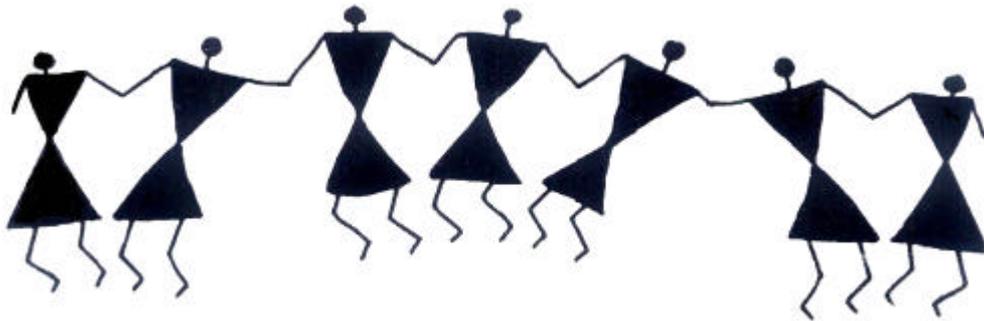
1st – 9th October 2004, Visakhapatnam, India

Organized by mines, minerals & PEOPLE, India  
on behalf of:

**International Women and Mining Network**

**Theme:**

**“Defending Our Lives, Demanding Our Rights”**



## **III Conferencia Internacional Mujeres y Minería**

1-9 de Octubre del 2004 Visakhapatnam, India

Organizado por las minas, minerales y GENTE,  
a nombre de:

**Red Internacional “Mujeres y Minería”**

**Tema:**

**“Defendemos Nuestras Vidas, Exigimos Nuestros Derechos”**



# Conference Report

*In great sorrow, we dedicate this report to:*



**Leticia Miranda** who was killed in a road accident on her way to the mining town of Oruro in Bolivia shortly after her invaluable participation in the conference. It is a profound loss for the international network as she had taken most of the responsibilities of the RIMM



international coordination office for the last four years and was one of the key persons in coordinating this conference for the Central and Latin American regions. She will continue to be our beacon for the International Women and Mining Network.

## **Acknowledgements**

*For a small social justice organization like Samata having a bunch of young grass-roots activists most of whom never traveled beyond the state or national capital, organizing the third international conference on behalf of mm&P and RIMM, has been an exhilarating experience. I feel extremely proud of the entire team and wish to thank every individual in Samata and CRYNET who worked tirelessly till the last participant was safely bid adieu. But for this team, I could not have had the confidence to accept such a big responsibility.*

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*The regional media was extremely responsive and sympathetic to the issues raised at the conference and we thank them for all the media coverage.*

*Lastly, I wish to thank the team – Niki, Ravi Shankar, Sarada and Guna – which worked tirelessly in bringing out this report.*

*K. Bhanumathi,  
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## ***Words of wisdom and anguish...***

“It is very important for everyone to know about the work of women in the mines. I am proud of myself to represent the women in the mines. I have a lot of work ahead for the children, the youth and the women in the mining regions.”

*Margarita, Bolivia*

...Must I laugh? Must I cry for you?  
Diamonds are a curse for Sierra Leone, not a blessing.”

*Rebecca, Sierra Leone*

“Workers are not enemies because problems that communities face from mining industries are also faced by workers. We have one common enemy and that is the one who makes profits-the capitalists and we need to re-strategise to fight this system.”

*Faith Letlala, South Africa*

“The land that was our life was taken away from us- first, the pastoralists, then the government and now the miners. The government in Australia and the mining companies work together...”

*Robyne, Australia*

“Our country is rich in natural resources; we are the fourth country in the world with very high biodiversity and we'd like to look after that.... so all I can say is, we are struggling for the justice of our people and against the destruction that some one else created on our lands.”

*Matilda, Papua New Guinea*

The biggest challenge, as women in the mining industry is acceptance by our male counterparts that we are as good as or better. I'm the only woman in Zimbabwe with a blasting licence to work underground.... I had to fight – it was a world war to achieve this.

*Josephine, Zimbabwe*

“Finally, we'd like to insist that sustainability is only possible through community management of resources.”

*Manree, Thailand*

“Mine closure is an alternative, if we want to consider all alternatives, especially as millions of people are destroyed. Companies should declare their mine closure plan and communities should be allowed to participate in EIAs to protect their health and lives.”

*Hannah, Ghana*

“Many believe that when a woman gets hired it is just to fill a quota. This is why we believe that a women's committee be mandatory in every mining company, and recognized so that we can have our voices spoken and heard by the company and by the government.”

*Tina, Canada*

“Women in mining communities experience harassment by businessmen, mining contractors, company security guards, and government soldiers around the mining areas. Domestic violence, rape and prostitution have increased and women are at heightened risk of HIV/AIDS and other STD infections from a transient male workforce.”

*Christine, Burma*

“After the mining operations started, our village started getting destroyed. Today ground water has dried up, the forests have been cut down and so we are fighting for our lands.”

*Sunita, India*

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## Introduction & History of RIMM

Red Internacional 'Mujeres y Minería' (RIMM), or the International Women and Mining Network, is the first and only international platform that has brought together women from different continents on this very serious issue of mining and gender justice. The initiative taken by some of the groups like the Cordillera People's Alliance, Miningwatch, Cepromin and others since 1997 by organizing two international conferences to highlight the condition of women living and working in the mining regions and to identify the diverse problems that they are being confronted with under the new global economies, has led to the consolidation of these meetings into the International Women and Mining Network.

The First International Women and Mining Conference was held in the Philippines in 1997 and was hosted by the Cordillera People's Alliance when women came together to voice their concerns and share experiences from different countries. Energised by this first meeting, the groups committed to take this learning forward and spread the solidarity of women's voices in mining into more regions and reach out to more women suffering. We again met in Oruro, Bolivia in the year September 2000 for the Second International Women and Mining Conference, with a more focused goal of strengthening the process through the formation of the International Women and Mining Network. The key issues that were addressed at this conference were the invisibility of women's work in the mines, impacts of mine pollution on women's health and environment, impact of transnational mining corporations on women's lives and the rights of women vis-à-vis mining.

During the first and second conferences, we learnt from the experiences of country presentations and from first hand visits to some of the mine sites, that women are the worst sufferers from mining and that the impacts have serious consequences on their economic and social status, physical and mental health and security, access to resources, information

and decision making, and that their struggles for expression of suffering and to demand for gender justice are being brutally suppressed by local and national governments and by the mining industry and global economic lobbies.

What emerged in the second conference was the need to develop national level networks, to consciously sensitise mining struggle groups and workers' unions and to lobby with our governments on gender concerns in mining and to look at the impacts of mining from a gender perspective.

For the first time, focus was brought on the legal and human rights issues of women mine workers and women displaced and affected by mining, as an international network. It was unheard of for nations or for corporates or for international bodies to be questioned on their accountability towards gender concerns and the disastrous consequences their activities have on women and children. The two conferences, while questioning these, also strongly emphasized the direct association of liberalization, trade deregulation and privatization of the global economy to the consistent degeneration of ecological resources, retrenchment of labour from the formal sector and the suppression of community rights wherever minerals exist.

Hence, what started as an initiative to explore the gender concerns in mining took the role of a global platform for women exploited by mining projects either as communities displaced or as workers in highly exploitative working conditions. At the second conference, the initiative to explore the problems of women in mining developed into a consolidation of women as an international network.

In the four years since 2000, many more countries and movements fighting mining issues have started raising the problems of women in mining with their governments and with the companies they are affected by. Particularly, we have started focusing on the unorganized sector as that is

where women are present in large numbers. The National Network of Women Mineworkers in Bolivia is an immediate outcome of these deliberations at the international conferences. Indigenous communities and tribal groups affected by mining is another important area where the network has found the need to focus, especially in the Greenfield areas where vehement opposition to new mining projects is emerging in many countries in indigenous peoples' lands.

We are also trying to impress upon the world how serious an impact mining has on women's health, particularly reproductive health and more alarmingly, social health with illnesses like HIV-AIDS being reported on epidemic proportions in mining regions. The outright denial and continued callousness of the mining industry supported by weak and complicit governments are increasing the vulnerability of women to technological justifications, inaccessibility to information and rights of choices over their bodies and their dignities.

The frustrations and lonely suffering of women impacted by mining is now leading to a breaking of this passivity and invisible silence. The purpose of RIMM is to nurture this strength of togetherness in our struggles and that is why we have bound ourselves to the **Pact for Life** to tell the world we do not want to lead ugly unhealthy lives for filling the coffers of the mining markets. We may be rural, or tribal, poor or illiterate women but the knowledge to nurture our earth and our creation is inherent in us and we will fight in our small forests and factories wherever the fumes of the ores are choking us.

## The journey to the Third International Women and Mining Conference

At the Second International Women and Mining Conference in Oruro, Bolivia in September 2000, it was proposed that we should have the Third Conference in 2004 in Indian and that **mines,**

**minerals & PEOPLE** should take the responsibility for organizing it.

Some of us members of RIMM (International Network of Women and Mining) met in La Paz, Bolivia from 6<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> October 2003 to plan and prepare for the Conference and to come up with a framework. The countries, which participated in this meeting, were Australia, Bolivia, India and Indonesia. There was a very good participation from the local groups in Bolivia, the national network of women and mining, the women mine workers, the representatives of policy and water commissions and from RIMM and Cepromin.

It is important to mention here that the meeting was held in the midst of political turbulence and people's protests against the exportation of gas to the U.S via Chile. We were witness to road blocks, demonstrations by peasants, trade unions and other sections of the civil society in Bolivia, heavy military presence and firing on demonstrators, killing of people by the police and the non-compliance of the government to the demands of the people – all the brutal forces of global mining politics were there in front of us as demonstration of the urgency to campaign against this global pandemonium.

The first broad plan of the conference at this meeting was to define the objectives and agenda and to look at the way forward as an international network. The preparatory work of the conference hence, was based on the following decisions taken at this meeting:

### Objectives of the Conference

1. To make visible the serious problems of women in mining across countries, governments, NGO's, human rights groups, trade unions, mining struggle groups and communities and all others concerned with the exploitation of women in mining
2. To build the International Network of Women and Mining as a strong global platform to fight for women's rights vis-à-vis mining

3. To provide an opportunity to bring together women across the world to share their experiences as mine workers, women suffering and affected by mining and women concerned with mining

### Dates of the Conference

The conference was to take place for 9-10 days with 6 days of discussions and 3-4 days of visits to mine-sites. The dates were tentatively fixed for **20<sup>th</sup> September to 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2004 which was later changed to 1<sup>st</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> October 2004.** The Indian group was to decide on the venue and sites for the field visits. We formed an international working group to consult and decide on the preparatory work and to distribute some of the responsibilities like contacting groups and finding the resources. The Latin and Central American region's responsibility was taken by RIMM and the Indian team took the responsibility for the rest of the regions, with the help of the working group.

### Sub Themes of the Conference

We planned the themes with two broad groups in mind – women mine workers and women in communities and the conference was broadly going to look at:

1. Understanding Mining Economy from a Gender Perspective
2. Analyzing Women's Roles in Mining Struggles
3. Participation and Right to Decision Making

### The Preparatory Work

Within **mm&P** we formed a Task Group to take decisions and responsibilities for organizing the conference and had our first meeting in March 2004. It was difficult to zero down on the venue of the conference as India is a very large country and has the whole range of mining activities from traditional

to large open pit and underground mines. We finally decided upon Visakhapatnam in the state of Andhra Pradesh because of its access to both mined out areas and greenfields where tribal communities in interior forests and hills are under threat of destruction by multinational mining operations.

**Conference Theme**  
**Defending Our Lives, Demanding our Rights**  
***International Network of Women and Mining***



From across the world we came together ...



# Day I

## Inaugural and Welcome

The conference took off on a colourful celebration with a mixture of traditional Indian and tribal customs. The joy of coming together from far and wide to spend ten full days of meaningful discussions and share human stories from 21 different countries was initiated with the lighting of the diyas (Indian lamps) by representatives from every country present. A tribal priest called upon the spirits and the Gods of the forest for the success of the conference and prayed for the health of all the women who gathered at this seaside city of Visakhapatnam. Young tribal women performed the traditional community dance, Dhimsa and led the participants into the conference hall.

All the national and international participants were warmly welcomed by the team from mm&P – Bidulata Huika, an adivasi leader from the mining struggle in Kasipur, Bhanumathi from the national secretariat of mm&P and Shanti Sawaiyan from the regional office in Jharkhand. Bidulata emotionally welcomed the participants and stressed on the urgent need for communities and people suffering to come together as the global forces are fast devouring our lands and our lives.

### **Photo Exhibition**

Lardou Jonko, a senior adivasi activist and representing the tribal workers of the coal mines in Jharkhand, inaugurated the **Photo Exhibition on Women and Mining in India** which was organised specifically for the Third Conference, by Sonu Madhavan. The conference thus made a headstart with the inaugural and the photo exhibition and a full house presence of the local media who were eager to learn from the women who came from all corners of the world.

## Introduction of participants

After the inaugural address and the welcome speech, each of the participants introduced themselves and gave us a brief background of their mining situations<sup>1</sup>. The Conference was attended by eighty women from twenty-two countries across Asia, Africa, Europe as well as the Pacific representing different mining concerns. They came from large open pit and underground mines to small quarries and rat hole mines, from abusive multinational projects to problems of traditional and small scale mines, from rich forest areas of indigenous peoples' lands to the marine biodiversity of coastal communities.

Some were mine-workers themselves, fighting for better working conditions and safer living environments at the mine sites and in the communities, for equal participation and remuneration in employment, fighting gender injustice, mine induced health problems and atrocities at the work place, problems related to child labour and informalisation of women's labour, right to decision making through unions, cooperatives, societies, mine workers' wives associations, and others.

Many participants were representatives of communities fighting Greenfield mining projects, exploitative conditions in existing mines, community groups and NGO's fighting displacement issues, social, cultural and legal violations faced by communities affected, lawyers and legal experts advocating for the rights of communities and workers, national advocacy groups and international human rights groups. There were academicians and researchers who have studied the impacts of mining on women and are working towards highlighting these problems to governments and scientists – all of them

<sup>1</sup> See annexure for participant details

women, committed to bring about a visibility to gender injustices in mining.

Apart from the participants themselves, the core team from **Samata** and **mm&P**, along with volunteers from across the world and a team of professionals provided the management, technical and infrastructural support for the entire conference.

## Report of RIMM Activities by Els van Hoecke

### **From the Philippines to Bolivia, to India**

We have met three times, worldwide. The first International Conference on Women and Mining took place in 1997 at the city of Baguio in the Philippines under the motto "Women united and struggling for our land, our lives, our future" gathering women who work in mines, women members of trade unions, women researchers, women who work in non governmental organizations working in favour of women defending the environment, women thrown out of mining areas, all of them women close to the mining sector.

At the second International Conference on Women and Mining carried out in Bolivia in the year 2000, we worked with the feeling of promoting a gathering among women of the mining sector. We were looking for changes to improve the lives of those women. The motto "Construction, participation and solidarity in the Women and Mining movement" helped us in the road to develop speedy and efficient solidarity and friendly communication means, to mutually build confidence that our voices would be heard so that as women, we could influence in economic, labour, social, environmental and equity policies, women who live close to the mining sector or dwell in displaced communities.

Here are some statements and conclusions which had repercussions at the second Conference.

- We made a pact for life to participate in the struggle for a clean, healthy and cared-for earth.
- We commit ourselves to break the silence, "we are angry, because we feel deprived, poorer, and mistreated like are our children, the environment and the nature;" these are words uttered by a woman delegate from Indonesia at the II Conference.
- We should make alliances with existing national and international networks which work on the subjects of mining, women, the environment, indigenous peoples, and health.
- We should work to have alternative projects for women. Let's work to protect the environment, let's fight to make the work of women in mining more visible; let's analyse particular cases of women severely affected by working in the mining sector. We should investigate and interchange information about the expansion actions and policies of transnational companies. We strive for a responsible mining; a mining which takes into account the communities' needs, and especially those of women.

We would like to share with you our main concerns along these 4 years, from 2000 to 2004:

The coordination team of the International Network RIMM works at a small office in the city of La Paz, Bolivia, with two computers and three part-time workers. It lacks legal support of its own. RIMM is in touch with the countries which participated in the first two conferences, as well as with the organizers of this conference. Women who are part of RIMM are members of different institutions, organizations, or they are independent women.

At the II conference, continental events were encouraged as "actions to accomplish", yet none took place. Several meetings were held, though, with countries which participated in the Ist and IInd conferences, and has been very positive. These meetings were held in Chile, Peru, Bolivia,

Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Australia, on the subject of "women and mining". All these events have contributed to make the work of women in mining visible.

The preparatory work for this Third Conference was started with a meeting in October 2003 in La Paz, Bolivia, just the week before the events which led to the change of government in our country. The international team was composed of women from India, Australia, Indonesia, and Bolivia.

The Conference objectives are defined in the following manner - to make visible the serious problems confronted by women in mining in the different countries; to build up the network as a strong worldwide platform to struggle for women's rights in mining; to carry out a work of consciousness at high levels to exercise the women mine-workers' rights; look for opportunities to share experiences, that is, to learn one from the others' experience.

The subject of our present Conference came up this way:

***"Defending our lives, demanding our rights"***

It seems too general, yet it is full of challenges.

Faithful to the 2000 Iroco Declaration, we reconfirm to work with:

- mine working women, organizations and networks which work with them
- Women of communities affected by the presence of mining.

At this Conference here in Visakhapatnam we should advance one step forward to analyse our participation at all levels and stress the exercise of our right to participate in decision taking. We are aware of the great importance mine production has in the national economy of several countries, and that there is a tendency of strengthening the

trans national companies with all the consequent problems such as displacement of communities, losses of territory, and deterioration of the environment. Furthermore, women continue to be ignored doing an invisible and inhuman work in the small-scale mining, in a situation of survival.

We have to get the governments, international instances, and the mining companies to include our demands in their policies, and that the trade unions and cooperatives also include our demands in their agendas. We must get those responsible for the deterioration of the environment to stop their atrocities.

We have tried to approach those countries that have a close relationship with mining, we have been successful in some of them but there is still much to be done. There is a lot of work to do in the African continent, so important with regard to mining.

**“ We have to get the governments, international instances, and the mining companies to include our demands in their policies ... ”**

The national networks do not have an end by themselves: They are actually an instrument for coordination among those women who want to integrate and join efforts; convinced that by sharing experiences, they can make greater advances.

As to the need for these networks, there was a lot of internal discussion and correspondence with India. There may exist various networks in a country concerned with women and mining; our position is, more organizations working with women in mining or women displaced by mining, the better; what is important is to have good coordination instead of working separately.

The creation of Bolivia's National Network has come up as a commitment of the women present in the last day of the II conference; this was a condition to accept the coordination of RIMM. We have advanced a lot in coordinating our activities, respecting the diversity of our actions.

We would like to advance more as RIMM, because globalisation is coming fast; we are part of the movement which met in Mumbai in January 2004 at the World Social Forum where a growing anti-globalisation movement was explicitly and implicitly articulated and expressed in actions against the dominant tendencies of the multi nationals which favour powerful economic interests against the needs of the majority of the world's population and women. **mines, minerals & people** of India organised within the Forum a work group on women in mining, thus creating a space where women's voice could be heard.

The eight bulletins published in Spanish and English along these 4 years were an instrument to get in touch, shortening distances to intercommunicate with all of us. We have not been able to evaluate its contents together with other countries, but we do know the bulletin has been read in the whole world, because we have always included it after its diffusion in the WEB site: <http://www.iwam.net>

Some women having a relationship with mining who are present here have become aware of the Network through the site in two languages.

During the functioning of RIMM's coordination, we have received a lot of documents, books, and magazines of interest to the mining sector. It is important this information reaches all interested people; thus, the documentation is available at the Web site, and physically at the office in La Paz, Bolivia, also in two languages, Spanish and English.

Regarding RIMM's membership, we have received requests as to "what one should do to become a member of the International Network?" This is an issue we have to make clear on October 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> at this Conference. The Network is large and serves to join efforts.

Without financing a network cannot function. We have tried to decentralize this responsibility as the only way to keep the network functioning. For

many years the Boliviacentrum of Belgium has contributed to the International Network and Bolivia's National Network. Also the Danish cooperation, agencies of the Netherlands, Australia, Canada, England, and some other sources, foundations and even family enterprises, support the International Network and the Conferences.

I would like to say something about our presence here. Many of us are here representing a group of women, a union, a committee, a non-governmental organization, or in some exceptional cases on a personal basis. It has been a hard job to find financing so that this group of women present here may exchange experiences and find solutions to the serious problems confronted in mining.

Our responsibility goes beyond this Conference which represents only a turning point between a work done and a work to be done. All of us are here together to set positive changes in favour of women, in favour of their work and living surroundings, in favour of their families, their children, in favour of the whole community. Only through a common effort we, women of all countries, could make life more humane and honourable. And what is more important than "life"? Nothing. We want to make our contribution, even a small one, to the whole humanity.



## Theme - Understanding Mining from a Gender Perspective

### Leticia Miranda M. - Mining with a gender perspective

The gender perspective is a set of knowledge enabling us to analyse the significance of the roles, practices, representations, symbols, institutions and standards societies and human groups decide on based on the socially constructed differences between men and women.

This shows the gender-based hierarchy, which is expressed in an unequal valuation of what is female and what is male and an unequal power distribution between men and women.

Our societies, and hence our economies, require a comprehensive development emphasising equity and citizenship that become apparent in any type of public actions, including legislation, policies and programs, with an impact in decision-making spaces from our own organisations.

Although progress has been made in all countries in public gender policymaking, this is not reflected in the field of specific social and labour development for women mine-workers.

This discord between acquired rights and a lack of a comprehensive gender vision becomes even more critical when the mechanisms inherent in globalisation processes are incorporated, because at present out of the 550 million poor workers worldwide (with a daily income under 1 American Dollar a day) 330 million are women. If this amount is not reduced by 50% by the year 2015, the Millennium Development Goal regarding poverty reduction will not be achieved.

### Importance of mining work in global development

The ILO estimates that today, the number of mine-workers totals approximately 13 million in 55 countries and that 80 to 100 million persons directly or indirectly depend on this activity for subsistence.

In Asia, of the total number of mineworkers less than 10% are women; in Latin America, this proportion tends to be higher, approximately 20%. The percentage of traditional women miners is the highest in Africa, with 40 to 50%.

In this field, approximately 30% of the world's traditional miners are women, for whom mining is an opportunity for subsistence, regardless of the fact that this activity is often very risky.

In spite of these factors, activities have increased by approximately 20%; in this sense, traditional mining is an essential activity in many developing countries<sup>2</sup>. This 30% of women miners play various roles in mining, from

the operation of heavy machinery to artisanal mining processes.

### Impact

In many cases, the role of women in the mining communities is significantly different from men's roles, as they are subject to different risks and opportunities as their needs and demands are often ignored both in private initiatives and in government development plans and programs. Our actions must therefore focus on strategy building to have an impact on specific policies for women miners, i.e. for women miners, housewives, union workers and women in communities affected and displaced by mining.

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**Gender-based hierarchy,  
is expressed in an  
unequal valuation of  
what is female and what  
is male**  
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<sup>2</sup> Source: Women and Artisanal Mining: Gender Roles and the Road Ahead

We must promote a responsible mining that generates gender-sensitive socio-economic changes, taking into account cultural values, beliefs, ethnicity and promoting technological, financial, educational and health-related adequacy in accordance with the viewpoint of women related to and affected by mining.

Mining work differs in the entire world, from mine to mine, from country to country, from continent to continent, and even from culture to culture. Hence, women in mining are a heterogeneous group, although the invisibility of their contribution to the household, local and hence global economy is common to all of them. The presence of transnational corporations in mining work

When transnationals start to work in mining, an ecological, social and gender imbalance takes place, affecting women in the communities who have to take up new tasks. In mining districts, the assignment of roles to women becomes even rougher as besides productive and reproductive roles, the women workers' civil rights are affected by an increase in discrimination and inequity. In many cases, women cannot fulfil a communal role, as their participation is unequal and as the distribution of natural, human and economic resources does not benefit women.

Mining causes uncertainty in the communities as mining could give rise to an environmental liability to the detriment of their living environment. However, at the same time, mining exploitation could also provide them with an income. Today, no processes are known in which the communities have been actors together with the central and/or municipal governments in income related decision-making processes based on business ethics and social responsibility, considering human, labour, socio-cultural, economic and environmental rights and also gender as a crosscutting topic.

But when the decision is made to work in mining as an income-generating activity, management

strategies must be identified for the communities to be the central and decisive stakeholders not only in employment generation but in sustainability of an equitable development in which the work of women is visible and economic, social and cultural rights are not violated and environmental damages are avoided.

To date, experience shows that mining exploitation has left an ecological and social debt. We must therefore identify means, ways or strategies for mining to become a part of social and economic development for communities and countries, within the framework of policies in which stakeholder proposals, needs and standards are considered.

As women stakeholders are essential in mining processes, there is a need to create a citizen participation mechanism at the international, national, regional and local levels that effectively integrates women miners for them to have an impact on and participate in decision-making, planning, design, evaluation and monitoring of the policies, plans and programs affecting them.

*It is not sufficient to proclaim equal opportunities for men and women. A contribution must also be made to overcome the concept of citizenship based on equal rights for all, taking into account the diversity of concrete citizens: "the idea is to create a new basis for the concept of citizenship, incorporating real human beings that are not separated in two halves" (Judith Astelarra)*



## K. Bhanumathi - Gender Perspectives in Mining - Issues before the international network

Most often, people find it strange when we specifically talk about women's problems in the context of mining as it has never occurred to the world that women living and working in the mining regions have any problems that need to be addressed. Therefore, it is very important that we make the serious problems of women affected and working in mining a visible concern across all our countries and continents. It is time that our nations and the mining industry acknowledge the serious forms of gender discrimination and the exploitation happening to women in the mining regions. We have gathered here from a wide range of mining situations and the stories that we will hear over the next few days will highlight the miseries and suffering that we see women comforting.

I wish to raise some of the urgent concerns, and flag some issues for discussion during this conference so that we have a better understanding of each other and identify the broad issues for our perspective as an international network asserting the rights of women.

Some of the glaring concerns-there are many more-that we need to look at are:

- Mining is a very masculine industry and gender exclusive and discriminatory industry.
- Countries which have mining as a predominant economic activity, are not necessarily the most prosperous countries. On the other hand, it may be just the contrary
- Privatization is hitting us hard and the biggest reality for mine labour is that women are completely being pushed into the unorganized and informal sector.

- Women have to face more complex health problems without any relief or rehabilitation.
- Culturally the status and spaces for livelihood and expression have dangerously affected women.
- Where women are present as workers, it is in the processing and highly hazardous areas of the mining activities.
- The control of mineral extraction and processing by the multinational mining industry has brought in worse forms of exploitation of women by downsizing labour (which means women are the first to be retrenched) and by destroying community or traditional mining activities which is where women's work is present as part of community livelihoods.
- Indigenous women are the worst sufferers as most large scale mining is displacing them from their lands and denying them access and control over natural resources
- The living and working condition of women mine workers is fast deteriorating and there are no legal protections for women to demand for rights.

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**Indigenous women are the worst sufferers as most large scale mining is displacing them from their lands and denying them access and control over natural resources**

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We are all battling with these, whether we are working as women mine workers or as women displaced and living in mining regions. In some of our countries, mining is too large and significant a sector

that our struggles are related to demanding for solutions within the framework of mining. In many of our countries, often, it is not the first choice of work and livelihood for women. They have and are practising traditional forms of livelihood based on land and natural resources, have the skills to sustainably carry out their livelihoods, but cannot choose to demand for these options as the mining lobbies are too powerful and beyond their control.

So, as a network what is it that we have learnt and how do we widen our horizons and perspectives with these experiences before us. I think we should be able to envision the larger economic dynamics behind the mining industry. There is a need to work at two levels, which may look at times, contradictory, but the larger objectives and perspectives have to be understood and identified. I say this because, as a network we have to understand and support the local campaigns and struggles of mining groups, whether workers' groups or community groups.

For example, our support is required for workers fighting for their rights in the industry, their rights to equal wages, against retrenchment, privatization, pollution, improved working conditions, etc. This is the need of the women mineworkers. But how do we also see the larger economics of mining, as a network? Then we cannot look at mining as an isolated sector, but rather as a part of the larger global economics. We should be able to understand the global players behind these economic decisions that are being pushed on to workers and communities, the economic realities of gender discrimination that exist as a result of these global decisions. The mine workers at the pitheads may not be in a position to look at these or address these concerns as their immediate needs are the survival and livelihood requirements through empowerment in the mines. We have to go beyond our sectoral thinking.

Secondly, demanding for improvements, rehabilitation, compensation and better working conditions are the most important campaign areas for workers. So far, corporates have always conveniently ignored or suppressed the information relating to impacts of mining on women or the abuses on women directly or indirectly due to mining and have never considered them as having a right to demand for rights. For instance, women suffering from or dying of silicosis, asbestosis, tuberculosis and other mining induced illnesses have never been considered a responsibility of the companies.

Therefore, if we were to do a costing of the physical, social, economic, reproductive and other losses of women who work in the industry, then the compensation that the mining industry has to pay will run into billions and the statistical projections of profitability, sustainability, viability of mining would stand questioned. We have to fight that companies take responsibility for the damages. ***Unless, they are held accountable and pay up for these losses, they should not be allowed to open new mining projects in green fields.***

When mining groups fight or demand for better working or living conditions, we know that the companies have ready-made answers. They resort to technology as having all the solutions to convince the world outside. A quick way of fixing these is through processes like corporate social responsibility or CSR. This is the biggest trap. What are the accountability issues addressed under this by companies with regard to gender? Throwing in a gender component to project documents as a flavouring or dressing to dishes is not our definition of gender participation, gender justice or gender development. I think these are completely diversionary tactics in order to avoid addressing the main issues of livelihood and rights. I doubt if there can be a win – win situation in such kind of a discourse. How can there be a level playing ground between illiterate tribal women and big mining corporate backed by government support?

We should be particularly wary of being trapped by such dialogues since mining is projected as very scientific and very technology intensive and that women are not capable of understanding or handling technologies. Given the kind of mine extraction and processing activities that women and children are engaged in where they are exposed to the most hazardous and polluting conditions, where mining companies flout all norms and standards in order to use them as the cheapest means of labour, there is no technological truth in these statements.

Even while mining is being increasingly projected as very necessary for a country's growing economy, why are communities rejecting the blank promises offered by corporates? They are no longer willing to be convinced that mining is for the economic prosperity of their communities after witnessing the historical havoc and social exploitation by the past projects. In India, as a network we are saying that there should be a moratorium on mining in green field areas until the existing mine sites are cleaned up and industries take responsibility to the communities and workers.

However, where mining should continue and do justice to workers, they are simply shut down and

abandoned without any future either for communities or for workers. Here our fight is to stop closure and to demand for proper mine closure plan even before a mine is opened up.

I hope that this conference will bring us all into a closer understanding between communities and workers, that we need to work symbiotically and that we do not approach each others' campaigns as opposing but rather, as complementary. By the end of the nine days, I trust that we will strengthen our solidarity as an International Network on gender justice in mining.



## Theme - Global Mining Processes - Gender Perspectives

### Ingrid MacDonald - What Does Corporate Social Responsibility Mean for Women's Rights and Mining?

Governments, international financial institutions and companies justify the promotion of large-scale mining in economically developing countries in the name of economic development and poverty reduction. The traditional belief is that a 'free' private sector led market economy will generate increased levels of gross aggregate wealth which will trickle down to the poor, thereby lifting them out of poverty.

Yet despite decades of economic liberalisation, deregulation and privatisation easing the way for increased private sector activity, the United Nations has found that inequality between and within countries has increased rather than decreased.<sup>3</sup> This trend is especially pronounced for women and children who make up the majority of the poor. What's more, the World Bank's own recent Extractive Industries Review (EIR) Final Report found that the per capita gross domestic profit of resource-rich developing countries grew two or three times slower than those countries with few natural resources from 1960-2000. Such studies call into question the traditional belief of a private sector led market economy and its benefits especially to women and children.

### **Trade liberalisation, privatisation and deregulation**

Over the last few decades the size, power and impact of mining companies has increased dramatically. In 2002, as a result of the increasingly rapid and unfettered movement of international

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<sup>3</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 2001*, *op. cit.* states that "The income gap between the richest one-fifth of the world's people and the poorest one-fifth measured on average national income per head, increased from 30 to 1 in 1960 to 74 to 1 in 1997."

capital, the revenues of five of the world's largest transnational companies were more than double the combined GDP of the world's poorest 100 countries.<sup>4</sup> Economically developing countries are under intense pressure to attract FDI by liberalising their economies, deregulating markets and privatising their industries and services.<sup>5</sup>

This unprecedented state of affairs is being driven by the global movement toward a free market system, driven by the private sector, IFC's such as the IMF, the WTO, the World Bank Group and other regional development banks. IFC's have imposed strict structural adjustment programs on many developing countries in order to generate an economic environment conducive for foreign mining company investment. Strengthening and upholding environmental and human rights standards, including women's rights and gender equity, is rarely, if ever part of these programs.

As a result, transnational companies, including mining companies are increasingly operating in economically developing countries throughout the world and impacting heavily on poor and vulnerable communities. Through my work as Oxfam Community Aid Abroad Mining Ombudsman, we have found that where grievances exist amongst local community women and men affected by mining activities, they often reflect a direct denial of their basic human rights – especially their rights to free, prior and informed

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<sup>4</sup> Utting, P. (2002) *Regulating Business via Multi-stakeholder Initiatives: A Preliminary Assessment*. United Nations Research Institute for Sustainable Development: Available at: <http://www.unrisd.org>.

<sup>5</sup> See Langman, J. (2003) p 5-16; 'If one needs any further evidence that a competition for FDI is on amongst developing countries, according to UNCTAD, since 1991 a total of 1,333 regulatory changes affecting foreign investment have been enacted in at least 76 countries around the world. 95 percent of them, or 1,315, were targeted at making their countries more attractive to foreign investors.'

consent; self-determination; land; and livelihoods. These grievances are often industry wide and found at every stage of the life cycle of mining projects.

We have also found that women in particular are negatively impacted by mining projects; yet there has been little consideration about the roles and rights of women in relation to mining activities; their lack of access to any purported benefits or opportunities that such activities may bring. In fact, the market economy has been roundly criticised as having negative impacts on women and children; with the modern large-scale mining industry dominated by mining conglomerates from Australia, Canada, the USA, United Kingdom and South Africa, being no exception.

Despite host countries having primary responsibility for ensuring that mining companies do not violate the rights of women, in reality many countries are unable or unwilling to discharge this responsibility. Often this stems from a fear of losing potential and current investors on which the host country is economically dependent, or simply lacking the resources and capacity to enforce regulations. It may also be a reaction to the strict structural adjustment programs promoted by international financial institutions and others, which favour market economies over human rights.

Furthermore, the prioritisation of favourable investment conditions provides companies with the ability to engage in what is popularly called a 'race to the bottom' by seeking to minimise costs by investing in countries that provide the lowest costs of production and regulatory standards. Countries then fear raising environmental, labour and occupational health and safety standards because it may make them less attractive to private sector investment.<sup>6</sup> Greater financial and company mobility has further enhanced the ability of companies to rapidly invest in 'investor friendly economies' and divest when they are no longer considered to be so.

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<sup>6</sup> Langman, J., (2003), Op. Cit.

### **The barriers to realising women's rights**

It cannot be assumed that women automatically benefit from economic development efforts, especially in respect of traditionally male dominated industries such as large-scale mining. As women are primarily in the informal and invisible labour force, and are often not active or only partially active within the paid labour force especially in relation to male dominated activities such as large scale mining, their non-paid labour has no 'economic' value. For example, modern large scale mining is very technical and requires highly skilled workers, which can exclude women from the workforce where they have not had the same education, training and vocational opportunities as men.

### **Corporate Social Responsibility**

While there are no standard definitions, 'corporate responsibility', 'corporate accountability' and 'corporate citizenship' are broadly synonymous terms. Corporate responsibility generally refers to business decision-making that is linked to ethical values, occupational health and safety, labour practices and respect for people, communities, and the environment. It recognises that a company or business-like organisation has social, cultural, and environmental responsibilities to the community in which it operates, as well as economic and financial responsibilities to its shareholders and other such stakeholders.

The prevailing methods for putting corporate responsibility into practice over the last decade have been through voluntary mechanisms. Provided voluntary mechanisms fulfill certain important criteria such as possessing independent monitoring and verification systems, such mechanisms have the potential to be a step towards the establishment and implementation of effective legislated regulation. However, voluntary mechanisms are not, and should not be promoted as, an alternative to government regulation. Examples include:

Self regulation – company-specific codes of conduct, policies or guidelines.

Industry regulation – codes of conduct prescribed by industry groupings with voluntary membership such as the Minerals Council of Australia (MCA) and voluntary reporting mechanisms, such as the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI).

Pressure from civil society and community, and multistakeholder initiatives.

Here I will specifically focus on corporate codes of conduct, as they are becoming an increasingly popular form of demonstrating the mining industries' corporate social responsibility.

### **Public relations or legitimate change?**

Public perception of companies and brands has an enormous impact upon profitability. This impact is now far greater than earlier due to the high-speed of information dissemination, heightened community awareness, and greater participation in stock trading.

Companies and industries under attack or suffering an image problem, may, in order to reassure the public, establish a code of conduct for themselves or their suppliers. However there are often considerable gaps between what they say they do and what they *actually* do. Furthermore, companies have huge resources at their disposal to influence public opinion and government policies. They can stage strong campaigns to maintain and improve positive brand images, thus reasserting their power over vulnerable communities.

### **Self-regulation?**

Whilst self-regulation can be a useful internal standard-setting tool for companies and industry groups, it cannot be a substitute for binding international and national standards, especially in relation to upholding the human rights of local community women, men and children impacted by mining operations.

Despite industry sponsored initiatives paying tribute to the importance of human rights and environment protection, businesses are profit driven and their bottom line is straight economics

rather than social and environmental protections, except where such protections can be justified through a 'business case'. Industry processes such as the Mines Minerals and Sustainable Development initiative and the World Bank Group Extractive Industries Review (EIR), whilst useful for raising awareness with mining companies and IFC's, provide no guarantees for local communities at risk.<sup>7</sup>

Self-regulation is voluntary and if companies refuse to sign on - as many do - then their activities are not covered. Self-regulatory mechanisms are often difficult to enforce; lack transparent and independent monitoring and verification systems and can be negotiated down to the lowest common denominator in order to attract industry signatories. For example, an OECD study of 246 voluntary codes showed that the only issue which all included was the prohibition on child labour and that less than half recognised the right to freedom of association.

The success of codes of conduct also often depends heavily on market mechanisms, or the business case for compliance. Yet, it would be disturbing if women's rights were reduced to mere things or objects where the justification for their protection depended on the market value or business case for protecting them. Women's rights are guaranteed under the international human rights system. They represent minimum standards that cannot be traded off against other priorities. Some industry advocates also believe that market forces will ensure that companies adopt best practice regarding human rights and issues of corporate responsibility.

However, history has shown that protecting human rights is not always necessary for profitable business. Many companies have, and continue to prosper, under corrupt, authoritarian, and oppressive regimes. A good example here is the prosperity of diamond companies in South Africa

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<sup>7</sup> See Macdonald, I., & Ross, B., (2003), *Mining Ombudsman Annual Report 2002*, Oxfam Community Aid Abroad, p.8.

under apartheid. It is therefore inappropriate to reduce basic human rights to factors within the business cycle that can be traded or negotiated depending on how good they are for business.

What's more, the ability of victims to claim redress often depends on the good intentions or benevolence of companies, as many codes of conduct do not provide complainants with access to independent complaints mechanisms. The accountability of a company to victims should not depend on the goodwill of that company.

Ultimately however, the most pertinent argument regards impact. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in its study *Voluntary Approaches for Environmental Policy: An Assessment* found that self-regulation of environmental performance through voluntary mechanisms had limited impact on the actual performance of many of the companies studied.<sup>8</sup>

An important question that needs to be raised is whether we should leave the protection of women's rights to the mining industry. Whose interests are these codes serving and are the women impacted by mining actually involved in drafting these codes? There are some potentially positive aspects of codes which protect company workers. As a network, we need to explore how we can engage proactively with these processes and the involved stakeholders.



<sup>8</sup> OECD, (1999), *Voluntary Approaches for Environmental Policy: An Assessment*, see [www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org)

## Joji Carino - Global Institutions, Conventions, International Bodies in the Context of Women and Mining

The experience of indigenous peoples' groups in international processes:

At the international level there are numerous policies regarding women and mining but it is important to know how the fruits of these processes are reaching the women affected and if they are not, how women can access these processes.

The presentation follows three main topics

- Review of international developments relating to mining
- Indigenous peoples and policy advocacy
- The UN Commission on sustainable development

Here I will give you an example of how we are able to send indigenous women into the international agencies like the UN in the past 20-25 years. In the year 1977 indigenous people established a strong position for themselves at the UN where a working group for indigenous peoples as a permanent house was set up.

In 1982 the UN established the working group on indigenous people. The 1992 (Rio, Brazil) UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) was a recognition of major affected groups including indigenous peoples and women among nine others and indigenous peoples got an opportunity to have a dialogue with each other. What is more amazing about this conference was that mining was not yet addressed as an issue for debate with regard to environment and development.

After this meeting local peoples all over the world started organising themselves. The Ogoni people in Nigeria were one of the first to launch a major campaign against Shell. At the same time a lack of governance however led to a reduction of mining codes all over the world through liberalisation.

In 1995, there was a UN conference on Women in Beijing, China where all the issues concerning women were raised including free trade regime and mining. At the 1997 UN General Assembly Special Session Review a review of the events that had taken place over the five years was taken up.

The UN Millennium Summit in 2000 defined a new set of Millennium Development Goals. The meeting had a focus on eradication of poverty as the primary function and main goal of all world institutions including the World Bank.

The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD or Rio+10) in Johannesburg in 2002 saw the mining industry getting organised. Some of the initiatives include the “Global Mining Initiative” as well as the establishment of the industry body ICMM. These were designed to show that the industry was now trying to become a sustainable industry to improve its image.

Friends of the Earth called the World Bank for an independent review of its funding activities in oil, gas and mining along the same lines as the World Commission of Dams which had operated only a few years earlier. The commission delivered a report requiring local decision-making on dams and criticised the history of constructing big dams around the world. The World Bank responded by setting up the Extractive Industries Review but the research group did not have the same setup as that of the dams commission. For example it only contained one eminent person, Indonesian Emil Salem.

The final report of EIR was delivered in January 2004 with strong inputs made by indigenous peoples all over the world. The recommendations were that the World Bank should stop oil, gas and coal financing altogether. The report also noted that unless stronger human rights concerning mining could be employed mining may not lead to development. As the World Commission on Dams commission had done earlier the Extractive Industries Review wanted local people to have the right of prior informed consent to any project

affecting their communities. So far the World Bank board has chosen not to implement the recommendations.

In 2004 the Global Reporting Initiative was launched. A special mining sector supplement was also added to answer special requirements for this industry sector. The entire scheme is however a voluntary approach where companies are not legally responsible for the impacts of mining and can choose to contribute information and what and how this information is collected and disseminated. There has been no setting up of standards in the initiative.

### **Future**

A UN follow-up on tribal and human rights in extractive industries in the year 2005

UNCSD Focus on mining is a one year program launched by Canada and South Africa and the meeting will take place in 2010.

I wish to briefly speak about the policy issues as policies and decisions at the UN constantly keep changing. It is important that we participate at these levels and be vigilant about the policy changes especially related to mining. What we have to decide at this conference as an international network is, what are the issues that we want to bring to the international arena? What are the issues related to women in mining that we want to assert? This is what we should be talking about over the next few days.



## Open discussion - Day I

### **Hannah:**

Mines destroy human dignity and urban cultures erode traditional cultures and social practices. The social balance is lost. Natural resources are getting depleted, water is getting polluted; government and industry exploitation of community and workers is high. Mining is our livelihood in many places but community rights should also be ensured and there should be responsible mining. My question to Leticia is which kind of mining is more responsible-community/traditional mining or corporate mining and is it possible to ensure codes of conduct?

### **Leticia:**

Mining is a major economy in our country and there are big corporations and other national governments entering our country for extracting minerals under the Common Development Plan. The corporates are talking of corporate social responsibility but under this garb, they are cheating us in the dark. But, we were able to get some of the mines closed down where there has not been responsible mining. We are demanding for responsible mining.

It is important for communities to participate in policies. It cannot be achieved overnight and this is the time to start the struggle at national and international levels. We want to strengthen the people's struggles and for this we need strong unions for workers to get better wages and demand for CSR in a better manner. Our government is trying to sell our rights to multinationals and it is our biggest enemy. So we feel that small scale and traditional mining is beneficial to local people and we should work to improve their functioning.

*Question: Please explain the structure and role of the trade union.*

### **Sizaye:**

The structure of the trade union basically is to try and give some guidelines to the miners as well as

to help them get better working conditions. The current problem in Zimbabwe is that we cannot take part in the decision as well as policy making process of MNC's as women are not employed in any decision-making position there. I feel that there have to be women in such positions.

**Question:** Is there a possibility that we women can take a stand against World Bank's present policies and change them for the better?

### **Joji Carino:**

No recommendation has been accepted or taken into consideration by the World Bank till date.

### **Leticia:**

If you take a look at the World Bank's documents and policies, on the one hand they are talking about gender-based perspectives. But, we know that women are not included in the policy making processes of the World Bank. While they are talking about compensation to the miners, they are slowly pushing women into the informal sector, where they will not be entitled to any kind of compensation. I am not saying that they should not talk about male miners, as some men are in the informal mining sector, too. But the number of women in the formal sector is abysmal compared to the number of women in the informal sector. Also, the proportion of men in the formal sector is far more than that of men in the informal sector.

We should endeavour to bring the women in the informal sector into the formal sector. Only then can we affect the decision and policy making processes of the World Bank.

### **Bidulata:**

My question is about BHP because a lot of communities have been affected very badly thanks to BHP's mining operations. How do we fight against such a menace?

My second question to you is that I want to know the internal working structure of BHP.

**Matilda:**

In 2000, two large companies merged with BHP making it one of the biggest companies in the world. BHP is now in most countries.

Whenever we try to have a dialogue with BHP, they always send their lawyers, making us fight with them because they do not listen to us. But the lawyers show themselves in a favourable light to the media, distorting our arguments, denying the abuses of the company and misinforming them about compensation which is not given to us. The nexus between lawyers and the company ensures that even the small compensation doled out is snatched by the lawyers as their fee. Now, we have already lost our land and about fifty percent of the compensation money. So, all we have received in reality is a token compensation.

We are still fighting against BHP. It's going to be long, tough fight, and we do not see an end to it in the near future.

**Josphinah Gumbi:**

I am a mine worker with BHP. I had to go underground twice everyday because I had to supervise the work done and report that to my superiors. I couldn't understand their language. I was working in a coal mine. We have seen our sisters and children dying due to the pollution caused, thanks to mining. This is not just a problem for women; it is a problem for both, men and women. While understanding the sensitivity of the problems in South Africa, men should join hands with women to fight this problem. We will fight for the formation of Trade Unions for miners.



## DAY II

### Theme - Issues concerning women in communities Displaced and Affected by Mining: Rights of Rural and Indigenous women

#### **Matilda Koma - Issues Concerning Indigenous Communities in Mining**

I am not going to give a professional speech but rather put forward to this meeting some recommendations I feel are crucial for Indigenous communities and nations in relation to the extractive industries (mining, oil and gas). I do this not only because I believe many issues are similar across the globe, but also with the perspective of issues in my own country (Papua New Guinea) as well as with my experience as an indigenous person with mining occurring in my own backyard.

#### **Recommendation 1**

Traditional Landowners must have a right to equity share from mining activities (mineral, oil and gas) that occur on their land. They must have a fair distribution of the wealth that their land provides.

In Papua New Guinea, major stakeholders in the mining industry are:

1. the Investor/Company
2. the Government and
3. the Traditional Landowners

The Investor however, normally drafts both these documents with some assistance from the government. While the Compensation Agreement is negotiated between the Landowners and the Investor, the MOA is usually approved and signed by five parties:

1. The Company
2. The National Government
3. The Provincial Government
4. The Local Level Government
5. The Traditional Land Owner

In this process some traditional landowners miss out on equity participation. I say 'some' because some Papua New Guinean landowners have successfully negotiated equity to date and therefore have shares in the mineral/oil/gas wealth. However, there are others who are missing out on such arrangements. On top of that the ratio of signing any agreement usually falls short on landowners because in almost all cases the government and the companies work closely together serving each others interest more than with the local communities particularly those affected riparian.

Why should traditional or tribal land owners have a right to a share in the mineral/oil/gas/ wealth?

Indigenous communities, tribal and traditional landowners as well as First Nations (Canada), deserve that recognition to be shareholders in the wealth. After all, that wealth really belongs to them. All people on earth have a place they've originated from.

Indigenous communities/people have always had this close attachment to their land.

"Land" that has been part of their lives in many ways from generations to generation. Land over which, their ancestors have protected through blood-shed and even death so that the future generation can have a place to live on and upon.

The introduction of the foreign concept or ideology that minerals/oil/gas belongs to the state is disturbing and does not help the local inhabitants of the land. Maybe because of its (mineral, oil and/or gas) high economic gains in comparison to other natural resources, it is

appropriate for the state to claim ownership and have equity share for overall development purpose of a country. But while they and the Industry have their share traditional landowner to should also be recognized in the sharing of this cake.

**Recommendation 2:**

Mine-Affected communities must be fairly compensated for the deprivation of their rights as a result of mining activities in the area.

Usually more communities are affected by mining activities than those from whose land the mineral, oil or gas is extracted. These are people whose rivers, oceans and air are polluted, whose social and political structures have been dismantled, whose livelihood has been destroyed and those whose health are at risk because of mining.

In PNG 95% of people are traditional landowners and 85% of the 5.2 million people live off land that traditionally belongs to them. They live subsistence livelihood – grow their own food, fish in their rivers and oceans, hunt in their bushes, use bush materials for their houses, use herbs for sickness and so forth. People have their own social and political structures; own native languages (about 700), come for many (over800) tribal groups and are closely linked to or attached to one another and their environment.

New and rapid changes imposed on these vulnerable communities from mining activities are also rapidly destroying these very unique lives that people have lived for generations.

In Papua New Guinea all because of mining: we watch our rivers dying one after the other, we are not sure what is happening to our ocean floors that submarine tailings disposal is causing although we can tell from the declining number of our marine resources and dying reefs that our children's future is at threat. We see major social changes in the lives of our people as a result of the introduction

of lots of money into our communities – there is prostitution, alcoholism, gambling, night clubs which was never part of our lives, family violence and breakdowns, HIV/AIDS issues on rise, people become more lazier and no longer work in food gardens, elders status undermined by the new bred generation, so forth and so forth. It is painful physically, spiritually and mentally not because people want to keep living primitive lives, but rather because the act is forcefully imposed making people struggle to quickly change from their normal way of life into another form which is quite foreign to them. People are made to believe that money is the sole solution to so-called "poverty alleviation". In PNG we fight vigorously over our land because we believe it if life for us. Therefore people should be respected and allowed to change according to their own pace and wish.

This does not mean that we do not want development. What we need is some time and space at which we can cope with. People need that respect for a change to occur but at a pace that is more acceptable and one that will sustain their lives overtime. Rapid changes can result in increasing poverty among vulnerable communities because of unexpected major changes imposed as a result of mining.

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**95% of people are traditional landowners and 85% of the 5.2 million people live off land that traditionally belongs to them**  
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Nonetheless, we can understand that mining companies may not entertain this request because of the nature of their work – that basically putting profit before anything else. But the investor and the government must have some sense of responsibility for their actions and be prepared to compensate fairly. By fair compensation, I mean what is paid should be worth the value lost by the communities whose livelihood has been entirely based on their surrounding environment. A formula should be derived in collaboration with all parties to cater for proper compensation not only on the value of the destruction of physical environment but also on the destruction of social,

cultural and spiritual values or what I would refer to as “a psychological destruction”. Psychological destruction is immeasurable if I’m not wrong.

### **Recommendation 3**

A dispute and grievance mechanism at International, Regional and National Level should be established for vulnerable communities (mine-affected, mine workers, women, etc) whose cases may not be properly addressed by currently established systems.

In Papua New Guinea, there is no proper legally recognized system from which disputes and mine-affected community grievances can be addressed. Compensation Agreement is currently negotiable between company and landowners. Where a dispute over compensation is unresolved, the Minister responsible for Environment arbitrates. In many case, local communities may refuse the arbitration and take the matter to court. But so far this has been an expensive and unsuccessful exercise. Compensation is not an issue for landowners alone, it is an issue for all affected communities as well and sometimes can become a very complex issue on its own.

Currently some parts of the Papua New Guinea Mining Law is being reviewed under the World Bank Technical Assistant Loan and one of the major concern is giving the Mine Advisory Board (Department of Mines and one or two other government agencies) the legal recognition to approve of any mine-related issues brought to them; and the Mine Warden (Department of Mines) the power to resolve disputes. These two bodies are not neutral and from experience they will normally act in the interest of mining companies.

### **Recommendation 4**

More support and avenues given to Women in Mining to enable the opportunity of sharing and encouraging one another in their work – whether it be as mine workers, unions, miners or activist. Not only that, but women be given some recognition also in decision-making forums.

In Papua New Guinea and as in many other indigenous communities around the world, women always play a different role from men normally seen as housewives, playing most of the work in the kitchen and of motherhood.

Slowly by slowly this kind of barriers have been broken into and more women are seen playing a more proactive role in pursuing their agenda and taking practical actions in their professions and in what they believe in. In Papua New Guinea this change is currently taking place vibrantly and I’m sure it is similar for many other countries. In some mining areas, roles of women are changing drastically in different ways. Local women of areas where mining activities are in place now experience this trend.

In Papua New Guinea women are mobilizing to take the front line in pursuing the protection of environment for the sake of the future generation. This year we had women protesting in Lihir Island for the Lihir Management Company (Gold mine operated by Rio Tinto) to address certain issues they felt were not being dealt with well; women from Tolukuma Gold Mines (operated by Durban Rooderpoort Deep, DRD, A South African mine) pursuing their rights through government authorities; civil society women’s formation of Mine Affected Women’s Foundation (MAWF) and so forth.

In addition, education on gender and HIV/Aids are seriously taken up as well.

We want to educate our men folk by making them understand why it is important to be gender sensitive. It is not about power but about sharing of values that can contribute to overall development.

Therefore, I believe that encouraging the voice of women in many of these types of meetings and at decision-making forums, whether it is at local, national, regional or international levels, could make some difference.

## **Medha Patkar - Political Economy of development and displacement**

It is the economics and politics of development that really lead to understanding the impact of displacement; whether it is environmental, economic or political. The social, political and economic issues that come up while assessing the impact of mining on communities can be categorized as follows:

- Ownership rights
- Technological issues like choice of technology,
- Environmental issues such as natural resources utilization and management and;
- Distributive justice issues like parity in distribution of benefits to the different sections of the population.

The categories can also be further discussed from the point of view of the displaced people. From the point of view of human rights and women's rights activists, these form the core issues. Displacement is not just physical dislocation. It can also mean marginalization. If we go by this definition, which includes the impact on people's livelihoods and not just on their habitation, we should consider the impact of mining on the common property resources and not just the titled property resources. We should also consider the impacts on cultural environment and socio-cultural relationships and, of course, we should review the impact on the power relations – both socio-economic and political. Therefore, in this wider context the number of displaced populations within India ranges from 40 million to 80 million. What requires to be understood when we talk about such numbers is that large numbers of the affected people are just left out of the records when it comes to rights and entitlement in terms of rehabilitation. Two special sub-categories - indigenous people and women, - are the most affected. Two-thirds of the labour force in the world comprises women who have the least percentage of property (one per cent) and incomes (ten per cent).

Gandhi said that if you want to make the right decision, you think of the last human being. What he meant by this was the poorest of the poor and the downtrodden among the downtrodden. But in today's context we should think of the most affected among the displaced. In the Indian context, that could be a dalit, socially and economically the most disadvantaged with no property rights to speak of. It may also be an indigenous woman with abundant access to natural resources but no property rights. This is where we should begin our efforts. If we look at the impacts of displacement we cannot think of one mine in an area but of 'the course of the land and everything attached to the land' (a phrase in the age old Act of Land Acquisition used by the British Empire). It may not just be the house; it may be sub-surface resources like groundwater and grazing land for the cattle. We have to take into consideration various categories of trades and occupations.

### **People directly/indirectly affected by projects**

When we discuss about legitimate records or official records, we may have to begin with the whole arena of rights. Otherwise we will be excluding all forest cultivators, who are considered criminals although they have been maintaining sustainable forestry practices for ages. We also would be excluding those who have user rights to common property resources, such as the grazing communities with huge herds of cattle who need the grazing lands and women who are historically a marginalised group. These issues will come to light only if we assert their rights to the resources first and not just begin with the right to get rehabilitated or relocated – as if we are in hurry and begging for dislocation and displacement!

The whole issue of the right to resources is invariably linked to the right to decide what should be done with those resources and whether or not a resource such as a mineral resource that is underground, or on the surface like bauxite or uranium, or just the sand, a minor mineral in the Indian legal term, needs to be extracted or not. Political and economic decision-making begins at

that stage and with that point. So we cannot accept mining as it is handed over to us. We will review whether the mine is necessary, desirable or not. Any change that uses natural or human resources should first be agreed upon and it should be a development related decision.

The next obvious question should be “who desires it?” That is where the rights of the displaced population come into play. These rights define the role of authority and power of each of the subsections in taking a decision about a developmental project’s work plan.

The right to resources is invariably linked to the right to developmental planning and if the community, as a part of the socio-economic and political unit, has that right, i.e., if it is granted that right by the law makers or if the community asserts its right, then the decision related to a mine or dam becomes the community’s decision. This can change the entire economics and politics of the place. Hence this arena of rights is crucial to politics of development and displacement. This is my first major point.

The right to information comes next. If decisions were taken by someone else, you seek information. But if you have the right to decide, you become the source of information. Giving consent becomes your prerogative. Then you have power to promote your choice of technology; you decide the process and pace of development and where and when a moratorium should be applied. This kind of power helps to minimise displacement, destruction and degradation of the environment. This would also hopefully, minimise economic expropriation and exploitation and, of course, political exclusion.

In such a situation, issues of gender, caste-related inequities and differences in natural resource ownerships within the community will not be acute. Today, it is basically a conflict between winners and losers. To understand the economics of development cost benefit analysis should be performed. If we talk about environmental impacts, we have an EIA (environmental impact assessment) to answer with.

But from whose point of view do we have all this analysis and assessment? If it is from the point of view of the ‘losers’ we can as well begin by defining them not as ‘losers’ but as investors. They are not investing money like the corporate sector or State; they are not even putting forth a technology, giving technocratic inputs; but they are investing their land, the minerals that should have legally belonged to them. They have the first right if not the ultimate right to that resource. They also invest water and everything attached to that natural environmental unit. It is therefore necessary to understand that the economics of a project can be presented from two different points of view.

Of course, we will then have to place a value on the resources. Here, the word ‘valuation’ has a double meaning. Valuation in terms of money is one thing that the State as the miner or the State as protector and agent of the miners undertakes. We may have a different kind of monetary valuation if we want to counter their argument using their methodology in our argument. But we may discard that kind of monetary valuation and say that we value the resources as our life support and hence oppose certain actions that are destructive to the resources. So that right also should be granted to the community. We must assert our right over the resources with confidence and not with arrogance. Therefore we must have a holistic impact assessment, which includes socio-cultural economics, to dissect their economics. This opens up a whole arena of new strategies that, I am sure, will be worked out during the next few days of the conference.

Again, who are they? The State and the principles of eminent domain are the main actors. To this day multinationals and global powers, including the W.T.O, are instrumental in forcing the State to neglect the rights of women, indigenous people, and the entire community but mainly protecting the miners. Hence we should pay more attention to national alliances than global or international groups.

One needs to understand here that it is the State that is actually legitimizing the processes of expropriation, displacement and dispossession. We could challenge it legally, but the legal regime is limited to those bodies of State legislature, judiciary and bureaucracy, which are not effective. We also have to decide where we can go beyond, and say that human rights are more important and fundamental than legal rights. We will have to adopt multiple-front strategies to know what is happening at the ADB and African Development Bank, about individual multinational corporations, and the anti-nationals that are here in the form of Reliance joining hands with Enron and Pepsi. The actions of these organisations need to be scrutinized and challenged.

At the same time, as I said earlier, the State and every organ of the State needs to be tackled head on. How best can we expose their economics is a question to be discussed in more detail. I would say that the indigenous communities, which are the worst hit, give us the clue. The clue is that the real conflict is between natural resource based communities and urban industrial societies. This conflict needs to be our basis not just for the struggle but also for economic and political analysis of development and displacement.

Today, the richer the community in natural resources, the more vulnerable it is to attack, encroachment and expropriation. So our strategy needs to be based upon expropriators. If they take away one thing from us we must take away another from them. This strategy is not limited to a road blockade for a few hours. The strategy should be far deeper with wider implications.

For example in the Narmada valley we had no alternative but to grab the land as we did for one month. The government then started giving us land which it purchased. We may have to resort to another round of land grab. But we have to give it a different name for the sake of understanding, as we are not grabbing the land but are rightfully taking it back. As we harness our own water resources we must also harness our own mineral resources.

We have to work towards this, not through corporations, but through cooperation. We may be giving this effort the form of a legal cooperative. Of course, the community itself is a cooperative in many situations. The situation is different in each country, but if we have a unit that can be called a cooperative, we can prove that harnessing our resources can lead the Adivasis in Visakhapatnam to think how they can extract a handful of bauxite. A pinch of salt made a difference in the freedom movement of India.

Doing this will break up the existing colonial relationship between 'losers' and 'winners' in the country. A new relationship, which is anti-colonial, anti-exploitation and anti-expropriation, can be evolved. That will also help to end or mitigate undesirable environmental and social impacts.

I have just one more point. This effort, as I said, would require multiple front strategies. I would like to highlight just two of the fronts. At the global front what would be the basis of our alliance to evolve a new politics? I think our alliance will have to be not just Third World based or First World based. Even the North-South language terminology should not be used any more. It will include women, dalits and all those who depend on natural resources for their livelihoods. Human labour comes first and that will really bring in that gender perspective in terms of what is right and wrong in development. Every thing will follow if we have the development perspective clear. Of course as an interim strategy we will have to assert and gain something for the workers and for the women workers who are the first to be retrenched once the World Bank comes in. In the whole belt of the mining industry, from Bengal to Bihar, especially the Durgapur Asansol Belt, women are not employed because companies do not want to give them maternity leave. For companies, profit margin is to be the highest and profit has to rise over people. So that is the confrontation that we will have with the alternative development perspective which gender sensitivity gives us.

## **A Second Front**

The second front I want to refer to is petty power politics. I am calling it petty because power politics or politics per se is a much wider concept than electoral politics. But we have to rethink what is happening in the name of politics because it has an impact on all development projects including mining projects. The global convention on miners that took place in Delhi drew many people ranging from miners and IT technocrats to several others with considerable influence in all sectors. They came to India because it remains one of the richest countries in natural resources, to date. Because their work is just a miniscule part of the profits that goes into electoral politics, wrong decisions are made in the development of any sector and projects.

The World Bank consultants were taken on our planning commissions, committees and mid-appraisal committees. Now they are out because all of us including the left front protested their inclusion. But the Bank is not completely out yet. It may be informally, if not formally, consulted as the Vice-Chairman of the Planning Commission very categorically stated. This is much more dangerous as there is no accountability or transparency. Although the consultants are officially out, for the time being in India they are still in as they are in every country. So this kind of electoral politics that uses not just the mines, not just the monetary contribution from the mining companies, but all those investors, the corporate sectors and the profit makers to gain and consolidate power, need to be challenged for aspiring to have those kind of undemocratic power relations. How to do it is the difficult question. What are our strategies?

There needs to be a strategy for those who are watching the mining industry and those who are challenging them or their impacts. There is one more point I want to make here. That is about the life style issue. Discussing the economics and politics of mining would be futile, if only we put forth the statistics and perspectives of what is mined and who uses it. Who pays and who benefits? All that is mined from one place and is

used in the form of value-added thermal power for another section of population in the cities - the urban rich. We will have to challenge it. Otherwise we will appear as if we are against development.

We will have to take a stance on costs and benefits as well as the economic and political framework. Nothing can be discarded, not even plastic in this present context. But how to minimise its use, whether it is electricity, water or minerals, is a question of life style. This will also help us define our economics and our politics of the displaced. The mass force and strength will come from displaced people, not from those who play the catalytic and facilitating roles. The landless will define and lead the land revolution.

## **Usha Ramnathan - Displacement in the Mining Context - Some Legal Perspectives**

I will start with some ground rules that we established over the years, working on displacement issues. Displacement as a phenomenon has been occurring for over a century and half but it is only in the past 25 years that the magnitude of displacement has been recognized and has been given public space and acknowledgment. One of the factors that allowed displacement to continue unacknowledged inextricably entwined with the process of development.

Because of this, nobody acknowledged that it was happening. The state has to implement policies and undertake projects that boost industrialisation and the economy. But the price being paid in the process by those adversely affected by the state's actions is never acknowledged. Since the 1980s it is becoming increasingly impossible to ignore the number of people being displaced from their homes to facilitate development projects.

While we were formulating our ground rules, we learnt two important facts:

- Only the State has the power to make the law and,
- Only state has the power to control all forms of violence.

These two facts have been central to our understanding of how the relationships between the people, corporations and the State have been reorganized. At this point, by the word 'State', I am only referring to it as a political and executive entity. The judiciary is also part of the State plays a slightly different role although its primary role is to bolster and strengthen the programs and policies of the State. These are some of the understandings with which we have to work.

Now we have learnt over time that poverty is not a static phenomenon lasting 25-30 years. There is a process of impoverishment that results in cycles of poverty. However the State talks either about people who are poor or about poverty as a phenomenon.

When we observe a so-called development process, we are watching to see whether it is a process which improves the life conditions of everybody affected by it or whether it has specific inbuilt conditions that cause impoverishment. Tribal communities are worst affected in this process because they neither have property nor any of those symbols of non-poverty which other communities may acquire over time. Their symbols of prosperity in subsistence are not recognized as anything that has worth or value. So, every time there is a taking away of their capacity for subsistence, there is a process set in motion which results in impoverishment of tribal communities. Or, if communities which do not possess these visible symbols of value, then the State and corporations justify their actions saying that there is no real cost involved in this because they do not have anything to begin with anyway. Thus the notion of subsistence, self-help, self-reliance and communion with the environment and working

with resources without interventions from a third agency, is not recognized at all. I know that many of us here are from post-colonial countries. What gets left behind as a legacy of colonialism is very hard to shake off. Despite our efforts to rid ourselves of it, we are still left with huge accretions that weigh us down.

Under the process called eminent domain, government can (does) seize private property for the public use - to build roads, schools or court houses. Now this is a very useful concept for State to assert its right over the territory over which it has gained control and colonial courts also assisted this process by stating that courts could not question the State. It is enough for the State to say that it is taking the land for public purpose.

Most post-colonial countries work with Constitutions while the United Kingdom prides itself in not having a written Constitution. UK can afford do so because it had the continuity of rule. Post-colonial countries don't have that luxury. We had at least one point where we had to break off and start afresh. That is why we have the constitution and we refer back to it to find out about our rights. We expected a break from the colonial past. But the same methods got carried forth even in post-colonial era.

Moreover, all human rights documents produced around the world are not useful for protecting the rights of the affected people. They are good for proving the morality of rights but not enough to assert the community's rights in its domestic jurisdiction.

Medha spoke about the Land Acquisition Act and the British implemented this law in 1800 as they wanted to assert their rights over all the territory they occupied. Now the Land Acquisition Act says that State can take over the land at any time and can do whatever it wants in the name of public

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purpose, and nobody can resist this appropriation. The only concession that has been made is that for those who have an interest, which is a legal interest, should be compensated for what they show as they have lost.

The doctrine of eminent domain cannot be applied when lands are not individually owned. When you can't find an individual owner, there is no question of buying land off him. A large part of the tract, which are now being taken over for mining or development projects, actually have only some pockets which are recognized as "belonging to individuals and to people." Large chunks of them are seen as belonging to the State. One of the things we have to challenge is the State's role as a landowner. Is the State asserting the right to ownership? Who's the State? Executives/bureaucracies in most countries wield absolute power. If bureaucracy believes that a certain project is necessary, then it also finds a way to implement it. One such way is perpetuating a myth that State is the landowner. In most of the cases, states' actions have not been questioned. There is no accountability.

We also have a colonial notion about the encroachers. An encroacher is a person who doesn't have a legal right to be where he is. A trespasser is a temporary encroacher but an encroacher is more 'permanent'. An encroacher may enter an area, work on a land, may build a house or shanty and live off the land. They are classified as encroachers and in the past few years, particularly since this process of globalization and liberalization started, we are finding large number of people, particularly indigenous people and people who have been pushed into poverty, are systematically being classified as encroachers. This categorisation not only strips them of legality, but also renders them 'illegal'. Again we find that the colonial idea of the rule of law, which was used to justify many of the actions of the erstwhile colonial State, is being used even today. We are enforcing the same law when we are sending away the poor, marginalized or indigenous people out or when we exclude them from a certain territory.

The State claims that it is enforcing the law to evict encroachers from the place to make room for 'development', thus dubbing encroachers and 'illegal people' as obstacles to development. And they shouldn't be there anyway. In the process, you are legalizing that area and the State justifies it by fostering 'development' in that area. So when the State says that people have to move out of the area of development project, we learnt to challenge the displacement. We have given multiple meanings to it and even started talking the language of displacement. So it is either the environment or workers, or to put it differently, it is either the rights of indigenous people or workers.

The State and corporations have found a very effective way of breaking up communities by playing one group's rights against the other's. Communities' interest never gets recognized because of the kind of cost benefits that gets bandied about. The entire notion of cost benefit analysis is being challenged. Monitoring of costs and exclusion and externalizing of many other costs have been challenged here.

It is very common to hear the Indian State saying that it cannot afford the rights at this point of development. We are a growing nation, which is into global economy. Since the 1950s, ever since major development projects have started, there has been a large-scale displacement of people and for a long time it wasn't even counted as a cost. It was only in 1949, for the first time it became part of the project decision that people who were displaced by the project had to be rehabilitated as part of the project itself. It was very minimal and only referred to people who had land. They said those who have land should be given land. But it was still not acknowledged that compensating with money alone is not going to help communities to reconstruct themselves. At that time, what communities required or the extent of laws was not seen as a factor in making a decision about projects.

We should leave the State with no alternative but to acknowledge that communities have to be allowed to decide what price they are willing to pay and what they take in return. We have had enough of the language of sacrifice which says somebody has to sacrifice for the sake of development. Unfortunately, it is always indigenous communities and people whose rights never get recognized who have sacrificed. There are also artisans, barbers and other service providers who, when the community is broken down, would be lost and they would have nothing to replace it. They are not even recognized as losers.

One way to get these 'service providers' recognized is to force the State to acknowledge that there is a cost built into the project. So it is only when you make them pay a price matching the communities' loss, the state will realize that the project is after all not profitable. It is profitable only when they have a free ride. The very fact that corporations say that the losses are borne by someone else shows that they are piggy riding on communities.

"What is the place of women in all this?" The standard reply one gets from corporations is\_\_ "women, like any other displaced people, are given a place in our policies."

Now here we have a process where the protest became so strong that it was no longer possible to ignore it. The State did two things simultaneously – it kept cracking down on protests and it criminalized protests. Every kind of protest today is criminalized. One of the tactics the State has used is to constantly keep filing cases against people who stand up in protest. The State needs to show a face that is aggressive. Partly because of this and partly because of World Bank's policies, where it is very clear that it will be politically correct in every statement to the extent it

understands, we find that over the years, that their policy directive in rehabilitation keeps getting refined.

With the kind of language that we are bringing to that domain, the World Bank also insists that every time it gives money for a project there has to be a rehabilitation package that goes along with it. So the package is created.

However, there is absolutely no condition that there should be implementation of that package. What is required is that there is a package and that's what the Indian State has also done every time. Many corporations that we have functioning in India are in the public sector for 50 years now. During this period, it is the public sector, which has been the most visible notation of the peoples' rights. Every time the protest reaches a pitch, the World Bank on the one hand and the protesters on the other force the public sector corporations to come out with a rehabilitation policy.

We wonder if it is possible to rehabilitate 400 million displaced people, as the process includes not only replacing lands but also finding jobs for the people who are displaced. This is highly impossible. Then why is it that

we are willing to accept or even listen to the language of rehabilitation? So the sector, which is protesting, and resisting displacement clearly sees that rehabilitation cannot be an answer, however, well intentioned it is.

What is worse is rehabilitation packages have only come as a way of silencing or de-legitimizing protests and are never intended to be carried out. It is only an intervening mechanism to silence people and that is the reason it has no credibility in most of our areas. It is useful to have something on paper because it gives you something more to hold the State to. Yet another disturbing development is that earlier the State at least used to pretend to be a neutral arbiter between

“**Rehabilitation packages have only come as a way of silencing or de-legitimizing protests and are never intended to be carried out...**”

corporations and the people, but now even that hypocrisy is gone. Some people say hypocrisy is bad. I wouldn't quite agree with the statement. I think it is a very useful thing and when people say the 'right things' you can hold them to it. Now they have stopped even saying the right things.

So we are stuck in a situation where they say "This is 'development'. This is what the country needs and if you don't agree with this, you are an anti-nationalist." You are in any case an encroacher. Now either the indigenous people or the people who are in these areas are encroachers, and those who go as catalysts are outsiders. Therefore, you have only two categories of people who are resisting this process of development-- encroachers and outsiders. The State is trying to de-legitimize the activities of these people by using language like this.

There is a complete link-up of interests between the State and corporations. The people have become permanent adversaries of the State and that is a tragic situation. I think this is one of the places where we need to intervene to change the dynamics because the State has turned bureaucratic. It's the government of the day that is the State and not citizens of the nation.

One statement that haunts us is --"You call us encroachers. Show us any place in India, as we are citizens of India, where we are not encroachers and we will go there." Such a place does not exist. These are some of the issues that we are trying to contend with at this point of our struggle to make the State responsive and accountable and not to let corporations take over our lives.



## Country Presentations:

### **Philippines: Fighting the Mining Giants in Defense of People's Mineral Resources**

**Vernie Yocogan-Diano**

#### **1. The Supreme Court Decides Against the Philippine Mining Act of 1995**

On January 29 of this year, the Supreme Court of the Philippines made a laudable decision against the Philippine Mining Act of 1995 declaring it as unconstitutional. Specifically, it referred to the full ownership of foreign mining companies to the exploration and development of the country's mineral resources.

This served as a victory for communities and people's organizations that campaigned hard for the scrapping of an abominable law that constituted the greed and grip of transnational mining companies on the mineral resources of this country. This development is a concrete achievement in the struggles for indigenous peoples rights and for national patrimony in the control of the country's resources.

In retrospect, the Philippines Mining Act of 1995 was a concrete response of the Philippine government to the World Bank's allowing the liberalizing of the mineral industry in 70 or so countries. The Mining Act so easily gave away more than 45% of the country's land area to mining applications. The Cordillera region, where mineral resources remain high about 65% of its land area has been covered by several mining applications since the enactment of the Philippine Mining Act of 1995. Upon the release of the Supreme Court's decision, the people's movement in the Cordillera led by the Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA) called on the DENR to implement the SC decision and for the national government to urgently implement a moratorium on large-scale mining in the said region.

Surprisingly, the decision came after President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo issued an executive

order entitled the National Policy Agenda on Revitalizing Mining in the Philippines. This sought to replace the National Mineral Policy, the implementing document for the Philippines Mining Act of 1995. The executive order was hailed by government as the product of a 9-month consultation by officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), (the government agency that has jurisdiction on mining activities), with major stakeholders in the mining sectors. On the part of the people, they questioned the process as their inputs were hardly or not at all reflected in the final draft. The final draft only contained the biased result of a National Mining Conference called by the DENR and mining companies in December 2003, which was attended by their own supporters. The DENR secretary hailed the bogus conference as a success referring to several points agreed upon by participants which include promoting responsible mining with strong emphasis on social equity and respect for culture, the rehabilitation and remediation of mines and the separation of DENR functions to serve as check-and-balance mechanism.

As the Philippine government is hell-bent on revitalizing the mining industry, it is assumed that the local and foreign mining companies would appeal for the reversal of the Supreme Court decision. And that is not far from happening. The present government is ever ready to go for gold thus it is determined to remove all legal impediments, even a charter change so it can fully liberalize the mining industry of the country.

## **2. The Bad Practices of Mining TNCs will Merely be Recycled:**

Determined to pursue their mining projects, mining companies colluded with government officials from the President of the Republic to local officials in the communities. The military as well as paramilitary groups virtually become their security force. In a People's National Mining Conference held in May 2002 that gathered leaders of people's organizations and communities opposed to large-scale corporate mining in the

Philippines, the participants consolidated the following bad practices of Mining TNCs:

### **Use of Deception:**

To pave their entry into communities, mining TNCs promise "progress and development" in the form of taxes paid to local government, high paying jobs, and livelihood projects for farmers and indigenous peoples. They get community folk to sign for an attendance sheet, which would be used by the mining company as proof of endorsement. Mining companies are also good at promising infrastructure facilities such as health centers, schools and community halls and providing social services such as organizing cooperatives and medical missions. To counter the charges of environmental devastation, the mining companies "promise of "environment-friendly and advanced technology" in mining, and distribution off "environmental awards" and "environmental projects" as "proof" of their track records in the country and overseas. Thus the words "sustainable" and "responsible mining" are simple green-wash.

### **Divide-and-rule tactics:**

Desperate to get the people's consent and defeat people's opposition, mining companies have organized fake tribal councils. In Southern Philippines, fake tribal councils installed by mining TNCs divided the ranks of tribal leaders and instigated tribal conflicts. Mining TNCs have also set up pseudo-NGOs to do community organizing and offer services to veer away community opposition. Priests were even employed to convince the people in accepting proposals of mining TNCs like what the Lepanto Consolidated Mining Company in Mankayan, Benguet in the Cordillera did, even to the point of demonizing those who are opposing the expansion of the mining company. Bribery in the form of cash, house and lot, position in the mining company and others, to local officials and even community leaders is also a common practice. Those the mining TNCs are able to bribe would become their instrument in sowing division and conflict in the community. Mining companies have even

encouraged transmigration into mining-affected community to “minoritize” original inhabitants.

**Using and bending laws to the TNCs’ favour:**

Mining companies have used the Philippine Mining Act of 1995, abused or manipulated the Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) and even the Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC). Likewise, they have made use of subsidiaries and dummies, sell and buy existing mining agreements and downscale Financial Technical Assistance Agreement (FTAA) to Mineral Production Sharing Agreement (MPSA). Worse, mining companies have also sued in court leaders or members of communities who rose up in protest and used the approval of the DENR, the Mines Geo-sciences Board, National Commission on Indigenous People’s (NCIP), local government units and other government officials to pursue their projects even without the approval of community folk.

**Exploitation of workers and employees:**

Mining companies in the Philippines are notorious for violating the basic rights of their workers and employees. Low wages, poor working conditions, lack or absence of safety gadgets and facilities remain to be a rampant practice of mining companies. Unions are busted; workers are denied their benefits. Contracting out has become a common scheme thus endangering job security. The Lepanto Consolidated Mining Company in Mankayan, Benguet in the Cordillera file high-level charges to their workers as a way of dismissing them.

**Repression, violence and militarization:**

Militarization continues to be a scheme in quelling people’s opposition to corporate mining. The police, military and paramilitary groups become virtual security force of mining companies. Mining companies have also employed bandits to scare the community folk. The mining TNCs use the New People’s Army or the Moro Islamic Liberation Front as a lame excuse to conduct military operations and heighten repression against workers’ legitimate actions and community opposition against the destruction caused by

corporate mining. Again in the Cordillera, police forces killed an innocent deaf-mute hunter in September 2003 in their operation to locate those who held-up Lepanto Mining Company. The hold-up incident became a reason to militarize the area. A pregnant woman was frisked, and the children and elderly were interrogated and homes were illegally searched.

**2. People’s Actions and Women’s Participation against Destructive and Corporate Mining**

Affected communities, mostly of indigenous peoples, did not simply watch the mining TNCs proceed with their operations. Women have actively participated in local, national and even international levels of struggles. Indigenous women in the Cordillera and the rest of the Philippines have historically joined their people’s spontaneous and later organized actions. They are the negotiators and when the mine representatives don’t budge, the women use their collective might to drive the prospectors away. They bare themselves (Cordillera experience), a signal that there is no more negotiation to do and the mine representatives better leave or they never see another day. They are in the forefront of human barricades as displayed by women in Itogon and Mankayan, both mining towns in the Cordillera, when the mining companies came to flatten their lands and bulldozed further their communities. They join delegations to government agencies whom they hand their petitions or complaints. In the commemoration of International Day of Indigenous Peoples in August 2002, women from the mining community of Mankayan, Benguet in the Cordillera joined the protest in front of the huge building of Lepanto Mining Company, and spilled the toxic tailings of Lepanto in front of the company’s main office. It was a symbolic demonstration to belie Lepanto’s claim that its tailing ponds are safe and free from so-called toxic wastes.

The impact of mining TNCs to indigenous peoples was one of the important issues raised to Dr. Rodolfo Stavenhagen, the Special Rapporteur for Indigenous Peoples Rights of the UN when he conducted an official mission to the Philippines in

December 2002. He included in his report the threatening presence of military members during a community dialogue with him in Mankayan. Manoeuvres were made by the Lepanto Mining Company to get the Special Rapporteur to their side like branding the organizations that are hosting him in Mankayan as terrorists.

In Mindanao, the Lumad folk engaged in pangayaw, a traditional armed resistance against mining companies. Small-scale miners in Diwalwal, a gold rush area in Mindanao, have also armed themselves against goons and military forces.

Legal actions taken by the people include dialogues, consultations with local government officials and passing of resolutions in local government units. Use of legal provisions such as free, prior informed consent, cease and desist orders, environmental compliance certificates and lodging of court cases have been employed where these were useful and complementary to people's struggles against mining.

Alliances against mining TNCs in local and national levels were formed. International networking is also an important component given the international dimension of mining. Research to deepen the analysis and understanding of mining issues are done to strengthen and substantiate the anti-mining campaign. Research work comes in the form of fact-finding missions, environmental investigative missions, table research and consultations with local and foreign scientists and experts.

Some recent victories in people's struggles against mining TNCs include (Proceedings, National Mining Conference Against Mining TNCs, May 2002):

- Banning the start of operations of mining TNCs like the experience in Capiz against Mount Isa Minera, Iloilo against Phelps and Dodge, Mindoro against Mindex-Crew, Mankayan, Cordillera against the expansion of Lepanto, coal mining in Isabela and mining attempts in Aurora.

- Stoppage or delay of existing mining TNC operations like that of Marcopper in Marinduque, Atlas Mining in Cebu, Western Mining Company in Davao del Sur, Climax Arimco in Nueva Viscaya and Maricalum Mining in Negros.
- Moratorium on the entry of mining TNCs on the municipal and provincial levels like that in Capiz, Mindoro and Mountain Province in the Cordillera
- Organizing and networking with scientists and technologists, and human rights and environmental lawyers
- Declaration by community folk of a mining-free area
- Decline or reduction of mining applications

Lessons have also been learned in conducting campaign against mining TNCs. Most important is a comprehensive study and grasp of the issue of mining, relating both the local experience, national policies and international maneuvers of mining TNCs and their support institutions like the World Bank, etc. It is also important to integrate the campaign with the organizing efforts in the communities, treating it not as a separate life-and-death issue of the people. The campaign should be sustained and in the process of strengthening people's efforts, networking with lawyers, environmental experts, medical practitioners, members of the academe and government officials, are important. Mining is an international issue thus it is also important to build international networks against mining TNCs and resolve how various efforts in the international level should be put together.

The movement against mining TNCs in the country is wrestling with challenges having a government who is so subservient to mining TNCs and determined to pursue a national program to revitalize the mining industry. We will continue to work for the scrapping of the Phil. Mining Act of 1995 and pursue all arenas of struggle against large-scale and destructive mining.

## **Indonesia: Mining in Indonesia - Call for Moratorium**

### **Siti Maimunah**

Indonesia is an archipelago of more than 17,000 islands. The extractive industry has been one of the largest industries in the country and had many serious negative impacts both on the land and oceans and in the coastal regions. Broadly, we have about 11.4 million hectares of mining concessions given by the government of Indonesia, which do not include oil and gas concessions. It is mostly marble, sand, and other minerals. We also have a lot of logging off in protected areas. The other big industry is forestry and there is a huge overlap in the areas of mining and logging off. This also overlaps with community lands and livelihoods and hence has created a tremendous conflict between mining, logging and community livelihood interests.

#### **The Mining Policies in Indonesia and their impacts:**

The mining policy of Indonesia dates back to 1967 but the mining regulations have not changed since then. The State perspective with regard to mining is that minerals are a commodity for economic and commercial development. Many foreign investors have been called into the country for exploiting these minerals without any thought for protecting the people's livelihoods or safeguarding of the environment. The government does not bother to obtain any prior consent from the people whether to allow mining or not. The people only have the choice of accepting whatever compensation is offered and to leave their lands and ancestral territories.

The other important aspect is that regulations with regard to access to information are very weak. People have no information and when they demand for it, mining companies complain to the government. They influence the government to such an extent that when and wherever people fight for information, the government brings in the military to suppress such demands and protests. So in Indonesia we have the military

guarding the mining areas or areas where mining is likely to be taken up against people, on behalf of the mining companies. The country also does not have any mine closure regulations yet. So the companies abandon mines without any accountability. For example, the Rio Tinto company claims that they have used best mining closure practices and the government accepts it, even when the ground reality is not so. We also do not have any mineral reserve policy. So we have indiscriminate extraction of minerals, without a policy to define how much and what should be mined.

If we look at the economy, the contribution from mining is a mere 4% of total economy whereas the areas under mining are huge with the involvement of big multinational players. If we take a look at the environmental impacts, then we will find the blatant violations and human rights abuses that mining companies indulge in. A study by Jatam showed that just from 6 big scale gold mining company (Rio Tinto, Newcrest, Newmont and Freeport, Aurora Gold and Laverton) was dumping 1.2 million tones of mine wastes of tailings. For example, Newmont has been dumping 122,000 tons of waste per day into ocean. The mine labour employment in the country is just about 33,000 totally on 2000.

What are the impacts and losses due to mining? In South Sulawesi 750 families were displaced and health problems, water, air and land contamination stalk the area. In Newmont Minhasa, 300 persons were displaced. River water is polluted. There is a total abuse of human rights. Central Kalimantan witnessed displacement of 6,250 families. In Freeport more than 900 people died due to military action and their ancestral land was snatched. In Gold South Sumatra 3,660 families were affected. RTZ gold mining has affected 1,3750 families. In Newcrest 38 villages were affected. Many people died and river pollution human rights abuses are only a few of ill effects of mining here. What we have seen is only a broad overview of effects of MNC mining in Indonesia. Exxon Mobil gives money for housing to military

and gets support to suppress people. 50% women in Buyat Bay suffer from health problems like respiratory and skin problems and reproductive defects. In RTZ Kelian accessibility to medicines is declining.

Abandoned mines pose a different kind of problem, as our government has no policy for mine closure. Hence we call for a moratorium on new sites and we are supporting people's struggles.

## **Ghana: Environment, Water and Health Impacts on Women Due to Mining - The Case of Wassa West and Adansi West Districts of Ghana**

**Hannah Owusu-Koranteng**

### **The Ghanaian Economy**

The Ghanaian economy is largely agrarian with agriculture accounting for about 40% of the Gross Domestic Product and employing 60% of labour force. Total Agricultural land is 13630000 ha, which is 57% of the total land area. The manufacturing and service sectors contribute 14% and 40% to GDP respectively. The extractive sector contributes 6% of GDP but currently has overtaken Cocoa by assuming the role of the leading foreign exchange earner. Principal minerals are gold, Diamond, Bauxite and Manganese.

### **Background of Gold mining in Ghana**

The quest for development has been a major concern for many developing countries. The current global economic drive is virtually dictating the dependence on mineral extraction by many minerals endowed countries of the south especially in Africa as a panacea for rapid development. This was manifested in the 1990s when the extractive industry accounted for more than 50% of exports and 65% of all Foreign Direct Investment in Africa.

The gold mining industry had been an old indigenous economic activity of countries like Ghana and the industry had existed for about 2000

years, (Gavin 20019). Such indigenous methods of gold extraction had a place for women and men as a major economic activity second to agriculture in the Wassa area and other parts of Ghana. The indigenous methods of gold-mining in the history of the country attracted Arabs and later European traders, which earned Ghana the name Gold Coast. From the 14<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century, about 14 million ounces of gold was produced in Gold Coast.

The country experienced economic decline from 1975 to 1983 that led to a 10% drop in the GDP and the PNDC government launched an Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) in 1983 to address the weaknesses in the national economy. The extractive sector became a major focus of the ERP. The ERP provided generous fiscal concessions granted in the Mining and Minerals law of Ghana (PNDC Law 153 of 1986). Ghana has become the destination for massive mining investment with the influx of important global mining players like Newmont, AngloGold and Goldfields investing in the country. The Finance Minister of Ghana in his budget statement of 2004 indicated that Rio Tinto and BHP Billiton have expressed interest in investing in Ghana.

The Wassa West District of Ghana by 1999 had eight multinational mining companies engaged in mining activities in the area and was said to hold concessions up to 70% of the total land area. The influx of mining companies in Ghana resulted from the generous fiscal concessions provided to the extractive sector including the retention of between 75-90% of gross gold sales in offshore accounts. The extractive sector is reported to account for 40% of the country's foreign earnings but this primacy is in gross terms.

### **Mining and Water**

The proliferation of surface mining companies has resulted in Stream pollution resulting from cyanide spillages, acid mine drainage, tailings leakages, mine

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<sup>99</sup> Gavin Hilson (2001) "A Contextual Review of the Ghanaian Small-scale Mining Industry" Imperial College Centre for Environmental Technology, London, UK September No. 76

waste disposals, and mine pits. These have tended to deprive communities access to water, which is a basic need for human survival.

The pollution of streams and ground water through surface mining activities is a clear violation of the economic, social and cultural rights of the communities. In a tradition where women and children have the responsibility to provide the water needs of families, loss of potable water means more work for community women. When community streams are destroyed, women and children spend several hours and walk significant distances to look for water.

In Abekoase, the cyanide spillage of October 2001 by Goldfields Ghana Limited (GGL) killed all life forms in the Asuman River, which served as a source of drinking water for many communities. Many communities that lived along river Asuman earned incomes from the river through fishing and the communities believed that the river provided spiritual protection to the residents.

Communities in the Adansi West District who are affected by activities of AngloGold Ashanti spend a lot of time looking for water to drink, and this is affecting economic activities and children's education. In a community like Hia which was affected by the cyanide spillage of AngloGold Ashanti in 1998, the community has an arrangement where groups of people fetch water in turns every third day from the only borehole because a cyanide spillage in 1998 flowed into river Supu and Fena, the two major sources of drinking water for many communities in the area.

Another example of mining impacts on water bodies could be found in Dumase where the establishment of a mine pit by the Bogoso Gold Limited (BGL) led to the drying up of five streams which were the sources of drinking water for the community. The boreholes constructed by BGL for the community have been rejected by the community because the water from the boreholes

turn blue-black few minutes of coming into contact with plantain and cassava which are major staples in Ghana. BGL supplies the community with water in tankers and the delivery of water in tankers generates struggles because the water is inadequate to serve the needs of the community.

### **Effects of Dewatering**

Surface mining operations consume large amounts of water whilst extensive excavations lead to excessive dewatering. Excessive dewatering through mining operations leads to the lowering of the ground water table, which affects the water yields in boreholes. Many communities do not have adequate water since boreholes constructed for these communities dry up most of the time and do not yield adequate water to meet their requirements.

The dewatering effects of mining reduce the availability of water to support plant life and fertile lands are reduced to marginal lands. There are community complaints of reduced crop yields though the mining companies are quick to say that the reduced crop yields of mining communities results from bad farming practices of peasant farmers. There is the problem of Chemical pollution of ground water through cyanide seepages from heap leach facilities and tailings impoundments.

### **Impacts of Mining on Women's Health**

International Finance Corporation's (IFC) publication of 2003<sup>10</sup> indicated that the often harsh living conditions for miners coupled with the lack of information and education about prevention, can contribute to a high prevalence of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and other communicable diseases among miners and their families. Also, work-related injuries and health risks—lung cancer, for example—reduce the miners' life expectancy and often put families in precarious situations.

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**The tailings Dam had  
destroyed the farm I made  
with my husband.**  
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<sup>10</sup> IFC 2003, Key topics in mining <http://www.ifc.org/legal>

A publication in *Drillbits and Tailings* (2000)<sup>11</sup> indicated that lack of access to clean potable water in mining communities has a relationship with the reduced health status of the communities, as they are plagued with many water-borne diseases. There is increasing incidence of skin rashes, dysentery, blood in urine etc in mining communities of Adansi West and Wassa West districts of Ghana where the communities are without reliable access to clean water. WACAM has experienced that mining communities are compelled to drink from polluted streams when boreholes constructed do not yield water.

The responsibility of women to provide care for sick people increases when the health status of mining communities worsens as a result of the high incidence of water-borne diseases.

Rural women lose their sources of income in the event of surface mining and this reduces access of women to health care. There is enough evidence from community women about their worsening health status and loss of livelihood in the advent of surface mining. Amma Safoa from Dokyiwa in Adansi West said this in a workshop in 2001. “The tailings Dam had destroyed the farm I made with my husband. Moreover, my husband is dead and I have to struggle to sustain my life and that of my children”. Patience Amankwa (20 years) from Dokyiwa in the same workshop said, “My uncle gave me an oil palm plantation to use the proceeds to pay for my education. The mine operations affected the oil palm and now I am forced to drop out of school. I now have two children.” The experience of women in mining communities clearly shows the relationship between mining and reduced incomes of women. Poverty can adversely affect access to good health care.

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**Production of one gold  
ring could generate 20 tons  
of waste...**  
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A report entitled "Boom and Dislocation" written by Thomas Akabzaa, a lecturer at the University of Ghana in 1999, and sponsored by the Africa Secretariat of the Third World Network (TWN) stated some of the impacts of mining in the Wassa West district as diseases such as malaria, respiratory tract infections, skin diseases and diarrhoea. The report mentions the Wassa West district as having the highest incidence of malaria in the entire western region, causing the highest mortality among children in the district, and the highest annual incidence of malaria in the country.

### **Mining, Environment and Community livelihood**

For communities, mining activities are at the cost of their rights to healthy environment, access to potable water and livelihood. The first indication of impact by mining activity is on the environment where large tracts of forestlands are lost to surface mining. Mining competes with agriculture for land.

Many women are engaged in agriculture or depend on the forest for their incomes. It is estimated that the contribution of women to agricultural production is around 70% and hence suffer the worst impacts.

Women do not usually own lands but work on family lands or on lands owned by their husbands. Compensation is paid to men who use the money the way they deem fit. The loss of incomes to women from loss of forest and agricultural lands and the increased roles of women in the event of mining are not subjects of compensation. Uncultivated lands and standing forest do not attract compensation in the event of compulsory acquisition of land for mining. Once community lands are lost to mining, women's economic power is diminished.

### **Mine waste**

Surface mining is an activity that generates a lot of waste. It is estimated that the production of one gold ring, could generate 20 tons of waste. Mine waste disposal is a major problem for the industry

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<sup>11</sup> Gold mining in Ghana destroys livelihoods, health and the environment *drillbits and Tailings* volume 5 Number 19, December 22, 2000

and in most cases; the companies look for the cheapest method of waste disposal with serious environmental consequences. The high sediment load from mine waste into community streams during rainfall is a major source of stream pollution when community farmlands are used as waste dumps. For example the problem of sediment discharges from mine waste established by Ashanti Goldfields Company (AGC) now AngloGold Ashanti into the River Saa is a major source of conflict between the people of Sansu and AGC.

Ashanti Goldfields Company is disposing tailings waste into mine pits as a way of reclaiming the abandoned pits and this activity has implications for groundwater pollution with heavy metals since 100% detoxification of the tailings waste cannot be achieved before the tailings are disposed into the pits. Communities in some instances have experienced pollution of community streams by the sewerage directed into streams from residential bungalows of mining companies.

### **Mine Closures**

Communities have lost many streams through mining activities. Environmental accidents like cyanide spillages/leakages into community streams have become associated with mining operations. When communities perceive a river as polluted by mining operations, through the changes in the taste of the water or changes in its colour, communities do not have the confidence to rely on such streams. WACAM is undertaking an on-going work in some communities in the Adansi West district where communities listed about fifty streams that they perceive as polluted by the mining operations of Ashanti Goldfields Company (AGC). Similarly, equal numbers of streams are being polluted by the operations of mining companies in the Wassa West District. Though the scientific basis for the communities' perception that these rivers are polluted had not been established, it has affected the communities use of the streams. It is evident that life forms in some of these rivers no longer exist. Reliable sources of proteins for communities are lost through such

pollutions and this has health implications for women and children.

The Ghanaian Chronicle issue of July 25, 2003,<sup>12</sup> reported at a durbar of chiefs to mark the launching of World Environmental Day celebrations that Ghana is listed among countries that would experience water stress of 1700 cubic metres or less per person annually by 2025.

The pollution of community streams by mining operations has led to a situation where communities are supplied with water in tankers by mining companies or have boreholes constructed and sometimes maintained by mining companies. Considering that surface mining is inherently unsustainable, after mine closures, mining communities would lose these support and government may have to spend scarce state resources to solve huge post closure problems of mining companies, which are the result of weak legal framework to regulate mining activities in addition to a weak monitoring capacity of strategy monitoring institutions like the Environmental Protection Agency. A case in hand is the fold up of Bonte Mines owned by Canadians that secretly declared bankruptcy as the company was in negotiations with government regulatory agencies.

Kwabena Mate in a submission to the UN13 summed up the major environmental problems in the two areas under review as follows: "Currently, land and environmental issues are growing in importance because the main gold belt coincides with the major logging and cropping zones. Mining operations have sometimes disrupted economic and social activities. Farmers whose lands have been taken over have usually been given cash compensation for their crops and the loss of their livelihood, instead of similar land and the means to continue farming. In 1996, such

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<sup>12</sup> The report was attributed to Mrs. Philomena Boakye Appiah, the Ashanti Regional Programmes Officer of Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

<sup>13</sup> Kwabena Mate, Boom in Ghana's golden enclave Major new investments boost output, but environmental concerns are growing Africa Recovery United Nations, NY

issues prompted community protests in the major mining area of Tarkwa. Women would be the major losers in such situations

### **Conclusion**

Gender studies on mining impacts would be helpful in having a clear understanding of the many problems that confront women affected by mining for the mainstreaming of these issues in the mining campaign. Our experience in working with women in affected communities shows that because of the direct impact of mining on women, an effective mining advocacy cannot succeed without the involvement of women in the campaigns.

WACAM has developed leadership training programmes for women activists in affected communities because women have been effective in articulating critical community concerns like water pollution, livelihood issues etc. This has resulted in some women emerging as leaders in their communities.

WACAM has also realised that poverty, illiteracy and lack of access to information have excluded women from decision-making processes at the traditional and national levels. When women lose their economic base through mining they become disempowered and vulnerable and male dominance in decision-making processes is perpetuated. Mining further weakens the ability of women to be involved in policy decisions at all levels especially now that policies that impact community livelihood are formulated at the global level and impose them on communities.

The challenge for this conference would be to see how we could raise the voice of women who live the impacts of mining to have a say in policies that impose surface mining on communities. The conference should thus develop mechanisms of making the concept of Free Prior And Informed Consent workable in the lives of community women. It is also important for community women to define what constitutes development and to support the struggles of community women for self-realisation.

## **Thailand: Proposed Potash mining in Udon Thani Province, Northeast Thailand**

### **Manree Bunrot**

The proposed potash mine, the largest mega project for Thailand, covers in total area more than 25 km. And will adversely affect local communities in more than 70 villages. Most people are rice farmers and raise cattle. Our way of life is simple and we rely largely on natural resources from the land, water and forest.

Ten years ago, a company called APPC - Asian Pacific Potash Corporation discovered two high quality and most accessible deposits of potash in the world. Closely and strongly supported by the Thai government, all activities related to mining project have been hidden from the public; needless to say the local communities had no idea what was going to happen to them.

The company conspired with the government to amend the mining law allowing underground mining, neglecting surface rights of villagers. The changing of the law was under the company and government MOU.

When the local communities discovered some of this hidden agenda, they gathered more than 1000 people to demonstrate and demanded all information on the contract of the project.

Up to now, information is still inaccessible. However, the company applies new strategy dealing with the struggle. They try to get involved in cultural events by financially supporting such events. Moreover, they also spend a lot of money bribing and buying local leaders and villagers. This is a successful divide and rule strategy. Villagers have been divided into support for or against the project even in the same community or neighborhood. This results in a physical problem among villagers, conflict always happens among the communities.

### Our ways of struggling

- Sign petition, sending letter, holding demonstrations up to now are more than 100 times
- Blockade of the proposed mine site.
- Explain to public about our local livelihood and what will happen socially environmentally, economically if the area is mined
- We try to use legal channels to challenge the project and the process of concession issue. Now the environmental ministry disapproved the EIR
- We try to search for alliance and networks helping us in terms of information and sharing experience. That is why we are here.

Our recommendations are quite similar to previous presentations. This proposed project has to respect and recognize local livelihood, right to information, right to decide our own development and have a final say on the project. Finally, we'd like to insist that sustainability only is possible through community management of resources. Mining is not the answer for sustainable development as Multinational Corporation and many governments try to claim.



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**The company applies new strategy by supporting cultural events financially and bribing/buying local leaders and villagers...**  
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### Papua New Guinea: The Impact of Ok Tedi Mine on Indigenous Women along the Fly River

**Elizabeth Matit**

I would like to thank the sponsors who enabled me to come to this 3rd International Women and Mining Conference to voice for the rights of the Indigenous women/children/community living along the Fly River, Western Province of Papua New Guinea. This is based on the life experience of the mine-affected communities. All the mine waste of 80,000 tons is dumped directly into the Ok Tedi River every day, which then flows into the Fly River, one of PNG's biggest rivers. The communities living along these two rivers are badly affected by the mine waste.

Ok Tedi Mining – the first largest gold mining in Papua New Guinea started operating in 1984. Shareholders of the

mine at present are:

Ok Tedi Mining Limited (OTML), [PNG]	- 30%
Inment (Canadian)	- 18%
Sustainable Development Company	- 52%
[a window curtain to BHP]	

Over the years since the operation of the mine, we the people in the flood plains have been victims due to no tailing dam.

#### **River Pollution**

Fly River is the second largest river in the country (PNG). It used to be clean freshwater that we used for drinking, washing, bathing, fishing, before the operation of the mine. Now today it is polluted, but we are still using it in the same way as before.

#### **Livelihoods destroyed – Loss of fish, loss of garden crops**

Our people rely heavily in subsistence agriculture, marine sources for protein, the soil is not fertile any more. When women do gardening they do

not have the best harvest as they experienced before. Their produce is not the best also for marketing so it makes it too inconvenient for their living.

We also rely heavily on fish. Fish and Sago is our staple food with the garden food. Now that the river is polluted our fish too are no longer edible. We cannot fish to bring to the market to sell. It becomes so hard in terms of income for the daily needs of the family.

Our sago palms have been destroyed by the non stop of floods that goes through gardens, sago swamps, rivers, streams even into our hunting places, bush camping places, into the sacred places. The flood is unusual that causes river beds erosion taking place almost every day.

The environment is completely destroyed. Forest turning yellowish, then complete drying of tree leaves, especially along the Fly River and Ok Tedi River. This was especially evident in 1996 when a big flood occurred in the area. Due to the changes, the birds and wild animals moved further inner to the thicker forests that make it harder for hunting.

#### **Air Pollution and smoke from copper concentrate drying mill**

There is no proper covering of the copper concentrate storage shed in Kiunga, so the wind blows it (copper concentrate) out in the open air and it's inhaled by people. It's really thick that it affects infants, children, women and the community as a whole. Children are getting sick every day, mothers are struggling to take them to hospital. Sometimes children/infants die. This is an additional burden on women who are struggling to help provide for livelihood caused by the dying environment.

The chimney is quite short just a few meters above the normal buildings. Everyday the machine is drying and the smoke gets out to the open air where the people inhale. We believe this could cause some long term health effects but we do not

have the facilities and resources to prove these suspicions.

#### **Social Issues**

The mine has brought rapid changes in the lives of people, especially in women, youths, children such as domestic violence, social welfare problems, drug abuse by children, wife beatings, sexual aberrations, commercial sex trade, marital discord, diseases such as HIV-Aids VD (Venereal Disease) and others, sexual abuse, rape, drinking alcoholism, high drop out rate and reproductive health problems.

These are all caused by "money" which has psychologically affected many of us. It is not our culture to use money for exchange for goods and services; it is a modern world "white man's" culture. Our culture is the land. On the land we plant food, find food, find materials to build houses, find herbal medicine, other cultural significances and all that's our heritage. Money is not our culture. Its introduction has blind-folded us and is killing our culture.

People already noted a change in the environment from the time operations began particular from the discoloration of water and sediment build up that were causing a decline in the number of fishery harvest. In 1996 a major flood occurred killing about 30 square kilometers of forested land including food gardens. By then the people took the company BHP to court in Australia. Only until 2001 that BHP admitted their guilt and exited.

That is when they formed alliance with Billiton the South African company and now called BHP Billiton. They (BHP) are still in control of their 52% share that they left behind.

Also another mining pollution done by the Pogera mine deposit (DOME company).

The mercury in the river (Strickland) may then flow into the Fly River. The Fly River pollution is then doubled from mercury sediments and other pollutants.

## Compensation Package

Every year we are given compensation payment. We are given K120.00 (30 US\$) per head in clans according to the number in the families. The other payment is the garden payment of K50.00 (13 US \$) and the river bed payment K80.00 (20 US \$) per person.

This is not enough to take us to the other year for another compensation payment.

We have things that we need to set for our families, our children's school fees, their needs and so forth. This money is not enough to cater for all these needs.

We women are now from the depths of our hearts crying out for the future of our children. What will it be like when the mining finishes? What would happen when the mine packs up and leave?

## Recommendation

1. Before the mine closes, women want "Special Compensation Package Payment" and for OTML to help the women develop and sustain their livelihood within the families, communities now and for the future.
2. Our land is our heritage. We value our land, environment and all that is within our land. All we want now is to compensate according to the values of our environment and our land that has been destroyed. We do not need half payments but full 100% percent compensation payments. The cash payment of 100% and development in terms of infrastructure backdated from 1984 to present.

Finally I would like to say to my government of Papua New Guinea "To stop borrowing brains. You have destroyed my LIFE, my LAND and my ENVIRONMENT from borrowing brains internationally and from various sources. Use our god given WISDOM and KNOWLEDGE, UNDERSTANDING for our GOD is the source of everything. RELY ON HIM."

## Greece: Maria Kadoglou - The Struggle against Gold Mining in Greece

### Brief Overview of the Mining Industry

Mining is a traditional sector of Greek economy and the main types of metals and minerals extracted are bauxite, nickel, magnesium, mixed sulphide ores (lead, zinc, silver), industrial minerals such as bentonite and perlite, and lignite. Apart from the lignite mines, which are owned and operated by the National Power Company, all other mines belong to the private sector.

The first foreign mining company to enter the country was the Canadian TVX gold, which bought the Cassandra Mine Complex in 1995. In the following decade, several international companies acquired mining concessions in Greece, drawn by its potential as a gold producer.

The "Cassandra Mines", in the Halkidiki peninsula, is a 314 square km concession, currently controlled by EUROPEAN GOLDFIELDS LTD. It contains two main gold reserves, Olympias and Skouries.

- The Sapes gold mine, owned by UK's GREENWICH RESOURCES.
- The Perama gold mine: it now belongs to the small Canadian company FRONTIER PACIFIC, which bought it from NEWMONT.
- A 300km concession at Kilkis, owned by RIO TINTO.

This however is only the tip of the iceberg as most of northern Greece and several Aegean islands are known to contain gold deposits. This is the main reason for the formation of Hellenic Mining Watch. We felt that if even one of these projects got approval and started to operate we'd have an avalanche of project approvals and the situation would get out of control – so we decided to fight against all projects simultaneously.

## **The Legal Framework**

International companies are drawn to Greece because of the favourable legal framework, lax regulation, government subsidies, the extremely low cost of purchasing mining rights and the low per ounce production cost, which reflects all of the above.

As per the 1973 mining law and the constitution, mining is considered “a matter of national importance” and as such it takes precedence over all other activities. Mining property (which means ownership of the subsoil) prevails over land property (ownership of the surface). Interestingly, the Greek State collects no royalties from mines. This gives mining companies the right to expropriate land owners, this right however has so far been exercised only by the National Power Company which exploits the lignite mines in north-western Greece. In order to eliminate competition over land use, in areas that are designated for mining, all other forms of development are forbidden. The reform of this law has been the main objective of Hellenic Mining Watch ever since it was founded. For the local people mining is the last priority for economic activity.

In most cases, the contract between the State and the mining company is ratified by law, so that the local population is deprived of the basic right to object. Interestingly, the Greek State collects no royalties from mines.

## **Alternatives to Mining**

Although mining propaganda says that the Cassandra area will starve without the mine, statistics prove that, in the heyday of mining in early '90s, only 2.5% of the local population was employed in the mining activity. The area is severely contaminated - surface and underground waters have been destroyed by acid drainage and 30 million tons of toxic wastes pollute the land and the sea. The Cassandra Mines changed hands twice in the past decade and every time the previous owners were indemnified by law against all damage caused to the environment and the people.

Affected areas desperately need an environmental rehabilitation program to heal the wounds of the past. There are currently European Union subsidized programs available for such cases but cannot be implemented in active mining areas. Such a program would give life to affected areas and employ many of the former miners for the transitional period between the mining era and the new era. The government however favours continuation of mining in order not to pay its contribution to the program. So these areas remain underdeveloped and continue to deteriorate.

What are the alternatives to mining? The answer depends on the region. The first thing that is needed is to change the legal framework that is literally strangling mining areas. If this is done, each area can develop according to its own physical characteristics. The Cassandra Mines area has such unique advantages that it could support a thriving tourist industry. It has 85% forest coverage, 45 km of beaches and ancient cities like Stagira, the hometown of Aristotle. It also neighbours with Mt Athos, Christianity's Holy Mountain, which attracts thousands of tourists every year. Fishing, forestry and other traditional occupations would greatly benefit from a change in the area's legal status.

Thrace, on the other hand, is an agricultural and stock breeding region. With the right kind of investment, Thrace could provide high quality biological products and stock bred with traditional methods, for which there is a growing demand. Large scale mining here would completely ruin rural economy as it would deplete water resources and devalue agricultural products. Furthermore, the coastal zone that is currently threatened by mining is the one with the greatest tourism potential in all of Thrace.

## **The struggle**

The people who started the anti-mining struggle in Greece were the 600 inhabitants of Olympias, a small village in northern Greece. The area was already polluted because of the operation of a lead-zinc mine, so when a project appeared for the construction of a

gold plant within breathing distance from the village, the people refused to accept further deterioration of their livelihoods. After 15 years of struggle against two different mining companies, first a state-owned one and then the Canadian TVX GOLD, their struggle was justified by the country's Supreme Court, which blocked development of the mine on environmental grounds.

During the first years the struggle was often violent and included powerful demonstrations, road blockades, burning down of equipment and clashes with the riot police. At the end of 1997, military law was imposed on Olympias – for the first time after the military junta of the '70s. Armed policemen patrolled the village and the mine area and harassed the people. The struggle here has been successful in averting the installation of the gold mine for several years, but it had great human costs. People had neglected their work and families and many of them, men and women, had been sentenced to years of imprisonment because of their resistance to the mine.

Around the end of 1997, the struggle took a turn as people outside Olympias got involved in the struggle. We decided to follow the legal route, flooding the ministries and judicial authorities with lawsuits and complaints and taking the matter to the State Council.

We never negotiated directly with the mining companies because, in our view, the problem is not where or how to mine. The problem is “to mine or not to mine” which is a political problem between local communities and the government.

At the international level, we tried to block the company's access to funding. We contacted reporters, market analysts and TVX shareholders. The reports and articles about the fierce local opposition to the project that appeared in the international press, added to the serious financial problems of TVX due to delays in receiving project permits. We presented our case at the annual 2000 general meeting of Deutsche Bank, which was to finance the development of the Olympias goldmine. This move, which was in cooperation with the

Critical Shareholders of Germany resulted in a major success: one year later, the Bank officially announced the discontinuation of negotiations with TVX.

As a major industrial investor, TVX was to be subsidized by the EU with 35% of its total investment, or \$174 million for the two projects of Skouries and Olympias. When we provided details of the projects, the European Commission responded that “the projects were incompatible with the spirit of sustainable development promoted by the EU” and therefore would not be subsidized.

TVX Gold's stock price, which had jumped to \$14 in 1995, when the purchase of the Cassandra mines was announced, plummeted. After two consecutive reverse splits (5:1 and 10:1), the stock price was brought to 30 cents in 2002 and the company had to face mismanagement lawsuits by its shareholders. In 2001, a landmark ruling of the State Council cancelled TVX's gold project at Olympias, justifying the long and hard struggle of its people.

TVX was left with only one producing mine, an underground lead-zinc mine that was illegally expanding underneath the village of Stratoniki. In late 2001, the local mining inspector ordered TVX to suspend all mining under the village, but TVX ignored the order and went on. Underground explosions were causing cracks on buildings and the earth surface to subside in several places. Discontent over the mine erupted in February 2002, when the government gave TVX an illegal permit to operate. A police force was sent in to suppress riots and “protect” TVX from the people who were demonstrating daily in the village square. The people of Stratoniki are mostly retired miners whose children were driven away by unemployment. This makes their struggle twice as important because these elderly people decided they had to save their homes, and in the end, was successful. Just like in Olympias, the women of Stratoniki were the most dynamic group of inhabitants. They organized public protests, contacted reporters, printed pamphlets.

Stratoniki was under police occupation during most of 2002. In December 2002 the Stratoniki

mine was found illegal by the State Council and its operation stopped. This was the final blow to TVX Hellas, TVX's Greek subsidiary, which filed for bankruptcy five months later.

At the end of 1999 it became known that two more gold projects, Sapes and Perama, had received preliminary approval. In cooperation with local groups, we started an information campaign and it did not take long for the local farmers to realize that mining would destroy their livelihoods. Our work there has been much easier than in Halkidiki, because Thrace has never had mines and miners depending on them. Very soon, public opinion was 100% against gold mining and local and regional councils had unanimously decided against the projects. Both projects have been challenged at the State Council and the Olympias precedent makes us optimistic about the outcome.

In 2002, one more local anti-mining struggle was born at Kilkis, against the mining giant Rio Tinto, which had acquired a 300 km concession in the area. The company however hasn't yet submitted a concrete project proposal.

### **The Legal Battle**

The State Council is a constitutional court, entrusted with protecting constitutional values from the actions or inactions of governments that are corrupt, indifferent, or inadequate. It has the authority to annul laws or administrative acts that are found to be contrary to constitutional values. From 1998 onwards, every single administrative approval that was granted to TVX, was immediately challenged at the State Council.

In all, the council has issued 9 rulings in favour of the people of Olympias and Stratoniki. In the most important one, the one that cancels the EIS approval for the Olympias gold plant, the court ruled that "the weighing attempted by the Government through the contested act between the benefit expected from the operation of the project and the imminent damage in the natural environment from the project's installation and operation, is inadequate and violates the principle of sustainable development".

The significance of the Olympias ruling goes far beyond the specific project. In our view, this ruling effectively prohibits all large-scale mining projects. The judgment was based on two principles, which are core in EU law: the principle of sustainable development and the precautionary principle. Both are integrated in our constitution. The judges did not get into the details of the EIS because this would require technical skills and knowledge of the actual conditions. They looked at the massive scale of the project and where it would be situated and judged, based on "common knowledge and experience", that the environmental damage caused by the project would be undoubtedly disproportionate to the expected benefit. Thus, the project evidently violated the constitutional principle of sustainable development and had to be annulled.

A similar ruling was issued in 1997 by the Turkish constitutional court regarding the Bergama goldmine and was reasserted by a new ruling in 2004. "Taking into consideration the human right to live and the state's obligation to protect the health of the environment, and to ensure the continuation of human lives in a context of psychological and physical health... there is no public good in the operation of this mine that is almost certain to have an impact on the deterioration of the environment, and therefore, indirectly, on the deterioration of human health."

### **Results of our success**

The success of the struggles of Olympias and Stratoniki had serious consequences for the entire mining sector. Mining companies, which behaved like the early conquistadores when they first came to Greece, are now on the defensive. The strong anti-mining sentiment in the areas is constantly pressuring politicians, at a local and national level. Wherever a new mine proposal appears, an opposition movement is born almost instantly. The central government, which has always favoured mining development, is now numb and afraid of the political cost of approving these projects. Local governments refuse to issue new exploration permits on environmental grounds. This is a serious

cause of concern for the mining industry, which has never before been denied access to land.

Pro-mining propaganda continues to produce press stories about the “Greek El Dorado”. The government and the mining lobby saw the State Council ruling for Olympias as an anti-development one and claimed that Greece was losing its credibility towards foreign investors. Some even accused the judges of “judicial activism”! The Olympias ruling is a very strong precedent for similar cases – each project however has to be reviewed separately. Mining companies strive to present projects that won’t stumble upon the State Council, but the truth is they’re having tremendous difficulties. The Sapes and Perama gold projects have been lagging for years. Greenwich Resources, the owner of the Sapes project, tried to overcome the State Council obstacle by excluding cyanide from the processing method, settling for a significantly reduced recovery of gold. This move did not calm opposition to the project. It did not get them the desired permit either, as the government is reluctant to grant permits that could lead to another “TVX fiasco”. Ultimately, Greenwich sued the Ministries for failing to approve the project within the time frame set by law. The case will be tried on October 13.

Greece is proving to be hostile to mining investments and a new trend arises. Major mining companies are moving out, selling the mines to small, high-risk companies. The Cassandra Mines passed from Kinross to European Goldfields, a Canadian-registered company controlled by the Romanian businessman Frank Timis, notorious for his Rosia Montana project. Newmont sold the Perama goldmine to Frontier Pacific, a very small Canadian company. In both cases, the sale price has been ridiculously low, reflecting the difficulties in seeing the projects through.

The latest news coming from Greece is that there’s an attempt to reopen the Stratoniki mine. The new EIS was discussed in the local prefectural council yesterday (September 29) and the outcome was, as usual, a definite, “NO”.

## **Sierra Leone: Displacement of livelihood of women affected by mining**

**Rebecca Moquee**

In Sierra Leone diamond is a major mineral export. Now, we have a question in Sierra Leone that we ask ourselves – why should diamonds be a curse for Sierra Leoneans, and not a blessing?

In Sierra Leone, prior to mining, women were engaged in agricultural activities and petty trading. But, since the introduction of mining, there has been a conflict between mining and agriculture. Mining is now so prevalent, that it is given priority over all other activities, which has led to a decrease in agricultural activities. Since women have been torn away from their normal activity – agriculture, they are no longer self-employed. This leads to a loss of income and therefore leads to a loss of their social life as well as livelihood.

In Kono, east of Sierra Leone (where I come from) where mining, by large MNCs, is currently taking place, women are often displaced as a result of the blasting of kimberlite stones for minerals. But the government, in collaboration with the companies, is marginalising our people, especially women. They are no longer engaged in their daily activities.

Most often, women find it very difficult to be fully engaged in mining, as in the African setting, all the difficult jobs are for men, mining being one of them. You scarcely have women engaged in it. They are not employed – even as clerks or secretaries – in mining companies.

The girl child is being discriminated and we, as a network in this conference, by educating the girl child in the mining areas – fighting to educate them – we’ll help this network to go on. Because, only the girl child – our children, grandchildren – will come and take this space we’re occupying now: Only with education. There are many women who are willing to stand up for their rights in mining areas, but, because of their lack of education, they are not able to articulate their views.

You have certain areas in Sierra Leone that do not produce any diamonds; the minerals found here are bauxite, iron ore, etc. But diamonds are more widespread and profitable than those other minerals. In the diamond-mining areas, there is less education – the miners do not value education because there is no money to pay for their children’s education. The only way to get money is to mine. That is their main occupation. An NGO reports that in Sierra Leone, mining districts are the worst educated districts. This is simply because they give more importance to mining than to education.

Education is a neglected sector in Kono. Often young beautiful girls are bought off by well-to-do miners. I myself am a victim of this. Because of poverty I was forced into marriage when I had just finished grade five of my schooling. I did not achieve my university level just because I was brought up in a mining area. But I ran away from that marriage, thinking I would be safe. But, I was not. The person I ran away with had me caught by the same person I married. Poverty forced me into this situation. Therefore, I want to stand and talk for my people.

Even after the war, when the attitude of the people seemed to have changed in favour of education, the lack of facilities such as infrastructure for schools, learning equipment and conducive and encouraging environment for schooling is deterring children from attending school. People who fled to other countries as refugees during the 11-year-old war know the value of education. Now they are back home and try to encourage education.

Kimberlite mining is still displacing people. We have three schools near the company (Koidu Holdings). They warn the schools about 30 minutes before the blasting at the mines. Irrespective of the schedule the schools have to close down. The duration of blasting is normally 30 to 45 minutes. After such a disruption neither

the children nor teachers would be interested in resuming classes. You cannot expect schools to function this way.

To make a cost-benefit analysis, the following factors should be taken into consideration:

- There are more women than men in mining areas
- The cost of living in mining areas is usually high
- Prostitution is prevalent
- Education is not considered to be important.

### **Impact of abandoned mine-sites**

Many abandoned mines are often left uncovered, making it difficult for women to reclaim their land for agricultural purpose. Most of the lands are no longer fertile and the uncovered mines become breeding grounds for mosquitoes. They also often become death traps with children accidentally drowning in them. So it is always women who are left to face the ill effects of mining.

### **Impact on environment, water and health of women**

Over the years, mining has adversely affected the environment of all mining districts involving major degradation of land. Valuable forests have been destroyed and the loss of biodiversity has forced animals to migrate into areas that are less encroached upon. Some species became extinct.

The mining areas are the poorest in terms of health facilities and sanitary conditions. A recent research reveals:

*“The sanitary conditions in towns and villages and even near homes are extremely unsatisfactory with dug-out pits, infected with mosquitoes and bacteria. Thus there is a prevalence of malaria, at times cholera and diarrhoea. Mining activities such as diving, deep-pit mining have left people blind, deaf and disfigured. There is no tap water in most mining communities. The chemicals normally used have affected the quality of water in these areas. The very*

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**They captured and forced  
men to mine at the gun-  
point ...**  
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*few wells that are around are highly polluted. The number of wells is woefully inadequate. Water has always been a problem for these communities. Recent research has found traces of contaminants in the water in Kono, east of Sierra Leone. Communities are now depending on bore wells for potable drinking water."*

### **Women in mining struggles: Roles and Voices**

As I said earlier, generally women are not engaged in mining but are supporters of miners. I mean women are not physically engaged in mining but some of them, who have a little capital, employ people and support them in mining. Even here they get cheated because many of them do not know the real value of diamonds. If a woman spends say \$200 on mining, she would probably get a diamond worth \$2000-\$4000. She again depends on others to sell it, who may give her just \$50. Thus women are taken for a ride easily. That is what is affecting the women in Kono district, the largest mining area in Sierra Leone.

If women were directly involved in mining, then they would know the value of diamond and escape exploitation.

As mining involves a lot of manpower, women generally play the role of supervisors in mining communities. But, women are not given the opportunity to take decisions in mining issues. Decisions are mostly taken by the elders of the community.

Women who are engaged in mining are made to operate illegally. Sometimes, under the guise of secret society laws, the women are discriminated against in the political arena too. They are deprived of opportunities to take up leadership positions. Women, who contested in the last district council elections, were forced to withdraw their candidature for chieftdom.

You also see irregularities in matters of decision-making, in mining companies like Koidu Holdings, the company that mines kimberlite. When they went to Koidu during the war, they went under the

name of a company called Branch NRG from South Africa (white South Africa). They went as the company and brought in their own security, calling it the Executive Outcome. Koidu was protected because of the presence of these security personnel, but the company was mining for its own interests. At that time, since the rebel war was on, there was nobody to voice their doubts against mining in those parts. They would extract diamonds and export them and there was nobody to question their actions.

The rebels also did their own mining. They captured and forced men to mine at the gun-point. Women were captured to serve for them and for other purposes. They cut off the hands and legs of men who refused to work for them. Sometimes, people were even shot to death. All this is because of diamonds.

Subsequently, there was a conference that came up with the Kimberley process and talked about conflict diamonds or blood diamonds. These are diamonds that in some parts of Africa, like Congo, where a war was going on, that are traded for weapons. These weapons are used to destroy their own people.

When the rebel war was over and the atmosphere was conducive for a legitimate government to come to power, we welcomed it as a chance for peace. But there is no peace for my people in Kono.

With the help of the NGO Network Movement for Justice and Development that is in coalition with the Campaign for Just Mining, we came up with a resolution. "Koidu's operations are not transparent. They perform an Environmental Impact Assessment and did not even show it to the community that is going to be affected most by the mining. The EIA said that the company must relocate the people before it started operations. But that was not done and the company was supported by the government. When the people protested, four of the community elders were put in jail. They made them appear in court. But even before the case

was heard, civil societies and human rights groups protested volubly against the arrests. The government could not even try those people. They were released with no questions asked.

But, now, we are scared. We have no strong women's association that can stand up and fight like men against mining in our town. So we think of setting up a network for women in our town that will eventually be strong enough to oppose mining there.

### **Conclusion**

I request this forum to help me. I will go back and talk to my people, especially to women. I believe that in this forum, we'll reach a conclusion that would be a solution to our problems back home. Women don't go into prostitution because they like it but because of their poverty. Let us stand our ground and fight for our people.

### **India: Tribal Women-the worst sufferers in Kashipur mining area**

#### **Bidulata Huika**

Today an illiterate tribal woman in Kashipur does not need a theoretical explanation about the "globalization and corporatisation" process going on around the world. Though she has not stepped out of her village and has no such exposure, she has been increasingly feeling the pinch of coercion of multinationals that function in connivance with the state apparatus. She realized the agenda of corporatisation when she lost three of the tribal men who were killed by police on Dec 16, 2000. Now the resistance to this new trend is becoming stronger day by day.

### **Experience and Anger**

People, especially the tribals, have already experienced the hazards in NALCO - both at Damanjodi (Refinery Plant & mining site) and Angul (Smelting Plant) and are protesting against private and multinational companies even at the cost of their lives. Let us also not forget that in

most regions natural resources, are being conserved and sustained by them. So naturally uprooting them will only lead to severe disasters, which in turn will affect the whole humankind.

### **Kashipur Shows the Way**

Various organisations came together to facilitate a concerted struggle to save the environment. In September 2002, the leaders of various movements met at Maikanch and decided to accelerate the struggle and establish links with other groups elsewhere in the country. Maikanch is the village in Kashipur where three Jhodia tribals fell prey to the bullets of the State and sacrificed their lives.

### **Kashipur - the grazing ground of multinational companies....**

This region (KBK) has been known for its abysmal poverty, starvation deaths, migration, sale of children, bonded labour, etc. Because of previous industrial/ development interventions in this district by organisations like NALCO (an alumina company of Govt. of India), Hydel Power Projects named Indrabati & Kolab, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, JK & SEVA Paper Mills, IMFA, Mangalam Timbers (a Birla Company), people are still experiencing the negative impacts of industrialization.

Kashipur is a community development block in Rayagada district of Orissa state of India. Here INDAL (Indian Aluminium Company), TATA, Norsk Hydro (a Norwegian Company) and ALCAN of Canada started a joint venture called Utkal Alumina International Ltd. (UAIL) in the year 1991-92 to extract bauxite ore. People have been protesting this move since the land acquisition process started in 1993-94. Tribal women and youth of Kucheipadar village took the lead in the struggle. However, the government did not initiate any dialogue with the tribals and started forcible acquisition of land, giving some compensation to people. The tribals were terrorised with the help of police force and local goons. In spite of all that many people did not accept the compensation offered to them.

Several alumina companies like UAIL, L&T, HINDALCO, OSWAL, STERLITE, etc propose to set up their refinery plants, smelter plants and Captive Power Plants (coal-based) and have already acquired approximately 50,000 acres of land which belongs to tribals. NALCO has already made its entry.

Sri Krushna Saunta, Sri Laxman Majhi and Maharaj Majhi, who were tribals and government employees, started organising tribals as they witnessed this largescale displacement. All of them were falsely implicated in several cases and victimised. Krushna is still under retrenchment. Tribal women leaders like Smt. Lachhama Majhi, Hemalata Majhi, Alai Majhi, Mukta Jhodia took the lead in resisting the move of UAIL.

In spite of all the resistance, UAIL, supported by the state government, went on acquiring land and had established the base office in Tikiri. UAIL has been misinforming people about the extent of displacement, number of villages that are affected and kept changing the information and data. So it is not clear in how many villages the industries would be set up.

Gram Sabhas, the constitutional unit of decentralized governance, were not consulted. Neither the company nor the government has divulged any information.

The time given to people to respond to land acquisition notices for filing objections was inadequate. We clearly see corporations indulging in coercion tactics, forcing compensation on people. Landless farmers and widows too are seriously affected by the compensation technique. Tribal leaders are framed in false cases and tortured by the state and company hooligans. There were incidents of deaths due to forced displacement. It does not end here.

When all these things were going on, other multinational companies like HINDALCO and L & T have also started their camps in Rayagada district. Interestingly, all the companies were to be

established in one block i.e. Kashipur. It has to be noted that NALCO's (National Aluminium Company) mining area is situated just 10 km away from Kashipur/Laxmipur. BALCO case has revealed that the Sashu-Bahumali mines were leased out to Sterlite in Kashipur. So four multinational companies are setting foot in one Block! The lure of bauxite has excited companies to unleash a reign of terror among South Orissa Tribals

### **People Led Spontaneous Movement**

On Dec 15, 2000, the tribals from many villages of Kashipur gathered in Maikanch to discuss the 20th Rasta Roko/Chakka Jam at Rabkana (Koraput - Bhubaneswar state highway). The local BJP-BJD men and the district BJD president and his supporters arrived there on the same day to organise an all-party meeting/Area Development meeting at Nuagaon which is adjacent to Maikanch. Varied reasons were cited for the meet. But villagers say that these people had deployed hooligans to check the movement of other villagers and sabotage the meeting of tribals at Maikanch. Still protesters assembled on the spot, travelling by alternate routes. The party men started threatening the tribals and misbehaved with the women. The two groups clashed and party men had to go back.

To take revenge, the district president of a political party, with the help of the state finance minister, pressurized the local administration to take stringent action against the tribals. In the afternoon of Dec 16, 2000, the police force, along with a magistrate reached Maikanch. The men were away working in the fields. The police started beating and stripping women. Hearing the cries of women, the menfolk rushed to the village to rescue them. But the police opened fire at them at random, mercilessly killing young tribals -- Abhilas Jhodia, Jhamadhar Jhodia and Raghunath Jhodia. They died on the spot. Many women were injured in the police lathicharge. It is to be noted that these tribals who sacrificed their lives to save their land or Mati Maa or Dharati, have no individual land.

The grief-stricken people gathered at Rabkana and organised a peaceful Rasta Roka/Chakka Jam on December 20, 2000. Subsequently a protest rally was also conducted and the police filed cases against tribal leaders and NGOs. A judicial enquiry is still underway.

### **Infrastructure Development by IFAD— for people or for companies?**

In 1993, IFAD - an offshoot of the World Bank - came through the Tribal Welfare Dept of Government of Orissa to integrate development of the tribals in Kashipur. More than Rs. 66 crore was spent in developing roads, bridges, etc. It is clear now that the IFAD project was used for developing the area and to provide infrastructure facilities for the industries. This includes a dam, apparently for local irrigation requirements but rumoured to have been constructed for providing water to the companies. Unfortunately, well established NGOs in the State get co-opted into such bilateral and corporate 'development' projects and become the implementing agencies locally.

UAIL has floated an NGO called URDS (Utkal Rural Development Society) and started to take up activities like - SHG, afforestation, women empowerment, health camps, etc. People have come to realise the manipulative tactics of URDS and protested against it because of which URDS was later sub-contracted to some local NGOs. This has created confusion in the eyes of people about the role and position of NGOs, in such a conflict situation.

In the context of global actions, locals will perish - this concept has been reverted in case of Kashipur. Krushna, Bhagawan, Judheswar, Hemalata, Lachhama, Alai and many others have shown alternative ways to "struggle for right to life". Kashipur is an organic whole because the tribals are dynamic and lively. If they perish, Kashipur is dead. Likewise, if tribals survive, the whole universe survives - we all have to admit this truth.

### **Argentina: Women and Mining in Argentina**

**Andrea Veronica Mastrangelo**

Argentina is with Uruguay and Chile one of the countries in the extreme South of Latin America. Even though its economy is based on exporting primary goods, the former and protected activities were historically cows live stock and agriculture. Because of this, mining is, still nowadays, a non traditional activity.

Although there are women working as geologist, engineers, anthropologists, lapidaries and women living in mining areas as wives and mothers of miners, prejudices -such as that mines need rough men- and the issue that women work in small scale mining and handicraft labour, have contributed to make the presence of women in mines invisible. Because of these, we can say that in Argentine mining labour has a male gender stress: there are not women among union leaders, and women health is not taken into account by the labour laws.

The presence of women in mining has begun to be considered since 1990 decade. In that moment, multi national investments in great mining were possible, in the context of a neoliberal economical programme.

### **Gender and Mining in Belén, Catamarca, Argentine North West before the Great mining investment**

Belén is a district located in Catamarca, one of the poorest provinces of the country. There, traditional economy has been based in two cycles: vicuña cycle, managed by weaving women, in which men supply raw material by hunting and a mining cycle in which men managed the enterprise and women worked in housekeeping and reproductive labours. The alternation and election of the main economical activities in each historical period was made by considering market opportunities and the move of the whole families. The area has historically had a low inhabitants density and the two cycles demand the use of all the labour force available.

Another consequence of the low population density added to the lack of economical opportunities, is that the local demography is mainly compounded by women over 65 year old and children under 14 years old, because active workers go out temporarily or definitely. These means that families are compounded by one or more older women taking care of young children whose parents have gone away. In this domestic units it is frequent that children do the work old women cannot bear.

In Belén, the place where this research was located, in 1990 decade a copper – gold bed began to be exploited. The mining site is 35 km. away from the nearest town (1500 inhabitants). The consequences of the mining settlement were different during the building of the process ground than in the current moment of exploitation.

During the building of the process ground, most of the labour force was formed by male who temporarily migrated to the towns. Most of these men were young and single that earned high wages and bought fashion clothes. Those things made them appear handsome and attractive to young women (14 to 20 years old) of the town.

The result of these encounters was a group of children named “T children”, born from native woman and migrant relation. These children are named “T” because it is the capital letter of the building enterprise, and nowadays are being cared only by their mothers.

- Since the mine began its production in 1996, men and women have done the same work in equal conditions, in management and in the mining site.
- In the mining work, women mainly drive big trucks from the open pit to the rock mill.
- In the administration task there are women working as secretaries and one reached the presidency of the company.
- Women working in mining site as well as secretaries are native, but the one who reached the presidency was a U.S.A native.

## **Conclusions**

From the information presented we came to the conclusion about the importance of gender condition (male-female) in social organization in general and particularly in mining. As a result we claim in favour of the inclusion of a gender perspective in mining public policies. Taking into account not only to add women in the labour process, but generate equal opportunities for women living near mining sites.

## **Australia**

### **May Byrne**

Robyne and I come from Western Australia. Our land in Pilbara is one of the most-mined regions in the world. I want to talk about the experiences of aboriginals in Australia and the impact of mining on our lives. First of all, I want to tell everyone about our continuous struggle to protect our land, lore and culture.

### **Our life before the white man came:**

Our ancestors – over five hundred tribes – had the ownership of the land. The land we know now as Pilbara was known as the country of Banjyma, Thalanji, Ngarluma, Mardathunia, Gurrama, Injibandi and many other tribes. I am a Banjyma person and I come from the Banjyma country. The language I speak is Banjyma. Traditionally, and even today, we share a unique bond with our land, which is our primary source of food and shelter and keeper of our spirits. We had established our own law, customs and ceremonial rites. When a child is born, it is born into a kinship of skin-group, totem and as a being of the land. In our culture you are born a Banjyma person with a distinct skin colour. This allows an aborigine to have sovereignty, a birth right over his or her country. Nobody can take away this right from us.

This means that our communities can never be extinguished. The law is written on rocks and trees, on sacred objects and painted on our bodies. It cannot be erased as long as we are alive. This law

was given to us by Mingala, the creator. However, we, the true custodians of the land now have no control over what is happening to our land. The land that was our mainstay was taken away from us: first, by the pastoralists, then the government and now the miners.

Our Native Title came about only in 1992. We thought, at last, we would get recognition. Indigenous people in other countries have had some sort of treaty and we thought we were also getting modern-day land rights, and that we would have most of our tribal land back. How wrong we were!

Our land is now owned by pastoralists. These leases are owned by the mining giants - BHP and Rio Tinto. They bought the pastoral stations for their mining tenements. The government of Australia and the mining companies work together. If the Banjyma people are governed by a Native Title system of White Man's law which keeps changing, we have no land at all. It is owned by pastoralists, miners and the government. Our Aboriginal Law is still the same since the time the White Man occupied this country and what I request this forum to urge the Australian Government to recognize our land rights.

After hearing what all the ladies said during the deliberations it is clear that the mining companies are working in collusion with the governments.



## Open Discussion - Day II

The stimulating presentations made by the resource persons as well as participants from different countries evoked many queries. Medha's call for global development with communities' perspectives as the mainstream paradigm of development brought in a debate on how to participate in political spaces and get people's mandates recognized and implemented.

The second most serious issue brought out which poses a critical challenge to the Network is on addressing the concerns of communities as well as workers without being intimidating or of opposing one interest against the other.

The third crucial point was on how we take forward our specific problems beyond mere sharing of experiences and what kind of a role we envisage for the International network to make an impact on women's lives.

### **Faith Letlala to Medha:**

What is your opinion on women being involved in politics as, without women participating in political and decision making spaces along with men, we cannot get our problems addressed. The other issue is that workers are not separate entities from communities. Do not look at us as enemies because problems that communities face from mining industries are also faced by workers, whether of drinking water, poor housing, health etc. We have one common enemy and that is the one who makes profits, the capitalists and we need to re-strategise to fight this system.

**Medha:** You have answered your own question. We have to take a re-look at the traditional class, caste and gender-based paradigms of conflict. How do we intervene in electoral politics and how far we are willing to go is an individual decision. But the decision not to be a political is very important. We have to push for alternative spaces as people's movements are also political movements and we also have to emphasize that ours are not peripheral issues. What is considered

minority is actually the majority concern and needs to get into the mainstream political agenda. Some of us have to get into the electoral processes while some of us continue as alternative movements.

When **Dr Satyalakshmi** wanted more clarity on how to get into political processes **Dr Fatima Babu** narrated an illuminating example of an illiterate woman in Tamil Nadu who became the Sarpanch and did not allow mining contractors to enter their villages and destroy their lands.

**Iris** responded that if women participate in the political and decision-making spaces, we can have more control over policies and decisions. We have to understand the new gender perspectives and introduce these in the public policies. We have to build alliances and networks of women and develop strategies.

**Bidulata** cautioned everyone on the problems of political interferences in movements where local governments and mining companies try to co-opt or intimidate leaders.

**Faith** further stressed on the need for the participants to come up with recommendations like those in Matilda's presentation with regard to moratorium. For example, how do we address the atrocities in Ghana, or do we ensure that the strategies of struggle in Costa Rica are implementable in Ghana. Our experiences, country situations, legislations, cultures are all different. So we have to complement these experiences and re-strategize as a Network. My submission is also that we workers are not representing the interests of the mining companies; we are with the communities and sympathize with the indigenous peoples' concerns. Our union is working very hard on the atrocities and labour issues of women and we are challenging the multinational companies. Also closure of mines is also not the solution to all the problems related to mining.

**Hannah:** Mine closure plan is different from mine closure. Mine closure is an alternative, if we want

to consider all alternatives, especially as millions of people are destroyed. In that sense mine closure is an alternative. In my country where illiteracy and lack of information is a problem, we are developing capacities of communities to face the situation. Women are totally deprived, do not have access to ownership. It is important to discuss the benefits of mining but also important to talk of the other negative impacts. It is important to share our peculiar experiences in the conference so as to develop our capacities and strategies right from community based advocacy and campaign to national and international levels.

**Usha:** Electoral politics and contesting, is a small part of politicizing an issue. It is one the problems that many sectors of this kind have faced when people go in as catalysts and recognize the existence of these issues but to give a place for it in the political arena is very difficult. Issues of women are only mentioned, as side issues and women are only a marginal sector. One of the advantages of meeting here is to discuss how to break these barriers and discuss how to go forward. With regard to difference of positions, we need to talk to one another when we come from different experiences and not have to depend on --corporates or the State. We are at different stages of mining and at different forms of mining. So we need to be able to share, for example, what it is like in a post apartheid era in South Africa, or about strategies and movements after independence in India. We cannot exclude the interest of workers, communities, development, and environment. We should find the space without destroying the rights of anybody.

**Faith to Andrea:** Do you have gender policy in Argentina? Can you tell us more about the de-rationalization of mining and prejudices against women participating in mining. You have raised the issues and problems of migrant labour and migration of communities. Migrant labour has been a trend in South Africa also and the impacts are very similar on families' health problems like HIV/AIDS etc., We have a succession plan for

this in South Africa, the mine hostels changed into family units so that families can live with the miners and this can reduce the social disintegration that happened when mining towns had single males in hostels.

**Andrea:** We do have some gender policies but the problem is, they are not implemented, so they exist only on paper. Women are working mainly in the small scale mines, most of the women are single mothers and their living and working conditions are pathetic. The problem is, they also do not have alternative livelihoods and there is high level of poverty. There is also largescale deforestation. Women and even girl children are forced into prostitution. It is important to look at the utilization of resources and also the extent and scale of mining.

**Maria to Elizabeth:** what are your plans for the future in PNG and what do you see as solutions, is closure of mines the solution you are demanding?

**Elizabeth:** The mine closure is planned for 2010 for OKTEDI mine. Before closure takes place, we are fighting for information and mine closure plan details and if it has anything for women in affected areas, so as to develop training programmes, information awareness etc., within affected areas and to make the concerns of women as part of the closure plans

**Matilda:** I want to say a little bit about OKTEDI. It has been an issue raised globally. There has been a court case in Australia as it is not allowed in PNG and as BHP was an Australian Company. The company left, as they were responsible for environmental damages to the river. They are trying to protect themselves to abscond from responsibility to the damages. It falls back on our government, which is also not responsible, to clean up the mess. So all we can say is, we are struggling for the justice of our people and against the destruction that some one else created on our lands.

**Mai:** I want to mention here that communities are not having choices any more. We have our experience in Buyat bay case in Indonesia. The company shut down in 2004. We are reporting to the police about the violations, pollution and the police come to the site for fact finding. We are also forcing government to look at it. The local governments do not respond as they face threats from the company. So communities are giving complaints to national governments are talking to media, putting up protests. We found this effective, as media has covered it extensively. In Indonesia people are aware as it is hitting the headlines everyday. So if people feel helpless, we must take some action. From Jatam we extend advocacy and solidarity support. We should ensure there is strong public awareness and protest on implementing our regulations. The companies do not like this and accuse our governments and threaten them that they will not invest if regulations are not conducive to them, but we need to fight these corporate lobbies.

**Sajaya** posed a general question to all the participants if there are any health studies involving mining sector concerning women's health.

**Faith:** We have a challenge to this conference in terms of Elizabeth's presentation. We should be helpful to her situation. National resources are polluted by mining and social problems like prostitution, are increasing because people cannot mine, cannot fish, families are getting just 2 US dollars a day and there is growing poverty in the mining areas. This is because a framework was agreed between the companies and the government. We do not want to have South Africa or any other country getting into such a framework. How do we renege this as a Network and play solidarity with those who are still pursuing cases in court? BHP's damages are not the government's responsibility, so how far BHP is interdicted to those responsibilities. We cannot leave things hanging, so we need to find answers to this as a Network.

**Bidulata to Maria:** What policy have you thought out or your government came up with, with regard to tribal and landless people affected by mining.

**Maria:** We do not have indigenous people in Greece. Most people have some ownership, may be not land ownership. Some did lose lands for mining but they got some compensation. Those who did not have titles like forest lands, fishing, lost out completely. No law exists in the Constitution for these people.

**Sanjukta to Bidulata:** You mentioned in your presentation that motivators and leaders participate in the city meetings and get beaten up when they return to village. What does Palli Sabha do in these situations?

**Bidulata:** Palli Sabha is saying no to mining but is forced to give their signatures for being evicted and mining is being sanctioned forcefully. Such practices should not be allowed.

**Fatima:** This conveys a powerful message that we are willing to stand up for the victimized and this is the kind of togetherness that we should be aiming at in the conference.

**Vemie to Rebecca:** Do you have workers union in Sierra Leone and do you have links with these unions and what are the areas where you can be of help to each other and what are the issues you still feel needs to be resolved.

**Rebecca:** There is a workers' union but the union is dead. People are using it as a tool against the community. Workers' wives or relatives are against the community because they are getting some earning from the mines and they will be out of jobs if they join the fight. So even if the unions want to get any facilities for themselves, it is difficult. If we speak against the economy it means we are talking against debt and against the State. If over 2000 people are to be relocated for a mine only ten people are given compensation. So if a mineral is found, it is no longer your land or house, and you will be evicted. People die from

blasts, injuries, health problems and communities are afraid today. We do not have capital and if you want to mine in our lands we say, at least give us all the rights of our land. We are looking for suggestions so that I can take them back home with your contributions.

**Pallavi to Rebecca:** You mentioned that women obtain licenses to mine and sell them to men. Do the women remain as owners and are the women rich or poor women?

**Rebecca:** Women just obtain license, but they are not fit to do mining. So they hire men to do small-scale mining. Women don't know the value of diamonds. Men know, so they easily cheat the women. Men take the diamonds and sell it in the markets, but what they pass on to women is very little, as women don't know the value. Some women own land whose husbands are dead, but they are told that it is sacred land and women are not supposed to taken ownership of it or mine it and men take it away. Also those men who have political links take license in their wives' names.



# DAY III

## Theme: Women Mine Workers - Problems and Perspectives

### **Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt - Women Mine Workers: A Gendered View of the Mines at the Times of Globalization**

#### **Women and work in mines**

Women have always worked to sustain their family, whether at home or outside of it. Even in an occupation like mining, which is generally viewed as a man's job, women have become an essential part of the workforce. This is irrespective of time and space, level of development of the country or contemporary social structures or ideologies about the 'roles of a woman'. The inclusion of women in the mining labour force also challenges the widely held belief that women cannot handle technology. Mining activity is also known to bring drastic changes to the social fabric of communities. It is not uncommon to hear stories of discovery of minerals leading to an influx of outsiders to an area and creating new social patterns in the local settlements. It has been seen that such changes are most likely to adversely affect the women of the community.

The organisation, Women in Development (WID) or Women and Development (WAD), which was established two decades ago, identified women involved in mining activities as a 'special' group. A host of studies looking at the impacts of mining on women were conducted under the auspices of WID/WAD. These studies helped create a greater awareness of the impacts, some positive but mostly negative, of mining on women. These studies portrayed women as the victims most-affected by development. In this presentation, I want to discuss the issues pertaining to woman and man's roles in mining.

Mining is not necessarily a capital-intensive activity. The image of mining as a formal enterprise, requiring formal training in engineering and geology in mining schools, large capitals and infrastructure, multinational operations, *tends to hide the fact that mining is also a livelihood* for thousands of unskilled workers. Thus, all forms of mining practices are illegitimized by this narrowly perceived image of mining.

Theoretically speaking, members of a free human society, women are equally entitled to pursue gainful employment through mining jobs and many do. However their contribution is downplayed where it matters, thus making them powerless. The question therefore is - *how to make women more visible in order to involve them in the decision-making processes and empower them?* My objective in this presentation is *twofold*. I would like to set the backdrop in which the extractive operations are working to hide women's contributions and establish an agenda of gender mainstreaming for mining.

#### **What is so special about gender?**

All of us are born with a sex and society gives us gender. By gender, I imply an asymmetrical social relationship between women and men based on perceived social differences.

The concept of gender sensitivity can be integrated into all mining-related development programmes. I say this for *two main reasons*: 1) in view of the past and present contributions made by women and 2) seeing the thrust towards the mainstreaming of gender in the global development agenda and globalisation.

The empowerment of women is possible only when they are seen as legitimate members of the workforce. This empowerment will change many inequalities inherent in our societies and also highlight women and men's gender-specific needs as against lumping them all together in the generalized description \_\_ 'the working class'.

### **Global changes and women's work**

A phenomenon beyond our control is taking place in the world today. This is the process of globalization. Globalization is 'creating languages, services and products that apply not just to an individual neighbourhood or city or country, but to the whole world' (UNPAC, 2002). It involves economic restructuring in third world countries; commonly appearing as the *avatar* of the triumvirate of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation. Unfortunately it also has the negative impact of deepening poverty. Women, usually at the bottom of the social hierarchy in third world countries, generally have to bear the brunt of the evil effects of the process such as increased workloads, lower pay, job insecurity and stress. Gender roles play a central role in understanding what is happening today around us.

Certain trends are appearing in the mining industry due to globalisation.

These are as follows:

1. Mining is finding 'new grounds' in third world countries;
2. It is becoming more multinational in nature;
3. Artisanal, small scale and informal mining are being acknowledged as having poverty reduction potential in remote areas;
4. As mining is becoming more mechanised, jobs in the industry are better paying but dwindling in numbers and the dominance of trade unions is also on the decline.

On the positive side, the mining industry:

1. Is beginning to take notice of the environmental issues and;
2. Is addressing issues such as the sustainability of development; empowerment of communities and the role of informal mining in creating a livelihood.

### **Gender mainstreaming**

A gender-sensitive approach facilitates an understanding of the causes of the subordinate position of women, and the difficulties they face in carrying out their economic and social roles. Involving both sexes is not only desirable for improving women's situation in terms of solving practical problems and ensuring increased equity between women and men, - but also as an essential input for sustaining the environment and development in mining regions. There is still a significant lack of understanding of responsibilities of women in all areas of mining. In addition, most technical planners lack the knowledge and tools necessary to incorporate gender analysis into their programmes. Another failing is the lack of attention to gender at a policy level. Current mining laws and policies should be reviewed and revised to give women and men equal rights over the resources of the land, and to represent in all mining management forums at all levels.

Women are not usually taken into account in the operational aspects of designing mining projects or in outlining Environmental Impact Assessments. They are seen only as users of domestic fuel like coal and as a pool of volunteers with unlimited resources of time and labour. They are seldom treated as managers of natural resources, or as those most affected by deterioration in that resource base. This has led to a 'welfare focus' in which men obtain all 'productive' and formal management roles - involving skill development and monetary rewards. The rationales to exclude women from public spheres are often based on fallacies.

A gender-based approach will recognise and incorporate the roles of both women and men in the mines. For example, in case of launches and closures of mines, displaced people are forced to change their previous livelihood activities or lose access to local subsistence resources. These changes have gender implications as women and men make different contributions. Participation of women in mining should hence also mean their involvement in the decision-making. Presently no strategies are articulated to achieve this. Involvement in consultation is one way to ensure a voice for women. Women, however, need support to enable them to take part effectively in the negotiation processes.

**Constraints of gender mainstreaming**

- a. Lack of access to and control over resources, and confidence. There is a need to improve understanding of gender roles and to sensitise men to women's contributions. Women should also be involved in planning and decision-making, in order to make them more self-confident. Programs must also be designed to give training inputs targeted at women.
- b. Lack of awareness and failure to give adequate consideration of gender issues. Policy-makers and managers have failed to utilise gender analysis and disaggregate statistics. Inputs required here involve gender sensitisation, development of gender analysis, planning methodologies and tools, development of effective indicators and monitoring systems, and establishment of accountability.
- c. Inadequacies in strategies and methodologies. Problems arise when there is an overemphasis on technical aspects and social aspects are neglected.

Women cannot be given their due when general strategies and methodologies are poorly developed. The view of community participation is narrow in the mining sector. It needs to be

broadened. Support mechanisms must be developed to facilitate an increased role for women. Male resistance - both inherently present in local communities and in support agencies such as trade unions - is often cited as one of the major causes of the gender bias. This resistance may stem from a lack of understanding of gender issues.

**Conclusion**

The banishment of women from mining work is neither desirable nor irreversible. Mining has the potential to empower women. This is particularly true of informal mining activity, where the dominant gender norms and values are now being incorporated to exclude women. Given women's work capacity and capabilities, no job arena should exclude women from its fold. We need to consider and consolidate lessons from all related research in order 1) to build a greater understanding of gender roles and responsibilities; 2) to include a gender perspective in mining planning, environmental impact assessments, community consultation and development projects; 3) to effect revision of international laws relating to women's participation in mining jobs on surface as well as underground, daytime as well as night time jobs, and 4) to facilitate gender sensitisation of trade unions, mine managers, technologists and bureaucrats.



## Country presentations

### Columbia: Women, Mining and Resistance in Colombia

#### The pillage of our Resources

- Agreements with International Financial Institutions and “military aid”: Benefits for the multinationals.
- The creation of domestic legislation on Mining, Oil, and the Environment: The multinationals and their lawyers.
- The role of the state and multinationals play in the “security” of mining and energy operations.
- The impact of these policies on the Colombian population.
- Resistance is our response to these threats.
- Agreements with international financial institutions and “military aid”.
- Agreements with the World Bank and IMF: Limits on the applications and enforcement of national and international legislations that protect the environment, the labour force, indigenous communities, the black community, women and child workers
- Military Aid from Great Britain and Canada; Casanare, Guajira, sur de Bolivar and Norte de Santander: B.P., Angloamerican, Anglogold and Anglocoal.
- Plan Colombia and Patriot; Putumayo, Norte de Santander, Bolivar and Tolima: Harken Energy, Oxy, Conquistador and Texas Star.

#### The creation of domestic legislation mining, oil and the environment

- Canadian cooperation - CIDA-CERI
- The 1996 mining code project.

- Corona Goldfields, Conquistador Mines, Anglogold and the biggest gold deposits in the Americas located in Bolivar.
- Law 685 passed in 2001, new mining code.
- Group Holcim- Cemex- Ladrillera Santafe-Glencore A.G. tax reductions, closure of state businesses, environmental control given to the multinationals, exploitation of urban areas, Arbitration tribunals, derecognition of agreement 169.

#### The role of the state and multinationals in the “security” of mining and energy operations.

- The United States and its allies invest in 2 areas of the economy: Mining and Energy, in order to guarantee its investment they tripled military aid.
- The role of the security agencies from USA and Israel in the creation and support of military – paramilitary armed groups:
- In Magdalena Medio the case of USO, the Panamanian helicopters, arms entered for these groups through ports belonging the Chiquita company, the subjections of drug traffickers to American “justice”.

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**32 % of the Colombian municipalities are involved in mining activities and oil municipalities. In the last 8 years 74% of the violations of human rights, 68% of forced displacement**

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- The financing of these groups by the state through the taxation of royalties, the transfer of public resources and loans for industrial development.

- The cases of the multinationals Drummond, Oxy, B.P, and the mercenary company Scan Air

#### The impact of these policies on the Colombian population.

32 % of the Colombian municipalities are involved in mining activities and oil municipalities. In the last 8 years 74% of the violations of human rights, 68% of forced displacement, (close to 2 million people) and more than 520 massacres that have

cost the lives of more than 7,000 people and grave violations of economic, social and cultural rights have occurred in these municipalities.

Those responsible for the majority of these acts are military – paramilitary groups, supported by the governments of the United States, Great Britain and Israel and they operate in association with intelligence agencies and mercenaries from these countries.

Under the current government of Uribe Velez a trade union activist is assassinated every 4 days, an indigenous person every 3 days. The number of detentions and arbitrary arrests has increased by 2,300%. As a consequence, women are forced to take the responsibility of maintaining the home.

Hence resistance is our response to these threats.

#### **Legal Matters:**

- Civil claims in USA against the companies Drummond, Oxy y Scan Air.
- Claims before the Constitutional Court of Colombia against the laws and codes.
- Legal support for the families (principally to women and children) of victims of human rights violations.
- Actions under the OAS and of the UN
- Other actions, constitutional and legal, which are collective in character, such as popular actions in defence of the environment, life and the integrity of people and communities.

#### **Political Organization**

- Modules on formation and integration for women miners about the mining process
- Organizational modules on the process of women and community participation.
- Technical modules on the passive resolution and management of conflicts.
- Processes with political and social organizations in the congress.

#### **Technical support.**

Mining plans, diagnostics and plans for environmental management.

## **India: Status of Women in the Unorganized Sector - Stone Quarry Workers**

**Pallavi Rege**

### **Introduction**

Human invention begins with the use of stones as effective equipment to protect as well as progress. Today, as we move forward towards finding life on other planets, valuable samples brought down include stone as one of the important components.

Stone is one of the major minerals used in the advancement of human history. Stone is used for Buildings, Roads, Dams, Bridges etc. It is used even as an alternative to sand, where stone is crushed into stone sand. As a consequence, mountains & hills are flattened and plain lands turned into huge ditches.

### **Status of miner community in unorganized sector**

Large numbers of landless families (from marginalized sections) migrate to stone quarries for their survival because of famine, drought and earthquake affected areas of different districts.

In the state of Maharashtra, India, the dominant caste/community engaged in the stone quarry sector belongs to the lowest socio-economic strata:

- Vimukta Jati- Jamati
- Nomadic Tribes
- Scheduled Caste
- Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Communities.

The Stone Quarry sector is legally registered under 'Small Scale Industry' protecting all possible interests of the Mining Owners. Since any law does not protect the Miners they keep migrating from one Stone Quarry to another without any certainties of time, place & duration.

- The living & working conditions of the Miners' community in the Quarry is extremely poor.

The huts provided by the owner, hardly 3 feet high and covered with plastic sheets do not have a supply of drinking water and no electricity. There is no health service center, no educational facilities.

- The villagers treat them as outsiders, exploited by owners, considered nil by the Public leaders and totally ignored by the Govt. officials, these miners lead a tough life, indeed.
- They have no permanent address; they are not included in any survey; not listed in the voters' list and, of course, no residence proof.
- The fundamental questions are - are they the citizens of this Nation? Do they belong to this Nation? Do they have any rights?
- They are always the people *unlisted, uncounted and people living on the edge.*

#### **Women as victims of unorganized sector-some cases:**

Laxmi Govind Chaweule:

Age 27, illiterate, Vadars (V.I.) along with her three children all below the age of 7 and husband migrated from famine affected Solapur district in

Maharashtra to Wagholi stone quarry unit in Pune.

While at work, Mr. Govind hit his stomach and died on the spot. The owner, safeguarding his interest, managed to shift his body to the hospital for post-

mortem and got the reports in his favor. The body of Govind was shifted to his village without any body knowing the incident. The owner seems to have promised Laxmibai some money, which she never got. Laxmibai pulls her 10 years old elder son Babu out of Pashan Shala discontinuing his studies to work in the quarry.

#### **Sangeeta Sukhadev Salunke:**

Age 21, illiterate, Lamanies (N. T.) along with two daughters & a son migrated from Latur earthquake affected district to Moshi Stone Quarry. Her husband being a tractor driver while filling the

tractor, a stone from top hit his head & dies on the spot. The Quarry owner shifts the body to the crusher owners place. No one could raise voice against the Act. Sangeeta was left with no owner responsible. Sangeeta along with her children survives on stone quarry.

#### **Phulabai Tukaram Hatagale:**

Age 28, illiterate, Ramoshi (Scheduled Caste), having five daughters and one-son from Gulbarga in Karnataka State migrants to Katraj Hills Stone Quarry Unit. Early in the morning, as they were pushing the stone from the top, Tukaram slipped down with the stones and was practically buried under a heap of stones. The other workers from the same village stopped work for a week demanding compensation. Their resistance could not sustain the pressures of the owner, and the workers had to disappear overnight to an unknown place.

Every day thousands of accidents in the unorganized mining sector go unreported. The powerful lobby of the owners suppresses them.

The immediate victim of the unjust practice in the unorganized sector are the women and children of the community.

### **Education is a distant dream in the lives of girls...**

”

The prime motive of the Miners' community is to survive. The work pattern in the unorganized sector has been on contract basis, parents begin their work with the sunrise and ends with the sunset. The girl child has to shoulder the burden of house- work, fetch drinking water from far distance, wash clothes, prepare food, take care of the siblings, look after the house and also join parents in the quarry for work.

Education is the distant dream in the lives of girls. They are married at the age of 12 to 14. Miner women suffer from the problems of polygamy, extra marital relations, harassments at work place and victims of drunken husband.

Most of the women miners suffer from anemia, continuous discharge, irregularity in period, pregnancy related problems and victim of HIV - AIDS. The unhealthy environment, degraded living condition and over exhaustion makes women difficult to cope up with work after the age of 35 to 40.

Though men earn relatively more than the women in maximum families, women are seen as the 'Practical Bread Earners'. Most of the men's earnings are spent on repaying the liquor bills and remaining on their other vices. In case women do not go to work for a week, the family would have to either starve or take advance from the Owner or borrow from the local money lender for high interest.

#### **Santulan's intervention:**

Santulan's intervention with the Miners Community begins with:

- Pioneering educational programme for the stone quarry children and child laborers.
- Women have striked on the issue of banning the illicit liquor in the mining area.
- Adolescent & Youth groups are promoted for skills training & personality development.
- Health awareness, camps and Micro Health Service for Mining workers.
- Women's Self-Help groups are promoted. Shelter Home for Orphan & destitute children
- Legal Aid Center cum Resource Center on Mining
- Work towards listing the workers in voting list, Ration Cards, Benefits from the Public Food Distribution and Govt. Schemes & programmes.
- Workers development committees



## **India: Women Mine Workers in Uttarpradesh**

### **Sahnaj**

I am from Uttar Pradesh and I work in the district of Allahabad in the Shankargarh area, in the Timur and Bind Hills, where open-cast stone mining takes place, apart from Silica mining. We work mainly with women's groups for the past four years. Earlier, women were not allowed to take mining leases on their own. But, after a long, hard struggle against a royal family, who had apportioned more than forty-seven villages to its name before the Land Abolishment Act, women were finally allowed to lease lands in their name.

Mining is a traditional occupation here. Women's groups as well as landlords have a share in about 31.5 acres in this area. About 41.58 acres is utilized for Silica mining. Wherever there is mining that is being undertaken either by the royal family or the contractors, there are a large number of men and women who are working there as bonded labour. This is because they do not have leases for mining. The bonded labourers belong to the Koel tribe but they are not officially recognized as Tribal. The bonded labourers are paid only half-wages even though they work for more than twelve hours a day.

The Uttar Pradesh government declared that the state was a 'Bonded Labour free State', but, this is not so. Children who are between eight and ten years old, work in the Silica mines as well as the stone quarries. There is no other viable alternative means of livelihood for the people here except for mining, because of lack of agricultural lands as well as an ever-receding forest line. Most children from these parts receive education. But, when they return home after school, they find their homes locked, as their parents are away working in the mines. They have to go into the mine site after school hours to be with their parents. Since there are no playgrounds in the vicinity, they are forced to play in the mining area. All this leads to an increase of respiratory diseases as the children are continually inhaling the dust from these mines.

Women miners spend a lot more time than their male counterparts as they are involved in collecting rubble. This is more time-consuming than what the male mine workers do, which is breaking larger chunks of stone.

There is no source of drinking water for the community in these parts. The only source of water is that which is collected in shallow pools around the mining area. These stagnant pools of water, often covered with muck, is their only source of drinking water.

This idea of giving leases to women was born because the male miners did not have the authority to mine for themselves. We filed a petition in the High Court in 1995 to give women their rights to lease land for mining. The court's decision, which came out in 2000, was to abolish the lease system, and to introduce an auction system, thereby increasing the value of the lands by ten times their original value.

Since the time women have received land leases they have taken an active interest on ownership issues and participated more in the decision-making process. Now, the government is pressurizing women's groups to give up their leases on the land because some of the women's groups haven't paid their taxes on time, even though a lot of the mines run by contractors are long overdue on their taxes.

The present government has created a lot of trouble for these women's groups. They now want us to go to Allahabad to collect the land lease documents. Since the women have started mining, they have had to deal with most issues pertaining to mining, for instance, tax payment, etc, at the district headquarters, which is very far – about eighty kilometres – from where they work. They also have residential lease certificates, which safeguard them from becoming bonded labourers in the future. As long as women do not receive residential lease certificates at their place of work, there is always a danger of them becoming bonded labour. These are some of the problems I wish to highlight with regard to women working in the quarries.

## **India: Sand Mining in Tamil Nadu**

**Dr.Fatima Babu**

Sand mining is a major cause of concern in many parts of Tamil Nadu in India. Indiscriminate mining of sand in the river basins, coastal areas and hill regions of Tamil Nadu has become a real threat to the ecology as well as the livelihood of the local communities. Hundreds of fishing villages exist along the coastline of Tamil Nadu. Parts of Tuticorin district and a number of villages in adjacent Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari districts have rich reserves of sand replete with deposits of Garnet, Ilmenite, Rutile etc.

Idinthakarai, Perumanal Periathalai, Kuttapuli and Panjal in particular have heavy deposits of these strategically and economically important materials.

A boom in the construction industry in the early 90s has also activated heavy sand mining in the river beds, causing great alarm to the people living in those areas. The provisions of the law to regulate sand mining are not capable of ruling over these mining-magnates. Even after the expiry of their licenses, they continue to mine, with the supportive structure of money power, muscle-power and political power. There is no such thing as permitted quantum of sand as far as they are concerned. The sand that they remove is four to six times the permitted quantum.

The affected river basins include those of Palar and its tributaries Cheyyar, Araniyar & Kosathalaiyar besides the Cauvery, the Bhavani, the Vellar, the Vaigai and the Tambaraparani.

The massive social and economic destabilization caused by the mining invaders has taken a toll on the peace of the villages and the people. Agricultural lands have acquired acute salinity rendering cultivation impossible and throwing a great number of farm -hands out of work.

### **The "golden sand" and the mining arena**

The fishing hamlets of South Tamil Nadu have been hit hard by the mining activities of some

seven companies. Garnet Sand, called "the Golden Sand" in business parlance among miners, is mainly used as an abrasive for its hardness. They are found in association with rare earth minerals like Monazite, Zircon, Rutile etc. Prospecting for these minerals is done by the atomic minerals division of the Atomic Energy Department (AED) which is setting up a plant at Koodankulam in Tirunelveli District. India has garnet deposits of about 36 million tonnes, of which about 8 million tonnes is on the Tamil Nadu coast.

Garnet deposits are found all along the Tamil Nadu coast from Thanjavur to Kanyakumari, though the concentration is greater along the Tuticorin, Tirunelveli coasts. In the last five years the abrasive industry has grown tremendously leading to a phenomenal demand for garnet sand. Private parties managed to get land on lease from the Atomic Energy Department, resulting in, what an official source described as, "uncontrolled mining and a flagrant disregard for rules".

V.V. Minerals, India's largest mining manufacturer and exporter of garnet and Ilmenite is the first private Ilmenite exporter in India. The company holds control over a 15 km-long beach area with continuous placer-mineral deposits, plus another 1200 acres of heavy mineral-rich land. This company, which was granted leasing licence in violation of proper permit procedure, has by its continuous removal of mineral-rich sand along the coast, upset the ecological balance of the coastline.

### **Social Repercussions of Mining Activities on villages of South Tamil Nadu**

The social repercussions of the mining activities of the companies above mentioned, fall particularly heavily on the women-folk. Encroachments by miners have deprived the fisher-folk of the space that has been theirs traditionally to land their catch, to dry their fishing nets and to keep their fishing equipment.

The underground rocks have started showing up, posing a threat to the vallams and catamarans, which the fishermen depend on for their

livelihood. During high tide, the waves lift the catamarans and dash them against the rocks and against the houses.

Sand mining has caused erosion in the areas, resulting in the collapse of fishing habitations and creating a sense of insecurity among the women. Activities along the beach line are not confined to mining. It is believed that under the cover of sand-mining, other anti-national/anti-social activities, such as smuggling, etc., are also going on.

A number of women, whom I met, in the affected villages stated that they felt inhibited and threatened by the presence of strangers in their village and that their freedom of involvement was restricted as a result of this.

Due to the disturbances caused in the marine environment and due to diminishing fishing area through mining, there is a decrease in fish catch along this coast. The fishermen say that certain varieties of fish have disappeared along with the red and black sands, which are essential for their breeding. "Two years ago, we used to get a daily catch worth Rs.100/- said a fisherman "Now we don't even make Rs.20/-

An economic crisis such as this at home, is a pressure on the woman, leading her to frantically borrow money from all possible sources and ultimately pushing her into messy debt-traps.

It is not unusual for women to borrow money on interest to pay the interest of an earlier loan. Thus borrowing becomes an unending cycle for the woman to run the family. The sad story does not end here. The woman is, invariably, the one left alone at home to face the ordeal of humiliating experiences at the hands of unscrupulous moneylenders, as the man usually thrusts the task of tackling such situations on her.

Poverty drives women into marginalized work such as domestic helpers and construction workers, even into socially humiliating work as commercial sex workers.

Saline water intrusion into drinking water wells is another serious problem the fishermen in these villages face. The women folk have to usually cover a distance of 2(+2) kilometres every time to fetch a single pot of drinking water from the nearest well. With the erosion caused by sand mining along the beach, increasing the salinity of water in the well and making it unfit for drinking, the women are forced to trek longer distances in search of good drinking water, enduring much physical difficulties. But that's not all.

Even as they walk across lonely stretches, they often encounter other kinds of assault including eve teasing and rape. In one village, the people have to depend on those who transport water from Kanyakumari and sell it for a few rupees per pot.

Moves by miners and protests by people as well as moves and counter moves by rival groups of miners are frequently creating law and order problems in the locality.

Rival groups of miners, directly or through their agents, are involved in the mining activity and frequently clash with each other. These miners usually engage men of the local community to attack "the other group". Thus, very often, we find members of the same village/locality pitted against each other.

When clashes take a nasty turn, as they do happen, the men are forced to forsake their homes (at least temporarily) leaving the women to bear the burden of managing home and family, besides having to face the brutality of the attackers. Moreover, during such periods, the women are at the mercy of the men, who intrude into their homes and harass them, even sexually.

The sand-miners have not only succeeded in creating rifts in the community, but also within the family, by setting one member of the family against another. It is not uncommon in these villages to have the father in the service of the sand-miners and the son protesting against their presence. In a situation such as this, peace in the

family is shattered, even as the women in the household try to strike a balance between the two men and end up getting abused by both.

Women's involvement in the sand mining industry in Tamil Nadu is not very significant. New technology and the heavy work involved in sand-mining usually keeps women out. As and when the need arises, Dalit women are lured to carry head-loads of sand and paid wages much lower than their male counterparts. These women, who do not belong to the locality, have no option but to stay overnight in their place of work, during late-night work, thereby exposing themselves to the risk of sexual harassment and exploitation.

### **Women in the struggle**

Women's participation in the struggle against sand mining has been significant. Sr Cleva, a Roman Catholic nun belonging to the Servite congregation, spear-headed the campaign against 'these 'mighty miners'. For more than a year and half, fishermen, women and environmentalists put up a stiff resistance. On the 6th of December 1996, while the villagers were staging an agitation urging the government to stop the infiltration of miners into their area, the police descended on them and attacked them brutally. Women were targeted and abused in humiliating ways. Even Jayaseeli, an elderly women belonging to the Perumanal village, was not spared.

Today, the drama continues and the villages are still disturbed areas; only the characters and certain scenes have changed – the struggle, now, is between a more powerful offender and lesser ones.

### **Sterlite Industries India Ltd**

Tuticorin District has another Democles' sword hanging over its head in the name of Sterlite Industries India Ltd., an international company, running a number of industries, mainly copper-smelting plants. SILL which was established in 1995 against stiff opposition from environmentalists and a lot of resistance from the public because of a copper-smelting plant, sited in the centre of a

cluster of villages in clear defiance of the P.C.B's requirement of establishing an industry of this nature at a distance of 25 k.m away from an ecologically sensitive area.

In the case of SILL, there is no mining at the location - Tuticorin, but the mined ore is transported to Tuticorin and the smelting is done here. In the process of smelting, Sulphur dioxide gets emitted and research has shown the presence of Arsenic, Mercury, Bismuth, Barium in the solid waste and ETP sludge, even in water. Emissions and effluents from the giant-copper plant have already done great damage to the town and its people.

The inhaling of gas emissions cause a host of maladies, like respiratory problems, asthma and other lung-associated illnesses as well as skin-diseases, jaundice and paralysis. Primary complex has almost become every child's ailment in Tuticorin. The incidence of cancer has also been on the increase since Sterlite set up shop in Tuticorin.

The presence of arsenic in air, water and the soil spells doom for future generations as it is bound to produce a whole lot of crippled and handicapped children for the next generation. With children being the worst affected victims of the killer smelter industry, women will be totally tied down to the task of attending on them life-long. With handicapped children at home, the mother's burden of managing the home, performing her duties at her place of work and ensuring the comfort of those children will handicap her potentials altogether. Accidents have been a regular feature at SILL, since it started its operations. In one such accident, more than 100 girls, working in an adjacent dry flowers company, inhaled the gas emission from Sterlite and became ill. Most of them became unconscious, some experienced severe vomiting and one of them, who was four months pregnant, had miscarriage.

In the struggle against Sterlite, women's voices have been quite powerful and they have always outnumbered men in every agitation against the industry. But in typical Sterlite-style, the bosses

sought to stifle the voices of protest by showering the town with so-called "Welfare Schemes". In a masterstroke of suppression, SILL indulged in sheer exploitation of the poverty of the masses – computers, sewing machine, cycles, etc., were given away "most generously" to the poor and they were silenced.

This was a serious setback not only to the Anti-Sterlite Movement but also to the painstaking efforts to empower powerless women. In recent times, there is a resurgence of activity among the women and they are coming together to stage a fight against crimes perpetrated against them.

## **Bolivia**

### **Margirita Alcala**

I am a mine worker and wish to tell you my story. I am an orphan and have been working in the mines since I was a child. Everyday, I am busy with the work in the mines and rush back home for housework. I work in the cooperatives. Our working conditions are very bad and so we had to struggle to improve the conditions. I to inside the mines and feel that women are capable of doing all kinds of work, so women should come forward and not remain in the background. We take help from the police in case of problems. Both men and women work equally to extract the minerals from underground. I am representing the women's cooperative federation in the conference.

Through National women mine workers federation we struggle for our rights and sometimes it becomes so dangerous that we have to give up our lives. The federation works to strengthen our rights and to fight for better positions in the mining. I want to make the lives of women mineworkers better. After we formed into this federation, we were able to make a lot of changes and improvements in our conditions.

We have also started some training on environment, health and water issues and are also trying to develop leadership among the women workers. I am thankful

to the organisations because I have learnt all this through participation in these campaigns and I am willing to sacrifice my life for our rights. In our federation we have 19 focus points and 10 federations which take different responsibilities. I am also questioning the public policies in Bolivia and am also asking the opinions of our members so that we develop the gender perspectives. It is very important for everyone to know about the work of the women in the mines. I will continue to work in the federation and go back home to tell my friends about my experience here in the conference.

But the Bolivian government is not interested in our conditions and life and we have to do strikes and protest and fasts in order to tell the government about our problems. I am proud of myself that I am able to represent the interests of the common people in my country. I have a lot of work ahead as I have to work for the children, the youth and the women in the mining regions. I am an ordinary woman but I will continue to work for this cause.

## **Zimbabwe**

### **Sizaye Shava**

In Zimbabwe, children are not married at the age of 12 or 14: There is legislation on it now. In Zimbabwe, the mining industry is fast moving into a new era of social responsibility. For a long time it has been viewed as an industry that did not take into account outside influence.

It should be acknowledged that the mining sector has always had a positive impact on many lives. It indeed provides infrastructure in remote areas and provides social services where they do not exist.

In spite of these positive impacts, the mining industry has not officially recognised women in mining communities. It is true that mining operations in Zimbabwe have been set up in rural areas. It is also true that the majority of people living in rural areas are women. Despite women being the majority, I would like to point out that in pre-independent Zimbabwe, women in the

mining communities depended on their husbands and their relatives for their livelihood.

However, things have changed so much so in Zimbabwe that the influx of women in the industry and many are now taking up positions of authority and responsibility in mining. Up until independence, in 1980, the majority of the workers in the mining industry were women. You could find a few women as employees. These would be receptionists, secretaries, typists and nurses. The number has increased since then to about 25 % of the total number of employees. The majority is employed as machine-minders and general hands, mainly in the milling department, while we have a good number in the engineering and technical services departments. Women, however, still feel inferior to their male counterparts and up until now, women still do not apply for underground jobs though the mining industry is an equal-opportunity-employer. Only a few women are in technical departments, mainly geologists and maybe overseers of maintenance. Illegal gold-panning also takes place, which is being done mainly by women to supplement their husbands' lowly wages.

It is sad to note that the male-female ratio as WACAM representatives is pathetic with few female WACAM representatives in the mines, apart from a few WACAM representatives in the trade union. It makes for no leverage: There are only three women representatives and out of these three, only one woman is at the labour centre, which is the Zimbabwe Trade Congress or Trade Union. In the mining Union, there are only three women executives out of a complement of 27. The government has, however, taken strides in recognizing the status of women in the mining industry. In this regard, the tripartite negotiating forums, which are the government, the labour and the employer, assured us the following:

- Maternity leave with full pay
- Gender equality, i.e., everyone is entitled to promotion, recruitment to any position without gender discrimination

- Sexual harassment is now a dismissible offence in Zimbabwe

Despite all the above, women in Zimbabwe are still bound by the cultural belief that even if they worked the required eight hours a day with their male counterparts, they are still duty bound that they go home and carry on with their household chores and thereafter, entertain their husbands. This leaves us a lot of questions as women working in the mining industry: Are we supposed to be working eight hours with the men? Or are we supposed not to work? I don't know.

Facilities to complement a working woman's life are inadequate. That is there are no crèche facilities after maternity leave at the work place. Also there are no protective clothes which are women-friendly. Supposed there is a fall in production where women are working, they invariably blame it first on the women, because supervisors do not delegate equal jobs to men and women. They still think women are weak or as employees who cannot take hard jobs. This is the blow on women in mining. Over and above all this, there is still the problem of men not accepting the fact that women can be in a position of responsibility and head departments with lots of men under them. The inferiority complex in men reporting to female bosses still exists. I am pleased to announce that with this representation, I have a chance to express the troubles of women and mining in Zimbabwe.

### **Back ground of Shava mines**

The Shava mines are situated in the Mashungu province of Zimbabwe, in a small town called Myshava, which is adjacent to the main Mashungu. The main mineral that is mined is asbestos. Asbestos mining was commenced in the Myshava area in 1917. Mining operations were initially undertaken by the companies, which were later amalgamated to L & N of the UK and are now part of the African Associated Mines, a subsidiary of SMM holdings, a locally owned company.

### **Zimbabwe: Development of experiences in which women miners have achieved incorporation in decision making spaces**

#### **Josephine Paidamoyo Mabenge**

Finally on March 2003 the green ticket (full blasting license) was in my hands. It did not just fall from the heavens. It was a struggle, a true first world war. I fought tooth and nail to get a hold of it.

I started in 1998 at the age of twenty-three at the Shamva Gold mining center with ITDG as a mining trainee and in 1999 I passed the examination and obtained a small-scale mining certificate. In the same year I went for industrial attachment to further my mining training career with Mazoe Gold Mining where I obtained a mining blasting license up to year 2000.

In 2001 I was transferred from Mazoe Gold Mine to Midlands Province Kwekwe Chaka for mining safety attachment and later taken to the sister company Tiger Reef Gold mine which had more enough training facilities.

At Tiger Reef Gold mine after mining safety training I applied for a post as Learner Miner to qualify as a full competent miner. I understand the following stages as part of hard won training.

As I have mentioned before, to qualify as hard rock minor was not easy. The first time, I visited the Midlands Province (Ministry of Mines) for my full blasting license all the board members laughed when I went inside to be tested. They were used to only testing men. I did not make it the first time. They told me I did not have enough underground experience so I was referred to several mines in Zimbabwe for underground support, electric blasting and mine safety. I managed to pass the exam the fifth time. In other words I went 5 times to the board so you can see how I sweated.

I would like to encourage other women to be able to fight these male dominated jobs no industry

matter what situation. They should wear a lion face and never look back. In a male dominant, one will be center of attraction and one need to stand firm and never lose out to bosses:

**The community**

It is very difficult for a women miner in the mining community, most women will be jealous of you and thinks that working with their husband’s means being in love with them. Most people in the community believe a women miner should be someone who does not have to be smartly dressed. If you are dressed well during weekends you hear them passing funny comments like "How can a miner dress so smartly and wear a nice deodorant?"

I have however managed to hold educational lessons with most women with their husbands working underground. I taught them how to treat their husbands before and after work; and also have taken most of women underground to show them the harsh condition their husbands work in.

**The company**

My company however has given me much honour. I live in a big company house and was recently promoted to Safety Officer for the whole organisation. My bosses and workmates accept me

and treat me as a man. I know one day I will be a mine manager.

**My organisation (I. T.D.G)**

I.T.D.G is setting another training school in Kadoma to train women miners but currently the programme is at stand still due to economic hardships but we hope by the end of the year all will be well. The organisation also assists women miners with learning about mining equipment and skills. We pay visits at the small mines and educate women.

**Conclusion**

The biggest challenge, as women in the mining industry are acceptance, tolerance by our male counter parts to show that women can also lead as good as or better than men.



Lashing - development stopes	1 month	Bland trimming	2 weeks
Track laying	1 month	Charging operator (slope)	1 month
Simple propping in slopes support	2 weeks	Charging operator (capital)	1 month
Bell operator	2 weeks	Blasting operator (night shift)	1 month
Lashing	1 month	Blasting operator (day shift)	1 month
Charging operator (development)	1 month	Qualified miner NEC registered	1 month
Mechanical tramming using locomotives	2 weeks	Gang leader construction	1 month
Jack hammer machine assistant	1 month	Senior gang leader (night shift)	1 month
Jack hammer machine operator	1 month	Senior gang leader (day shift)	1 month
Grizzley attendance	2 weeks	Shift operator (night shift)	1 month
Bell operator assistant	2 weeks	Shift operator (day shift)	1 month
General construction/U/G dam walls/concrete drains	2 weeks	Blasting operator jack hammer machines	1 month
Running/supervising mining operations	1 ½year		

## **Nicaragua: Union Federation of Miners and Similar Workers (Fesimini)**

**Marling Ferrufino Cáceres**

### **Historical background**

Nicaragua is a country with over five million inhabitants (5,000,000.00) on an area of 132,000.00 kms, which is located in the centre of America, in a privileged geopolitical position. It has access to the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean and an internal natural watercourse connecting the Atlantic to the Pacific through the San Juan River and the Great Lake of Nicaragua, which historically has been called the transit route and has been the object of the Northern Empire's greed.

Nicaragua is a country with many natural resources, an abundant fauna and flora and an underdeveloped economy that is mainly based on agriculture and livestock. It has suffered from the inclemency of nature, such as earthquakes, e.g. the one in 1972 when more than 10,000 persons died in the capital city Managua that was destroyed. Besides, the country lived under the military dictatorship of Somoza, one of the bloodiest times in Latin America that lasted for more than forty years, and which could be overthrown only thanks to the courage of a people's revolution directed by the FSLN that triumphed in 1979. However, a couple of days after having taken power, this movement was already involved in an unjust war directed and financed by the United States of North America in which more than 50,000 Nicaraguans died in the eighties. At that time, the government program prioritised popular classes, workers, peasants and the have-nots in our country.

In spite of a cruel and unjust war, the illiteracy rate fell from 54% to 9% through the Great National Literacy Crusade, in which young students from the cities went to all remote areas to alphabetise peasants in the different regions, valleys and settlements.

During the eighties, the Revolutionary Government had to operate in a war economy,

with considerable limitations and a merciless economic blockade.

In the nineties, when the Government under the leadership of Violeta Barrios de Chamorro took office, the privatisation process started. The mines, which had been in the hands of the state until then, were given in concession to the transnational companies. Likewise, the banks were privatised and structural adjustment processes of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank were started, based on their macroeconomic recipes that in the end give rise to enormous armies of unemployed and majority of people living in extreme poverty.

The neoliberal model of the current Government promotes the application of IMF measures to meet the requirements imposed by those financial institutions, without taking into account the consequences thereof on a broad social layer that cannot cope with the impacts, as there are no mechanisms of protection. Thus, today there are only a few wealthy persons with the rest of the people impoverished.

The degeneration of the neoliberal system is reflected in the flagellating corruption, whereby uncountable sums from the State treasury have enriched the corrupt classes, further deepening the people's misery and hunger.

### **Growth of the informal sector - situation of artisanal miners in Nicaragua**

The implementation of IMF economic policies without any palliative measures to reduce the impact on the masses has resulted in a large army of unemployed as a consequence of privatisation of the State companies, state contraction and outsourcing. Unsuccessfully, these people try to find a means of survival in the informal sector. The same goes for the mineworkers who spent their best years in the mining companies, which were temporarily closed on the pretext of maintenance, a lack of economic capacity, reserves, etc. While gradually activities were restarted with less personnel, the other workers became artisanal miners or *guiriseros*. This means

the whole family has to work to deliver some widgeon grass to the transnational corporations that fix the price arbitrarily and that no longer pay life insurance, insurance covering occupational hazard, extraordinary working hours and other types of fringe benefits were gained from the labour relationship. This new production scheme results in overexploitation of the artisanal miners, as they can only deliver their production to the transnational corporation, having no competitors in this area. The informal miners work in the areas where the transnational corporations hold concessions, which further increases dependency of the artisanal miners.

There are approximately 23,000 artisanal miners in Nicaragua, most of who are not organised. The Union Federation of Miners and Similar Workers (Federación de Sindicatos de Trabajadores Mineros y Similares – FESIMINI) has proposed to group the mineworkers in legally incorporated cooperatives, assisting them with legal advice and training. However, this activity did not have the expected results as transactional namely Canadian in the North Atlantic area have frightened the artisanal miners of this district, threatening them that the Canadian company will no longer purchase their widgeon grass. The said transnational company is the only company commercialising widgeon grass, and therefore takes arbitrary decisions on quality standards, weight and price without this being based on any type of market policy.

The artisanal miners working in this activity are mostly ex workers of the transnational companies who dedicated their life and youth to working in the mines and who are now put aside because they are old, tired and ill. Their state of health worsens as they work in inhuman conditions in artisanal activities in extremely bad safety and hygiene conditions.

Gold extraction has become difficult for the Nicaraguan artisanal miners because they do not have adequate tools and technologies and there are no funding policies in favour of small-scale miners for them to buy the tools and chemicals needed

for this subsistence activity, which they also need to avoid unnecessary risks and even deaths.

Conditions in the subterranean mines are inhuman: there are hardly any hygiene and safety norms, no protective equipment and considerable health risks for women who do not even have access to regular medical check-up, not even for the detection of diseases such as cancer.

The constant increase of illiteracy in the mining sector and the lack of opportunities to access formal or technical education are very worrisome as the mining population has many young children who support the household's labour activities and who do not go to school. These children follow in their parent's footsteps, they cannot enjoy childhood because they have to start working in mining activities from a very young age without having a salary and being exposed to contamination.

The government's policies state that artisanal mining is responsible for environmental contamination, but they do not contribute to artisanal mining development in spite of the economic contribution of this activity under unequal conditions. We cannot ignore this cruel situation in which the mineworkers live. Moreover, most women working in this sector are single women who have to support their families on their own. Besides exposing their children to contamination, there are no kinder gardens and no medical services. All this in spite of the government mentioning the eradication of child labour in its State policies, which is merely demagogic in view of the lack of concrete actions.

### **Strategies for Artisanal Mining**

- Continue to work on training, focusing the wives of mineworkers, women miners and artisanal miners with support from the Metallurgical Humanitarian Fund.
- Strengthen the District Commissions.
- Reduce the incidence of children working in small-scale mining.

## Challenges

- Organise artisanal miners (men and women) in Cooperatives.
- Train female leaders for them to participate in the cooperatives in different mining districts.
- Enhance female participation in the Boards of the Artisanal Mining Cooperatives.
- Coordinate activities with GOs and NGOs to ensure medical care and checkups for women.
- Develop awareness raising campaigns to lower the child labour index.



## Peru: Overview of Mining in Peru

### Anita Lujan:

During the last decade, Peru like most of Latin America has started the transition process for a free market economy. With this, a structural reform process was initiated, which modified the economic, legal and institutional framework, shaping an attractive scenario for foreign investment. Our country went through a privatization process of public enterprises, increased work flexibility – the traditional one of 8 hour was discontinued – the deregulation of labor standards with the elimination of work stability, collective negotiation, trade unions, etc.

In work structures, drastic changes were initiated with the appearance of new atypical working days; precarious work (specially with women, children

and adolescents); subcontracted, temporary work and something that is developed at home, juvenile program.

In the mining sector this reform has had many consequences for the mineworker's stability of employment.

In Peru, mining is economically an important activity, standing out for mineral production like gold, lead, tin, zinc, silver, copper and iron. Nevertheless, mining has its contrasts: In the last decade, its participation in gross domestic product (GDP) generation remained above 8%, and its contribution to the foreign currency generation was an average of 45%.

But, in spite of these numbers and its economic importance, the employment rates in the mining sector are low. In the last half a decade, our population has grown four-fold while the Economically Active Population (EAP) has tripled. In 1993 the EAP in the mining sector was about 72,170 persons who represented 1.03% of its national counterpart. In 1998 this activity employed 84,522 workers, 0.8% of the total EAP. This clearly indicates a decline in the growth rate of the mining sector.

Furthermore, from labor reform on we can see important changes in labor composition. In 1993, there were 32,964 workers (77.6%) with direct labor relations with enterprise. For 1999, they were down to 25,410 (41.3%): In 7 years, 7,554 jobs directly contracted by enterprises have been lost.

In the mining sector the extensive amendments to labor law – which resulted in more flexibility for mine owners – has also had a consequence with the introduction of the so-called atypical working days: Currently, the tendency is to introduce “working accumulative system and resting” in this sector. The majority of enterprises adapted their system to the 14 X 7, it means 14 continuous work days of 12 hours each, a period in which workers live alone in the camp. This is followed by seven days of resting, time for visiting their family, after which they return to

the next period (14 x 7). These systems are making it possible for the enterprises to reduce production costs, which involve the decrease of services like providing homes for workers and their families, among other aspects.

On the other hand, the geographical area occupied for mining grew in a significant way. In 1991, mining entitled rights covered 2,258,000 ha. In 1997, it grew to 15 million hectares<sup>14</sup>.

In Peru mining is classified according to mining exploitation:

- Large Scale Mining: 5,000 TN a day or more, with a concession greater to 1,000 hectares.
- Medium Scale Mining: between 150 x 5000 TN a day and more than 1,000 ha of concession.
- Small-Scale mining: below 150 TN a day and up to 1,000 ha of concession.
- Artisanal mining: 25 TN a day and up to 1,000 ha of concession.

### **Women in Artisanal Mining**

Artisanal mining, which is being developed in Perú, is dedicated mainly to gold extraction. It grew significantly in the '80s, as a result of increasing urban poverty, the agriculture crisis, unemployment, migration due to political violence and the increase of gold price.

Artisanal Mining represents 17% of the nation's gold production. For this reason, it became an important sector for the national economy. In the '80s, this was more than 50% of national production. Now it suffers a decrease due to large-scale mining production with Yanacocha. But artisanal mining has mainly, a social importance. For example, in creating jobs: It is a source of employment for many women and men excluded from the neo-liberal economy model. It was estimated that around 36,000 families are dedicated

to gold exploitation<sup>15</sup>, families to whom this activity shows them a way to survive because of the investment cost to create a job in this sector is cheaper than large-scale and medium-scale mining. It is developed with short investment, it uses simple techniques and technologies, and it depends on men and women's physical effort.

We can see in this activity a social work division up to 1990; one that was determined by sex and age: men's activities were relegated to gold mining productive process, while women were in reproductive activities (as in workers' feeding services).

The exhaustion of gold veins, irrational use of invested resources by miners and the waste of their profits, caused the impoverishment of many families, more so at a national economic recession context. In this situation, women began to insert themselves gradually in some phases of the productive process to increase the family's income. However, her work is only some "help" for the family and even for her, but what is worst is that this is not recognized as such.

Women are inserted in tasks like "Chancado". In this process they must be sitting on the floor using a tool like a hammer or "comba", breaking the mineral extracted from the mines into smaller pieces. This puts women at risk of hitting or bruising themselves by using the "comba", mineral splinters in eyes, dust exposure, etc. "Pallaquero" is the manual selection of high quality ore from a poor one. It is important to point out that the "Pallaqueras" have access to only the poor quality ore left over by men. Women can cut their hands; suffer contusions, wounds and postural problems, during this process. "Chacareo" is the workforce service offered by women in exchange for money or some goods (for example: sacks of mineral).

Women also participate in the process of "amalgamated milling" which is carried out in a

<sup>14</sup> The mining area per department are distributed in : Cajamarca 55.3%, Cusco 43.0%, Huancavelica 40.1%, Lima 38.5%, Ayacucho 31.6%, Junín 29.4%, Ancash 25.7%

<sup>15</sup> Piazza, María del Carmen y otros. *Niños que trabajan en minería artesanal de oro en el Perú*. OIT-IPEC/Minería. Pp 21-22

stone mortar. Here, mineral and mercury are mixed together and women must rock the stone, which weighs between half to one tonne, until the mercury forms an amalgam with gold. During this process, they are exposed to mercury intoxication, contusions and ergonomic problems.

We can see women doing marginal activities in the productive process, on the one hand to protect them from work dangers in mines and on the other hand, by cultural aspects. Women say that "muki" (Andean mythology character) lives inside the mine and he forbids women to enter the mines. If they do, the vein would be exhausted. The male version is that "gringa", as they call the golden mineral, because the vein is female, becomes jealous if women enter the mine. As a mineworker is someone who enters the mine, this gives them the rights as such; hence women are not considered as mineworkers and therefore, they are not members with the right to vote in miner's organizations.

Non Governmental Organizations like the Instituto de Salud y Trabajo (ISAT) has intervened for the sustainable development of artisanal mining, considering its social importance. ISAT has developed a program to promote the leading role of women and visualize their productive work by strengthening self-esteem based on the advance of their organizations, to achieve an active participation of them in productive organizations and sensitize men about the women contribution on family and local economy. This experience was carried out at Huanca (Ayacucho), in the south of Perú.

The main ideas developed were: **Organizational Strengthening**. First, women organizations were accompanied, all of them survival organizations, organization's organic structures were fortified, they were training on participative management of their organizations, and an important strategy was to benefit exchange spaces of experiences between local organizations and ones from other artisanal mining communities.

The strengthening of women's abilities through training programmes in leadership, conflict

management, self-esteem and environmental health, training in participative management and strategic planning, development of working plan for organizations and consultancies on development of investment project draft.

Sensitization Campaign on gender and leadership, beginning with basic conceptual elements which permitted them to understand the differences generated by sociocultural constructions of masculinity and femininity, and how these constructions are connected with leadership styles in miners' organizations and women survival organizations. Some other campaigns were carried out to visualize women work, to locate women and men's roles in mining, giving an economic value to work and promoting the right to participate in productive organizations. Moreover, other campaigns to encourage the appreciation of women work. Also a sensitization on many roles assumed by women at different social spaces: productive, organizational, community and at home. Some sensitization actions on gender and leadership were also carried out.

Even though, these are important achievements: women leaders strengthened, women who see themselves as miners, women financially more independent, with greater economic incomes; nevertheless, it is necessary to do much more to fortify women participation in productive organizations.

### **Women in formal mining:**

Unlike women in artisanal mining, most of the women in the formal sector are professional and/or technician. Here, women break one of the main myths, the "Muki" legend, because they have achieved "entered the mine".

Women execute working days like men, accumulative working days with a rest period like 14 x 7, 10 x 4, 4 x 4, 8 x 6 with 12 to 14 hours of work. They are at risk of being crushed by machinery and they wear ill-fitting clothes, as the services have not been implemented with women

in mind and their abilities as miners has not been given its due respect.

Women mineworkers who work as heavy machinery operators, work in companies where a trade union organization is developing (Antamina is a good example). But, women participation in the organization is not evident.

Amongst ISAT's initiatives, it has begun relationships with organizations to do a deeper work about gender aspects and security and health conditions at work.

#### **Existing Limitations:**

- Andean cultural obstacles. The Andean culture had patriarchal domination feature, with Spanish conquest, male chauvinist forms of thinking and discriminating between the masculine and feminine forms. Moreover from male chauvinist thinking exist many cultural imposition, qualities and stereotypes.
- Migrants looking for self-employment opportunities. In artisanal mining, women workers have to move away from their community and live in another place, mainly in the city.
- Violence and control over women. Violence is one of the main causes of degeneration of self-esteem. The violence against women is seen by the demands of men who sense that women neglect their housework (cleaning) and reproductive activities. It gets worse when women assume responsibilities as leaders in the mines.

#### **Conclusion**

- The Artisanal mining is an important activity for a great number of families living in extreme poverty. Moreover it is an activity economically important and feasible to improve their conditions of exploitation.
- Women in artisanal mining have an important performance; they do direct and complementary works. Nevertheless, they have to assume great responsibilities because most of them have

double roles, even treble the workload; hence they face exhaustion.

- Women's Organizational spaces start with survival organizations ("comedores populares" and others related to social needs) and they are in relation with their domestic sphere. These are socialization spheres and feminine leadership training with collective components and it is evident the individual emphasis
- Male chauvinism, domestic violence, male control constituted factors, which act against developing feminine self-esteem, new skills and knowledge and their participation in organizational experiences.
- Women are conscious of structural limitations where they are interacting, and problems they face in their lives; nevertheless their dreams and hopes like the well being of children are important to fight for.

#### **National Centre for Women in Mining Janet Barzola**

We are an organization of women with national presence and we exercise our citizenship and we work for the Promotion and Recovery of our Human rights from the ETNs and the Peruvian State. We represent the women and families who are associated with mining activities.

#### **Strategic objectives**

- Recovery of our Cultural, Environmental, Social and Economic Rights.
- Institutional invigoration.
- Campaign against Gender based violence and infantile abuse.

#### **I. Recovery of our Cultural, Environmental, Social and Economic Rights**

- The privatization, the corporate politicians that are imposed by the ETNs and the Peruvian State.

- In our fight we prioritize our Rights to education, health, proper housing, recreation and a healthy environment.

### Status and problems of Education

Many schools located in the mining districts of Peru, are above the 4,000 m.s.n.m.

- Schools have been destroyed in the mining camps.
- Due to the distance of the schools, our children have to be transported by garbage trucks
- The children are malnourished and anaemic and have health problems related to contamination of toxic pollutants like lead and other metals of the mining industry.
- Majority of the women are ignorant of our Human rights (Right to the Education).
- Women NEVER had training opportunities for access to a decent employment.

Many children orphaned due to death of parents from mine accidents have dropped out of school because the ETNs do not assume responsibility for workers in case of accidents or deaths.

### Status of Women’s Health:

- Numerous mining districts exist where the women and children live with the relatives. Example: Morocoha, Yauli, San Mateo, Huariaca, The Oroya, etc.
- Women and children are exposed to contamination of heavy metals like silica, lead, etc. while washing the clothes of the mineworkers.
- They have water borne diseases due to contamination of water (Hemorrhage, colic, gastrointestinal infections).
- Numerous cases of women suffering from sexually transmitted illnesses and AIDS.

**“ Many children orphaned due to death of parents from mine accidents ... ”**

“We, the women facing the violation of our Human rights, have based our strategy and actions on sensitization, dissemination, pressure and social articulation with other actors”

### Living conditions of women and communities:

- The women and families hired by the mining companies live mainly in mining camps.
- Many of them are located in the central region of my Homeland, in precariously built houses of 16 m2 above the 4,000 m.s.n.m. and are exposed to very cold temperatures.
- In the mining districts, we do not have spaces for healthy living or recreation.

Mining towns are proliferated with liquor shops, places of commercial sex trade and the ETN’s promote video parlours having television and video shows with pornography and other socially degenerative allurements.

### The Environment in our mining districts and communities

Most companies do not fulfill the environmental laws of my country

- The mine-workers’ families reside in the midst of the environmental contamination.
- The State, exercises a weak inspection of the Programs of Adaptation and environmental handling.

• Sensitizing the women from the communities to workers by means of informal gatherings, meetings and exchange of experiences.

- Demanding that the programs of social responsibility of the ETNs, respect and promote the Human rights of the women, families, communities and workers.

- Carrying out grafts in the days of April 28 in commemoration of our deceased and injured workers as well as for our orphans and widows.
- Disseminating our problems to the XXVI MINING CONVENTION, through newspapers, radio, carrying out of grafts and manifestations.
- Incorporating in the Tribunal on behalf of the DESC of the Peruvian women and denouncing the ETNs and the Peruvian State through collecting public opinion.
- Participating and articulating our fight in the Peru Social Forum, the First Social Forum of America and the World Social Forums.
- Using campaign materials like backpacks, poles, steering wheels, globes, exhibition of pictures, etc.

## II- Building Institutional strength:

We are institutionally building our strength through construction of our social base, creation of headquarters in lieu of CACs, demanding for political and economic autonomy and generation of our own revenues, networking with other affected people and undertaking training for our *dirigentas*.

## III-Campaign against Gender Violence:

We campaign through collection of testimonies and securing self esteem for our women, educate the women on human rights, compile family specific information and spread awareness on the sexual, physical and psychological exploitation of women and children.

*"Thank you partners, to have allowed me to share with you, our fight and hope of achieving a WORTHY LIFE"*

## Chile

### Blanca Alcaino

I am not a mine worker but my husband worked in the mines for 22 years. He is working in the state controlled mines. Most of the states in Chile are involved in mining activities. We are mainly dependent on incomes from mining. Laws related to women in the mining sector have progressed and we are also able to use better technology. I am a member of association of women's rights and we are getting bonus. Today our situation is better than before. We are also getting free medical and health facilities, maternity leave, etc. all the children are going to school and also able to join in colleges. If we have six months contract for a job, we are able to get a decent income to run our households. All these facilities we managed to get only through our union. We are also able to demand for compensation.

Workers are getting trained during free hours. In spite of all these facilities, we are having many social problems which have impact on the family. Migration is a serious problem, prostitution is on the rise and so also desertion of wives by men, drug abuse. Due to these problems, women are getting harassed which has an impact on children, who are not attending school properly but idling away on the streets. Women are facing mental stress as well as physical drudgery. Women mine workers are single, their husbands abandon them and they are single mothers. I feel that in order to improve the situation, we need to go to the companies and coordinate with them. Those who have been retrenched, should be rehabilitated into work. We are trying to intervene through training, meetings with women and mine workers. We want to start a crèche so that mothers can leave their children and go to work. It is not easy to achieve our demands, but we need to campaign and struggle for our rights.



## South Africa

### Faith Letlala and Josephina Gumbi

The improvement or the change of the atrocities women find themselves in cannot be remedied by anybody except us women by being organized. This is our first exposure as the women's structure within NUM to be forming a part of this conference and we acknowledge that prior to the formulation of our present structure, NUM did participate in the first conference.

We want to use this opportunity to take stock of what the Bolivian and the Philippine conference managed to bring forth, in sustaining this networking team. We have seen most of the issues in the papers prepared by Els and other participants present in this conference. We feel we have to work hard on what we achieved and what we did not achieve as the networking team.

Our presentation will be inclusive of two parts and the first part that we would like to advance is, as South Africans, acknowledging that all the presentations that have been put forth in creating awareness in us of the atrocities mining is doing to the indigenous people. We acknowledge that and we sympathise with them.

Out of the time that we've been allocated to we want to go through the worst atrocities that we happened to hear and read from the papers that we shared with you. In one of the papers that have been prepared from India, it is stated that India has the highest level of child labour in the world. This number is said to be equivalent, at the most conservative estimate, to the entire population of Australia. We want to register that, as South Africans, we disregard this. Our legislation in our country proclaims that we do not agree with child labour and we are saddened to hear that in India, this is still perpetuated. We also acknowledge that the December 10 [1996] petition in which certain directions regarding the manner in which children working in hazardous occupations were to be

withdrawn from work and rehabilitated. Despite this, the problem of children working in the unorganised sector in rural areas is still rife. We took it upon ourselves to give ourselves time and concentrate on the papers that have been given to us, especially to the very country that we have been invited to, and we say as part of this conference, we came as a trade union movement, we are one of the stake holders in mining and we disregard the atrocities that most of the individual countries have pronounced.

We've had different scenarios that were portrayed to us. One of them was about the tribal children trapped in Mica mines. The child labour in this region has become so intrinsic to the people that we feel, as South Africans, that some of these atrocities are perpetuated by our own cultures and traditions and some of our governments are also

encouraging that. Many children, including girls, have been engaged in mining operations. They even work underground at depths of more than twenty feet, to dig and search for this mica.

There are instances of death that have been reported when the ground beneath their feet collapsed. We also heard of cases of snake bites and we say that mining has never been good for anybody, let alone the children below the age of fourteen.

Occupational diseases such as silicosis, asthma and bronchitis are also common in this country amongst children and adults and are caused by mining. The waste mica was dumped all over the blocks in one of the cities. What is more petrifying is that people are trying to make a living out of the collection of the scrap of this very mica. It is said that mica has great export potential but the economic returns on mica for the poor who collect it is extremely meagre. The majority of labour here consists of women and children and large number of children in the labour force is the invisible work force. For a minimum of eight to ten hours of work per day, they earn as little as Rs 6 or Rs 8.

“  
**Have we failed to educate our communities optimally?**  
”

Comrades and friends, I thought it was of significance that I take you through that. We are not here to advance mining and turn a blind eye to the concerns that you have shared with us. What is important is we must go back and ask ourselves, 'Why is this happening?' Is it because we have failed to educate our communities optimally? Are we talking past the people we claim to advocate for? And do we claim to represent people that we don't talk to?

Communities cannot be treated in isolation. Communities need to be organised in order to be helped. We can come to a conference of this kind, develop good resolutions. If we have elders in those communities and we don't engage those elders – we disregard them – our cause is not going to do any good. We've got our entrenched traditions and cultures, that we, as Africans with the minerals that we are having, we have to talk more. I heard one of the speakers saying this morning, that there are no gender relations amongst trade unions. Yes, there are no gender relations everywhere: In our homes, in our societies, in our communities. It is inherent in us, as women, to advance that struggle that we should be helped within the issues that affect us, as women, as mothers and as workers.

The second aspect I want to talk about is because I take India as one of the countries that respect her culture; that honours her tradition. Maybe we must go back and have a word with our kings in some of our societies. We have a good platform for talking to traditional leaders and elders within our communities when we engage in these issues.

The question that I'm going to pose to all the countries that have indigenous people and feel deprived by mining is this; one simple question: Comrades and friends, if the capitalists or the government offers us land and says, 'Use it fruitfully', how is it going to be distributed evenly amongst the people in that community? Is that land going to be given to my brother, because he happens to my brother traditionally and I get deprived? Am I going to have a piece of the cake,

or am I not going to have the piece because I'm a woman? The issue is not about that we are deprived of the land, the issue is how are we going to revitalise that land? How are we going to renew it as the inhabitants of that land?

I thought, as part of my presentation, I must acknowledge that our norms and values of the traditions and culture that we grew up on will always determine our fate. A nation without norms and values will never be respected. But, it is upon us, as Africans, as Europeans, to sit down and re-strategise. The political frontier that we were told about yesterday is one of the departing points that we must move from in this conference. Are we organised enough to indicate our readiness for proper engagements at any forum, when we are required to be present?

Comrades and friends, I thought before I could use this opportunity to tell you of our success stories as South Africans with regard to women and mining, I must acknowledge that we share the same sentiments with you with regard to what mining is doing. We are all together in this and I am going to ask the participants for only a minute to listen to our success stories.

The implementation of agreements aimed at increasing the number of women in the mines, on the first day itself of signing the agreements, was proved to be futile. We managed to get an agreement with our corporate mines, at the chamber level and through the pressure that the Union exerted over the employers; we felt that women should be given a chance in the economy of the country. I understand how you feel about mining, but, at first, employers also were pessimistic about this initiative. They thought that the initiative was not going to succeed and it was going to waste their time and resources. We had extensive engagements with the industry and they realised that this is worth doing.

I think Zimbabwe has told you that they have won women with a blasting certificate. I must register to this conference that by 2002, we already had ten

women with qualified blasting certificates in the Gold Fields mine and those women were recognised as trailblazers in their companies. They obtained the same qualifications that Josephine obtained and that process is becoming normal in South Africa. We are having massive numbers in individual mining houses where women are on-setters – on-setters are the ones that drive the cage that goes underground. We've got women who are winch drivers, drillers. We've got women who are contributing to the production of the country positively, in the right way and we are proud to say that we are advancing as the National Union of Mine Workers.

The stories of success that we have in our country are that we have managed to strike a balance and equity in terms of women earning better salaries. We would rather have women go underground, be exposed to heat, be victims of rock-fall – like the men are exposed to – be victims of Tuberculosis and Silicosis, than take the dignity of women away with prostitution. I think a lot of you know how rife, in the developing countries, prostitution is becoming and it is unfortunate that African countries have also joined that list.

We have decided, as the National Union of Mine Workers, that rather than have these women on the street as prostitutes, we will advance that women be miners, women get a better salary and we will fight the employers for these conditions to be fulfilled. Women are experiencing with the employment underground: They are exposed to hazardous substances, but, mining was never good for anybody, let alone women. Men have always had to endure all those things. We acknowledge, as the Union, that there are disparities between men and women and women should be given a provision. But, we don't say that women should be left out from contributing positively to the wealth of the country. That is why the issues that we address, wherever we go globally or within South Africa, and that we would like this conference is this: Let us reinforce the commitment from all stake holders to ensure coordination is improved and become our primary objective. Furthermore, we will add

that communities must also benefit. This is normal in South Africa.

My comrade, Joyce, comes from a mining town. I was also living in a mining town and we asked our mining companies to develop the towns that we are living in. The towns are not developed for only mine workers, but for the citizens of the country. We would like this conference to use the multi-national agreements that the Colombian comrade was talking about to advance our cause in this conference. If we have the standards that suit how things should be done, we will then be able to network and exchange programmes as well as share our good stories. We will also want to advance that development of women in mining be given dedicated attention because women will be able to be highlighted for career growth through mining. We know women were sweepers and cleaners in the mines; they happened to be secretaries because of colour. But, when women choose mining as a career, they will also acquire certificates like Josephine and will also get a better salary.

As the National Union of Mine Workers, we have won a case of silicosis for the people who were retrenched from the mines years ago and some of those people are dead. They have left us but their families are entitled to that compensation now. When you are organised and you make your way to be here, and you form part of government laws and policies, some of the things will be possible. It is unfortunate that time has caught up with us. We do not say that the South African's way is the ideal situation, or the one-size-fits-all situation, but we believe that a few of the successes we have had in our individual countries will help us advance this cause. We would also like to urge you at this conference that let us come up with tangible resolutions that we will be able to implement and move forward from what has been articulated in the previous conferences. I know that there is a paper that has been written by Els where she tries to guide us on where we should start and one of the multi-national companies' laws that were addressed by Colombia is the route that we should take.

## Canada

### Tina Vincent-Gagnon

Since the first time women were hired for Inco in 1974, there have been issues brought up. Issues such as having to raise a family while working shift work, trying to put a strong front when your co-workers make it harder for you as in hiding some of your equipment so that you can't accomplish your work and make you look bad. Some ignore you even when you need help; some intimidate you, discriminate and even harass you either violently or sexually. Some issues about proper protection and proper procedures for our health and safety as well as for our family and community.

Right from the start when I was hired by the mining company I had to pass a physical test which included lifting 100 lbs of weights in a milk crate, 60 lbs over my head, again weights in a milk crate, I had to accomplish many different tests first before they considered me for employment. As many women don't have the same strength as most men it is very hard to lift this weight. After speaking with some of the new male workers they admit that they have a hard time to do this, which discriminates against size and strength. You do not need strength to do good work you need a good mind to be able to organize your work to be able to do it.

As a woman built on the smaller side it is very difficult to get the proper protective equipment to do my work. I cannot get certain boots that fit me because they don't make them. I tried both boots the closest to my size and the inside of my feet had no skin left it was raw and bloody. They decided to take me off my job and give me other work. I did however manage to get gloves my size. In doing this, many men of small built, are using the same gloves. They told me they never even

thought of asking for gloves that fit and they thanked me.

My work environment has very poor ventilation, many of my co-workers and I have experienced many health problems in the last six months. Severe headaches, dizziness, nose bleeds, burning eyes, burning respiratory tract, in many cases we try to hold our breath in various areas that we need to cross or work in. We asked to have ventilation fixed and the company stated that it would cost too much so we asked for a respirator, and they gave us a rubber one which with the very hot, humid, acid mist in the air, gave us rashes on our faces. We asked for a better respirator. They did give them, but only to certain workers saying that it costs too much to give one to every worker.

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**Severe headaches, dizziness, nose bleeds... all came with our work**

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The environment in the community is not the best either. Some areas of our communities are experiencing soil contaminations of arsenic, lead and nickel.

Our children are playing in these areas. Only now they recognize we have a problem, and how we are being affected health wise. In Canada our town is considered the capital of cancer. Many people develop cancer, both young children and all the way up to the elderly. It seems everyone has an illness. Just recently our community started to look green. In the past when you came to our town all you saw looked the same. Only rocks all over covered with some orange looking residue. There were no trees, when you did see a tree or a pond or swamp; it was covered in this orange residue. Nothing lived in the area. Like I was saying only recently you can see some life and some green vegetation. Some incidents have happened like a gas leak. The last gas leak we had, sent hundreds of people to the hospital with severe headaches, dizziness, nausea, vomiting and various other symptoms. We also have some "fall out" which is a particle of sulphur dioxide that have not dissipated in the atmosphere but falls from our

smoke stack onto the community and at times burns the paint off our vehicles.

What is harder on the women working in this industry is the shift work, trying to find childcare, working under stressful conditions when your co-workers are against you or harass you. The psychological effect it has on you is so many times harder than physical pain. Many women couldn't cope with the pain of being harassed and so decided to quit work. We have a policy against harassment but it is not strong enough. A piece of paper does not stop a man from harassing a woman, actions do. The problem we are facing is the victim is victimized too often and the accuser doesn't even get a warning.

If by chance you get pregnant and you ask for alternative work to protect your unborn child from the hazards in the work place, you pray that you have a supervisor who is considerate. Otherwise you continue to work and pray that your child will be born healthy if he or she survives the pregnancy, or you go home with no pay. When a supervisor agrees to give you work that keeps you away from hazards many co-workers speak out saying that's the reason why they shouldn't hire women, that we are just problems and that we don't belong there and should stay home in the kitchen. Many believe that when a woman gets hired it is just to fill a quota for the minority that has to be hired by the company; in reality there is no such thing.

Living in a mining town, it's everyone's goal to get employment with the mine to have good pay, benefits and a decent pension. It has taken many years to make sure gains towards responsible mining so that our children are not exposed to hazards and our workforce does not get injured or sacrifice their life. We have fought very hard with the government and the companies and many people have died before we were able to have laws in place to protect ourselves and keep our jobs. We have achieved an Occupational Health and Safety Act, which everyone, employer, supervisor and workers have to obey and work together to

create a healthier and safer work place. We have the right to have a joint health and safety committee to inspect and monitor the workplace and to investigate any workers concerns. We have the right to refuse unsafe work, the right to know what we are working with. There are organizations like the Workers Health and Safety Center that provides help in training in Health and Safety. OHCOW (Occupational Health Clinic for Ontario Workers) is another organization that will conduct monitoring and inspections of the workplace. We now have some laws on cleaning the environment, laws against discrimination and harassment and laws to be trained and qualified before starting a job.

We also have bargained with the company over many issues. We have come a long way but there are still so many issues we need to address because, despite the laws and bargaining agreements there is still no power for us women to deal with our issues such as harassment, discrimination, shift work, pregnancy leave, hazards to us and our families and our own health as women. When we need to address our issues we must present it to a board of men who then vote on how it will be addressed or if it should even be brought up. We have no say. This is why we believe that a women's committee should be mandatory and recognized so that we can have our voices spoken and heard by the company and by the government.



## Presentations Day III

### **Comrade Amarjeet Kaur - Trade Unions and Gender Concerns in Mining**

I have quickly glanced through all the papers which have been presented by Indian friends and of what has been said, I can see the impact mining has on workers, especially women workers and the impact of mining on people who are living around the mine-site, especially women and children, and to the livelihood of people in general. I have also read about displacement, about losing land, about losing fertility of land, etc., apart from the impact on people because their ecology is disturbed; because their environment is polluted; because water and air both have been polluted, adversely impacting their health.

All those issues, which are brought about in these Indian papers; it is the same experience that we, from trade unions, are going through. It is the same story everywhere and my personal experience of visiting various mines, be it open cast mines or be it underground mines; be it less hazardous areas or be it uranium mines, which is the most hazardous of all because not only the work force gets affected: It is the larger population which gets affected. It's also where the maximum of secrecy is maintained by the government. That becomes more dangerous because people don't know what kind of activity is going on around them.

When people, unions or women's groups raise these issues, immediately they say that this is something to do with national security: We have to compete with the enemies and we have to make our weapons and uranium is required for nuclear bombs or hydrogen bombs; although people may starve or people may not get water or may not have a livelihood. There should be bombs and there should be nuclear bombs and that kind of philosophy is spewed. So the secrecy that is maintained under laws and so called 'policies' makes people's life more dangerous and more difficult situations are brought about. But, I would also like to point out that there are public

sector mining areas. You can call it a formal organized sector and unionization is good there.

Our union is also there and other unions are also there. It is easier to have laws and it is easier to implement those laws. However, there is another sector of mines in India, which are on government land, but those mines are leased to private agencies or contractors. It is they who further contract and subcontract it. That is the most difficult area for the purpose of unionization. These workers are exploited a lot more than their counterparts in the organized sector. So let me tell you very frankly that Indian trade unions and our federations are able to best protect the workers and the women workers in the areas which are government sectors, public sectors or large private sector companies which could be called a 'formal sector'.

But, the areas which are informal and unorganized sector, it's very difficult to have unionization and even if we have, it is to be had at the places of their living not at their places of work because they immediately lose their job or livelihood as soon as it gets known to the contractors that they are going to the unions. That's a big problem as it is very easy for people to accuse trade unions and ask us why we are not organizing the informal sector workers. But the workers themselves tell us not to come near their work site but to come near their living quarters. So unionization is a weak element there and the protection of the rights is difficult.

Then there is the third area of mining in India, where the land also belongs to the private miners and they are the owners. Here there is no control. When government land is leased to private owners, you can at least go to the government and demand for cancellation of the lease. Here, the contract workers are harassed, equal remuneration is not given to women workers and child labour is rampant. We can question why children are working, why the government laws of compensation are not implemented and why the occupational safety health measures are not being given.

However, the third area of which I am talking about is the worst and most difficult for us – where illegal mining takes place and where mafia style of functioning takes place. Even civil society associations and organizations are given a very difficult time. India is best in making the best of laws and we have the best of Constitutions but implementation is lacking and you can get them implemented only when you are organized either as a trade union or as civil society groups. Then you are able to make some impact to force the administration, to force the labour department and to force those who matter in the case.

For example, the Equal Remuneration Act clearly says that men and women have to be paid equal pay for equal work. This is the law in my country. But my own experience by visiting the stone quarries, the uranium areas, the coal areas, the marble areas and many mining areas is that women are only paid almost half or two third of the male's wages. There are mines in Markapur A.P. where there are slate mines and there are slate factories. Child labour is prohibited in mines areas as per law but there is child labour in the Slate factories. We had an evaluation of an ILO project in India and I was part of the team on behalf of the trade unions. We directly conducted raids and found child labour openly. But the government administration and the labour commissions say that every thing is good and there is no violation.

There have been several studies undertaken on the impact of mining on health, working conditions, environment and other aspects. After the ILO convention, women were removed from night shift work in the mines. Many rights were won after years of struggle but we are losing them again under liberalization and privatization leading to situations like even bonded labour, especially in the export promotion zones and economic zones being declared in our country in the same manner that people have suffered in Latin America and South East Asia.

Collective bargaining processes are being weakened as capitalists feels that trade unions hinder their process

and are the biggest force of resistance. The same is happening in the mining sector where we have laws in the formal sector, which are not being implemented. But 95% of women are in the informal sector where they suffer doubly as there is no social security and there is no equal remuneration. Besides these, the women workers and their children are always suffering from ill health. The fourth biggest problem they face is sexual harassment. We are finding the informalization, contractualization and casualisation of women's work increasing these past few years.

Laws are being violated against the poor, the marginalized and the tribals who are questioning why these areas are being opened up for mining. So, the violation of laws today is actually a violation of our Constitution. As it is the wisdom which was used in framing the Constitution is being violated.

There is a lot that is common among us which brings us together in this conference and there is a lot we can learn from each other and there is a lot we can do together universally to bring our issues to the forefront. Of course there are many things which are country-specific and area-specific and we also have various kinds of situations and we also need to strategize in different ways in the informal sector, in the formal sector and in the private mines. We must have a multi-dimensional approach, as there cannot be a uniform formula. Laws can be universal, aspirations can be universal, targets can be universal and our objectives can be universal but when we go to the grass roots, pragmatic approaches and specificities of those areas and situations need to come into being.



## Christine - The Impact of Gold Mining on Women, Communities and Environment in Burma's Kachin State

Burma is a country rich in mineral resources. However, mining activities in Kachin State, Burma's northeastern province, has led to a significant decrease in the quality of life for women. Unregulated mining has deepened poverty and marginalized many women. While mining in Burma has caused rapid deforestation and irreversible contamination of rivers, the most disturbing fact is that mining destroys the health, livelihoods, rights and spaces of women. Mining operations are scarcely concerned with safe working conditions, benefits to local communities, impacts on women or the environment. Furthermore, the military government of Burma lacks the political will or respect for laws and technical capacity to regulate mining projects. This paper addresses how mining in Kachin State, Burma, particularly gold and jade mining by large-scale operators, adversely affects women, environment, indirectly has an impact on women.

Burma is a country with an extraordinary weak rule of law, corrupt government and scant regard for women's rights. Ruled by a military regime known as the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), Burma allows many foreign and domestic mining companies to operate without environmental regulations or consent of the local people. At mine sites throughout Kachin State, environmental or social impact assessments are rarely conducted.

Foreign mining companies are thought to bring jobs and reduce poverty to the local people but one has to consider the long-term effects of mining. Should large-scale gold mining be encouraged in Kachin State while the brutal military regime continues to rule people with an iron fist?

Along all major rivers throughout Kachin State, the presence of gold mining companies is huge. The northern part of the Irrawaddy River and areas around the Tanai and Chindwin Rivers (which is called Tanai Hka by Kachin People) are central spots for gold mining. For generations, Kachin people have survived by engaging in agriculture and manual panning for gold along the numerous tributaries of Kachin State. Both dry and wet cultivation is practiced. Gold panning is conducted only during the dry season from September to May. In the remaining months, local people engage in agriculture. Even though Kachin people traditionally have panned for gold, it was always on a small scale. Before large-scale mining companies entered Kachin State, local communities did not have any significant problems related to mining.

### Impacts of large and small scale mining on Women

The influx of gold mining in Kachin State has created additional inequalities and injustices for women. Mining may provide jobs to those in need of immediate incomes, but, the increase in mining activities also impoverishes many women. Shifting from a traditional economy to a cash based economy dependent on mining concessions has been destructive to the livelihoods and rights of women in Kachin State, Burma. Women's voices in Burma tend to go unheard and considered less important.

Mining brought in by large scale operators often replaces subsistence economies which have endured in for generations with a less stable cash-based economy. This new market-based economy implies a significant erosion of traditional customs which have been crucial in sustaining community and ethnic solidarity. Women shift to work in the public sphere and are categorized as unproductive and economically inactive. Furthermore, when

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**Women are also at heightened risk of HIV/AIDS and other STD infections from a transient male workforce**  
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large mining companies entered Kachin State, the majority of the employment opportunities were offered to men. When these men work for the mining companies, the amount of work left for women increases. More responsibilities mean women have less time for family unity, child rearing and cultural activities. Yet, when the encroachment of mining companies invades the natural environment, preventing women from their daily tasks, many women turn to the informal economy and men to hazardous jobs.

Large-scale mining is not the only culprit in forcing women to find other forms of income. Small-scale mining has the potential to harm women in Kachin State just as much. Small-scale mining in Burma is unregulated and unmonitored. It provides no protection for workers' safety, health and rights.

Women in mining communities in Kachin State experience harassment by business men, mining contractors, company security guards, and government soldiers around the mining areas. Domestic violence, rape and prostitution all increase with the advent of the cash economy. Women are also at heightened risk of HIV/AIDS and other STD infections from a transient male workforce. The workload of women also increases due to male absenteeism. The mine is perceived as being responsible for shifts in societal roles and a breakdown in values leading to, for example, more single mothers and teenage pregnancies. The wealth generated by mining further pushes women into poverty, dispossession and social exclusion.

One form of income that many women have turned to for financial survival is the commercial sex industry. The demand for the sex industry by the mining companies and employees, which previously did not exist in Kachin State, created an opening for women to enter this sector seeking a desperately needed income, resulting in the upsurge of HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases. Burma provides modest information about HIV/AIDS and STD education. The spread

of HIV/AIDS affects not only women, but also their families and children.

The most critical factor in the transition to a new society in Burma is the lack of provisions in law for the empowerment of women and their participation in decision-making processes. There is no legislation to address the burgeoning problem of the rise in sex workers around mining communities such as Kachin State. According to a Burmese general in the military government, 'women's rights is an issue that does not need to be talked about in Burma, because Burmese women already enjoy equal opportunities with men under a system of universal suffrage. Thus, understanding how mining affects women has been passed over by the military government.

### **Large Gold Mining Companies and the SPDC**

The SPDC owns many stakes in the foreign business concessions they dole out to large mining companies. It is undisputed that the government profits from these business ventures. The concessions to the gold mining companies in Kachin State are very complex. This paper will address only a small area where foreign companies are granted concessions to operate large scale mines with permission of the SPDC. The decision to open Kachin State to foreign mining operations did not include the voices of local communities. The SPDC regarded the natural resources of Kachin State as a way to earn revenue regardless of the social or environmental costs.

There are several gold mine companies operating in Kachin State. The most significant operations are Northern Star, Seasun Star, Wa Company, Kyatkaing Yae Company and the Thwe Company. Northern Star is one of the largest companies widely involved in gold mining throughout Kachin State. Its operations are successful because of its cooperation with the government military in Kachin State and other Chinese mining companies.

The Kachin Post Newspaper reported that Northern Star is an enormous source of income

for government military officers. Northern Star made a concession contract with the Burmese government for control over all of Kachin State and acts as the chief institution for granting concessions to other companies. This example is similar to how the SPDC exercises full control over the Hpakant jade mining area. If the other companies seek concessions for gold mining in Kachin State, they must request permission from Northern Star. Even the KIO and New Democratic Army-Kachin (NDA-K), the first ceasefire group in Kachin State, must ask permission to perform gold mining. The concession areas are on the Malikha, Nmaiha, and Irrawaddy River, including all mines beyond river areas. The concessions are only offered on one-year contracts. Northern Star dominates most mining concessions in Kachin State.

### **Changes to the Local Communities**

When gold mining companies arrived in Kachin State, Burmese people from all over the country began moving to Kachin State in search of earning an income. This has caused over-crowding, increasing commodities price and not enough food, land disputes, changed behavior among native residents, loss of traditional lifestyles and increased conflicts.

When the gold mines started to become lucrative, many villagers' land was taken away from them. Company businessmen negotiated with local village headmen forcing villagers to sell their land in order to set up gold mining activities. In 2000, near the areas of Malizup and Naung Hkin villagers were forced to give up their land to large mining companies.

Along the Malihka River many individuals panned for gold on their own. Since the arrival of large mining companies, individual small-scale mining has dramatically declined. Villagers have lost their land, jobs and are now facing issues of overcrowding and conflict with new groups of people flowing into their communities at once.

### **Degradation of Sound Environment in Kachin State**

Gold mining has caused an irreversible loss to Kachin State's forests and rich biodiversity. Unfortunately, neither villagers nor miners ever replant trees at the abandoned mine sites. If the deforestation continues, the future of Kachin State as well as Burma is extremely threatened because "Chindwin Valley in Sagaing Division and Kachin State is one of the few remaining undisturbed forests in Burma and the Kachin State is one of the eight "hottest hotspots for biodiversity" in the world.

Harmful gold mining pollutes rivers such as the Irawaddy, which is a major tributary for the entire country. According to Kachin culture and traditions, women inherently live close to nature and the natural environment plays an important role in their daily lives which has been destroyed by mining.

Gold mines in Kachin State use a large amount of mercury. Unfortunately, the mercury is released into the rivers and land. The mineworkers use mercury with their bare hands. Moreover, many myths and misbeliefs surround its usage. Many small scale miners lack the understanding of the hazards of mercury. One small scale miner explains about disposing mercury:

"I was not sure I could keep all the mercury in the bottle again because a little amount of mercury leaks out into the water every single time. Sometimes all the mercury accidentally spills into the river." 16

"Some miners swallowed mercury because they heard that it helps one recover from diarrhea. But I haven't seen this myself. I just overheard it from miners." 17

<sup>16</sup> BC(8/29/2002), Chiangmai, Thailand, on file with author

<sup>17</sup> BG(9/24/2002), in Chiangmai, Thailand, on file with author

## **Water Pollution**

The changes to streams are more obvious than the rivers because they are much smaller. The water was taken out by water pumps and the dirt and rocks which is from the gold mine holes are dumping near the streams or on the streams so that the dumping caused changing to the streams such as lost waterways, muddy water, lesser fish. For many generations fish has been a traditional food for Kachin people but now they have become sick from eating fish caught in local rivers contaminated by mine tailings.

Landslides always occurred before gold mining, however, after more gold mining activities came to the area, the degrees of landslides increased.

## **Women and Mining Laws**

Burma's environmental laws are weak and unenforced. Furthermore, effective laws regarding the protection of the environment do not exist. The Myanmar Mining Law of 1994 and the Myanmar Mining Rules of 1996 govern all mines in the country. Yet, corruption and lack of enforcement mechanisms make these laws nearly inactive. Furthermore, the law makes no mention of corporate accountability or responsibility. A mining company cannot legally be prosecuted or fined for its misconduct. The law directs large scale mining companies to "arrange backfill, re-vegetation or reclaim the land in the areas already mined out to the satisfaction of the Ministry" but, this if not enforced.

Globally, Burma is party to several international environmental agreements and conventions such as the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Vienna Convention, the Montreal Protocol for Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (Xinhua News, June 2000).

Burma is also a party to Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination

Against Women (CEDAW).<sup>18</sup> Yet, women continue to suffer and are deprived of many of the rights enshrined in CEDAW. The lack of respect for laws protecting women and mining communities points back to the inefficiency and injustices of the Burmese government.

## **Conclusions**

Gold Mining is creating enormous peril to the environment as well as women's lives in Kachin State. Even some gold mining areas have already been depleted largely, in fact, all along the Nmai Hka River in Kachin State. In Kachin State, local communities were never consulted on the influx of mining ventures. Mining activities and the impact on women in Burma is unique to other countries. The political situation and absence of democracy stifles women's voices. Reprisals and abuse accompany those who speak out against the government. Women live in fear and refrain from complaining about the changing livelihoods as a result of mining.

## **Inday Davi - The Effect of Mining of the Indigenous Women in Mt. Canatuan, Siocon, Zamboanga Del Norte**

I would like to thank the sponsor of this conference, for giving me the opportunity to voice out the message of our indigenous women in our country Philippines especially in our subanon tribe in Zamboanga Peninsula Mindanao.

Just like other Asian countries, Philippines are facing a serious economic, social and political crisis. Poverty is deepening not because we lack the human and natural resources but it is because we are not the ones deciding on how development should take place in our country and our community. Decisions are made by capitalist, elitist national politicians and dehumanized bureaucrats who are protectors of this capitalist.

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<sup>12</sup> After 20 States had consented to be bound by its provisions, either through accession or ratification.

Subanons are peace-loving people since the coming of Christian discoverers from Visayas and Luzon. The Law is good for us but in the operationalization it is problematic because some laws duplicated our existence, which is the Mining Law otherwise known as R.A. 7942.

The National Commission on Indigenous People (NCIP), which is the implementor of the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) Law, still caught in a bureaucratic mess and it remains incapable to deliver what is expected to deliver. NCIP Commissioners who are Presidential appointees and down the line that are also appointed are obliged to fully support the programs and priorities of the President. Even this led to aggression by the indigenous peoples. Even intellectual/ graduates from our tribe (subanon) could not do anything because their positions were taken through political patronage.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) specifically the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) implemented the Mining Act of 1995, which directly conflict with the rights of indigenous peoples as stipulated in IPRA. According to the provisions of IPRA, the indigenous peoples have the right to Free and Prior Informed Consent before any development project is brought into these communities.

For almost 20 years from small scale mining to large scale operations, Indigenous people specifically women and children are greatly affected. The women play a vital role of women in human, cultural and environmental sustainability as custodians of traditional knowledge, culture and the sustainable use of biological diversity. The mining in the ancestral domain has not only jeopardized the sacred place of the Subanon but also led to destruction of their homes, farms, forest and mountains.

In terms of education, people of Canatuan are deprived of a better education. The government there, the Barangay Council of elders provided elementary education but due to lack of teachers, teachers are holding multi-grade classes. Non-formal education is provided but due to continuous resistance of the

presence of TVI, anti-TVI people never attend classes conducted by TVI people. The same is the situation with health. The Provincial Medical Outreach Mission conducted its annual health mission in TVI area, the anti-TVI people never appear nor avail health services extended to the people with the reason that they are not in favor of the area.

High school is extended by the private sector but the area is within TVI-hence the anti-TVI never send their children to school. With the open pit mining, the school was transferred from the original site-another problem encountered by the parents as the school is quite far from their respective homes. Hence, school children dropped out of school.

Where there is development aggression, human rights violation exists. Checkpoints are set up before reaching the plant area. Special CAFGU Armed Auxiliary (SCAA) maintains these and CAFGU are trained by the military. SCAA members are ordered to control and regulate the passage of all travelers on foot or on vehicle, and to impose regular routine check up.

Of the 8,000 small mining families who lived in the village in the 80's, there are only about 1,000 who have chosen to remain in the village at present. They are composed of the original miners in the area. The dismantling of their processing plants dislocated these people to other areas of Siocon. Some refused to vacate because their farm, rubber trees and means of livelihood are within the vicinity.

The open pit mining started early this year with the transporting of heavy equipment to the area, which led to the people of Siocon to rally at Barangay Pisawal. Harassment and intimidation were experienced by the people who protested. A woman member, Gaudencia Montimor was a victim of splinters. Majority of the women participated in the rallies to oppose the mining operation of TVI but they were accused by the TVI who served them warrants of arrest last August.

Siocon is a flood prone-municipality and causes tension for every Sioconian, men and women alike. Mining activities have caused soil erosion and siltation

through the massive tailings they produce. The thousand of tons of mine tailings accumulated in Mt. Canatuan, whether left unattended or processed in custom mills are dumped into the waterways. Although the process is slower and the volume is lesser, the effect of siltation is still as evident. Siocon River is knee-deep compared to past years due to soil erosion and siltation.

The result of coastal area management team survey found that living corals couldn't be found in the nearby coastal area due to siltation and erosion. Fisher folks are complaining of low catch not only due to large fishing vessels but due to wastewater which passes through is heavily silted.

The truth is not only indigenous women will be greatly affected but the entire municipality. They will be the "sacrificial lamb" for the much needed revenue of the national government.

## **Vernie Yocogan-Diano - Women After Mine Closure: The Itogon Experience Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA)**

### **Introduction**

Itogon is an interesting mining community. For over 400 years, traditional mining was practiced in the area as a livelihood and it continues to the present. It is also a municipality that hosted a big mining company for almost a century, mining out almost all of Itogon's mineral wealth. Until today, Itogon remains an important resource base for Benguet Corporation, the American company that ravaged and mined it out. Clearly, the company will not simply surrender Itogon for as long as the place is viable for profit. This interesting municipality hosted an exposure program of delegates to the 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference on Women and Mining in 1997 that we hosted in Baguio City, Philippines.

### **Brief Profile of Itogon**

Itogon is one of the 13 municipalities of Benguet in the Cordillera, Philippines. It has total land area

of 49,800 hectares and has a population of 46,705 (Itogon Mun. Profile 2000), 22,668 are female and 25,055 are males. Its terrain is generally mountainous with narrow valleys. It is drained by the Agno River, which supplies the San Roque Multi-purpose Dam, a much-protested project and touted as the largest dam in Asia. 22% of Itogon's land area is classified as a mineral land, 70% is owned by the Benguet Corporation. Its inhabitants are mainly indigenous peoples belonging to the Ibaloy and Kankanaey ethno-linguistic groups. Other ethno-linguistic groups as well as non-indigenous peoples came in the area to work in the corporate mines, mainly the Benguet Corporation. About half of the population are engaged in small-scale mining, a traditional livelihood in the area for more than 400 hundred years.

### **Background on Corporate large-scale Mining in Itogon**

Large-scale mining began in Itogon in 1903 with the entry of the Benguet Consolidated Mining Company, which later on became the Benguet Corporation. Through the years, BC opened up the mining districts of Antamok, Acupan, Kelly and Balatoc. As the company's operations prospered, BC took over the claims of small-scale mining companies operating in Itogon as the Atok Big Wedge in 1979 and the Baguio Gold in 1987. In 1983, BC also bought 54% interest in the Itogon-Suyoc Mines, Inc. (ISMI). Benguet Consolidated soon became Benguet Corporation.

In this way, BC had gained monopoly control of all large-scale mining operations in Itogon by the year 1987. The company consolidated its holdings under the Benguet Gold Operations (BGO) covering 5 communities and employed more than 5,000 workers. At the same time, it held majority interest in ISMI which employed 800 workers.

Since 1903, BC employed the underground cut-and-fill method of mining and tolerated the operations of small-scale miners on the surface.

It was in 1989 that BC started a shift to large-scale open pit mining through the Grand Antamok

Project (GAP) that changed name to Benguet Antamok Gold Operations (BAGO). Also in the planning stage at that time was the Tuding Open Pit Project and the Project XYZ in the Acupan area. The shift to mechanized open pit and bulk mining was part of the restructuring program of the BC-BGO aimed at maximizing mineral extraction while lowering production cost. Closure of underground operations of the BC happened in 1990 after the big earthquake's impact that rocked Northern Philippines.

People's actions to stop open pit operations of the Benguet Corporation and its expansion began in 1989. From spontaneous protests, these galvanized into organized ones leading to the formation of a municipal-wide people's alliance called the Itogon-Interbarangay Alliance (IIB-A) in 1992 and immediately, a women's alliance that was composed mostly of indigenous women engaged in small-scale mining and traditional agriculture, the BEGNAS women's alliance.

The collective actions ranged from legal actions of petition signing, lobby with local government units and officials to militant actions like human barricades and demonstrations in concerned offices of the government and in the streets. In the main, the women's organizations raised the disastrous impact of open pit mining like its retrenchment of workers from 5,500 to only 500 before its closure, the displacement of small-scale miners from their livelihood, widespread environmental destruction and pollution, drying of natural water sources, loss of ancestral land, violation of indigenous cultural practices and various health and safety hazards within the minesite as well as in the surrounding communities.

The Itogon-Suyoc Mines, Inc. eventually closed shop in 1997. In 1998, the Benguet Corporation closed down, leaving its open pits unrehabilitated.

Its showcase reforestation projects failed and its tailings dams were not cleaned of toxic wastes. The damages it caused to the communities were never compensated.

### **Benguet Corporation will not leave Itogon**

As mentioned earlier, Benguet Corporation will not leave Itogon as long as the place is viable for business. An elder of the Itogon Interbarangay Alliance (IIB-A) illustrates the incomprehensible greed of the mining company—"they have taken all the wealth of our land and our waters, yet they want to get even the tail of the air we breath".

After mining out all the gold and minerals of Itogon, Benguet Corporation has shifted to other commercial ventures in 1998 such as real estate subdivisions, eco-tourism, a bottled water business from a communal spring for which it has applied exclusive water rights. The company was also able to get government to declare a certain portion of its mining claims a special economic zone.

Benguet Corporation has made it to the water business. Not content with the exclusive water rights it has, it applied for a communal spring for its bottled water business. It applied permits for all water sources in Itogon and even other parts of Benguet. Benguet Corporation is now bidding for the bulk water supply of nearby Baguio City, which is not yet in its favour. It has publicly stated that it is willing to spend millions in order to get the contract.

“  
**They have taken all the wealth of our  
land, our waters yet they still want to get  
even the air we breathe...**

”

Upon its closure, Benguet Corporation opened its underground tunnels for tourism, calling it the Balatoc mines tour. The company is also eyeing Gumatdang, another mined-out community in Itogon, as a showcase for Ibaloy cultural heritage. It is mainly for tourist attraction. The company does not only devastate the environment and impose control on all resources, it also commercializes the people's culture.

Benguet Corporation has entered into a deceptive partnership or contract mining which encourages small-scale miners to mine the tunnels of Benguet Corporation with a 60-40% sharing, the latter goes to the company. It later turned out that 60% went to the company and the gold produce has to be milled at the company's ball mill which was a separate payment by the small-scale miners to Benguet Corporation.

Benguet Corporation has also taken advantage of the People's Small-scale Mining Act. Under this law, people's small-scale mining areas or minahang bayan are identified and applicants will have to register with the Provincial Mining Regulatory Board, undergo a long trail of requirements and are exacted of various fees. In collaboration with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, a government agency that has jurisdiction on mining, it has declared Itogon as a people's small-scale mining area or minahang bayan. In Ucab alone, also a community in Itogon, 10 hectares of its land area, including residential lots, is declared as people's small-scale mining area. Part of the requirements imposed by the law is small-scale miners have to bring their produce to registered ball mills and have to sell their gold produce to authorized banks, the minimum volume being 100 grams. This defined system of marketing also ensures the collection of taxes from small-scale miners. Most women small-scale miners find this scheme as taxing especially during emergency situations.

### **Present Situation of Women in Itogon as a Mined-out Area**

The shift to open pit mining and the continued control of Benguet Corporation in Itogon has deprived and displaced many women from their traditional livelihood. They have long clamored that Benguet Corp. should turn over its mined-out area to the people who originally owned the company's mining claims. The government however honors the company's claims more than the people's ancestral land claims despite the 1997 Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA).

Having been virtually prevented from exercising their traditional livelihood, women who are engaged in small-scale mining are getting lesser and lesser. They are not allowed to enter people's small-scale areas if they don't have identification cards as registered members of the people's small-scale mining area or minahang bayan.

From producers, women small-scale miners have been reduced into semi-workers many of them are engaged in vending in the nearby city of Baguio. They face brutal dispersals from the police who prevent them from selling in the main streets of the city, being eyesores to tourists. They are into all forms of por dia labor, which is not regular and wage is not enough for their daily expenses. They are also subjected to various forms of violence including sexual harassment and psychological stress having to think where to get their next day's meal and other basic needs.

Water loss as a result of large-scale mining operation also affected the agricultural production of the women. Lack of water has worsened the health and sanitation situation of the communities. If they are able to continue with agricultural production, their produce is not adequate to meet their family's food supply. Their crops have also been affected by mine pollution, the produce is not as much as before. Crops they are able to sell are also affected by the influx of cheap imported agricultural products.

Many women have also been forced to become overseas contract workers, mostly as domestic workers. They become vulnerable victims of various forms of abuse from their employers, are exacted of various fees by government agencies in the course of their application and when they seek the help of Philippine consulates abroad. Their families break up, when their husbands enter into extra-marital affairs, or their children get involved in anti-social activities like drugs.

With Benguet Corporation's business ventures, the women and children of Itogon bear the bigger

impact of being denied of their own land and resources. They suffer more from the economic and physical displacement.

### **The Struggle Goes On**

The women's alliance along with the wider people's organization in Itogon vows to assert their right to their land and resources. The demand for Benguet Corporation to rehabilitate the mined-out and damaged areas and compensate or indemnify all damages is still standing. They continue to urge the national government to recognize the ancestral land rights of the people especially in the light of the 1997 Indigenous People's Right Act, and revoke the company's mining claims, patents and leases after it stopped its mining operations. In short, the people of Itogon are urging the national government that the company should give them back their lands.

BEGNAS, the alliance of women in Itogon continues to campaign against the company's current practice of monopolizing and privatizing land and water resources for commerce. Strengthening their organizations and engaging in an education campaign on land and resources issues are being done to prepare the women and the leaders for bigger battles to come especially that the resumption of large-scale mining in the area is not far from happening given the national mineral policy of the government and its serious moves to revitalize the mining industry in the country.

The rich experience of BEGNAS in organizing and mobilizing women against large-scale and destructive mining has served as an inspiration to other women in other parts of the country and the world.

"If it was gold that made us live, then let us live by defending the gold! For our children and the generations to come."

## Open Discussion - Day III

**Andrea to Kuntala:** With regard to globalisation, I want to know if there have been any studies on the impacts of globalisation at the local and regional levels, and if so, what kind of studies on these processes exists.

**Kuntala:** With regard to impact of global processes at local and regional levels, we never understood the connections earlier, especially in the mining sector. Earlier, mining used to have a local nature. We never came to know what is happening in the Chinese mines. Indian mine planners did their own planning without looking at the impacts it has on the local communities and it went unquestioned even if people had to be moved. The only good thing about globalisation is the improvement in communication among groups like us and the sharing of information that has become possible. Various community groups are coming in touch with each other and enriching each others' knowledge. That's why we need to talk about gender mainstreaming both as workers and communities.

**Andrea:** I feel it is important to focus at the local level and how we can make mining more gender sensitive because whatever tools and mechanisms are available at the global level, unless we make them implemented at the local level, there is no effect. We have to start our work at the local level. There has been no change in the nature of work of the World Bank even after ten years of fighting at the international level.

**Kuntala:** I agree with you that we need to intervene at the local level first.

**Andrea:** those women who work in the mines are forced into these activities or are helpless. They are told that this is the only to get wages. And so, women are unable to think otherwise. Now we talk about campaigning for their rights and to get a better way of life. We face many problems and obstacles when we try to get them out of this situation. Women want their children to go to schools but the children are forced to work. Until the government takes steps to protect them, we

cannot stop the multinationals from their exploitation.

**Kuntala:** I totally agree with you. We first have to clarify what is mining. Big companies and multinationals have taken over mining in the name of national development whereas mining was happening on an individual basis till about sixty years when it became corporatised.

**Margarita to Marlene:** when women get old and they are retrenched from work, do they get compensation or pension as they will not be able to do any kind of work.

**Marlene:** it happens quite often that older women get thrown out of work but sometimes they do get compensation. However, it is not sufficient to meet their expenses.

**Pallavi to Margarita:** what does your women mine-workers federation do-what is the nature of your intervention?

**Margarita:** when State stopped helping cooperatives, then we started federations which originated in the mines. Ten regional cooperatives together form into a federation. When mines got closed, the cooperatives got together and strengthened the federations. Every two years we have a meeting of the Congress and decisions are taken at this congress. Executive national body has two members from every federation and we have to give our written resolutions. There are 6 federations now and the problems of mine workers are addressed through these federations.

**Kar to Blanca:** I want to know about the free trade agreement with the US, is there any impact on the mining sector and on the workers as they had some deregulation as part of the agreement.

**Blanca:** I am not too aware of aspects of free trade agreements, I am only coordinating between miners and companies on issues concerning ISO international environmental agreements and processes.

**Bidulata to Margarita:** what is the education status of children of women mine workers in companies as mining it is very technical. How are women helped through your federation to develop skills in technical jobs, do you give training for women miners?

**Margarita:** both husband and wife work in the mines so that our children can get education. It is difficult to work in the mines, so we want our children to study well and go to the universities and get more opportunities. I have a son who is in the university and I hope he will get better opportunities. In our cooperatives and state run mines, we do not have advanced tools or technology. But in the private mines, technology is used.

**Vernie to Yesenia:** It is not clear about your demands with regard to largescale and multinational companies to protect the small scale miners

**Yesenia:** we are fighting for the rights of small scale miners, particularly the gold mines in Columbia. In the south we have some cooperatives which are fighting against multinationals and large mining companies.

**Margarita to Josephine:** I want to know about women miners getting licences, what is the process and how long does it take for women to get licences.

**Josephine:** I'm the only woman with blasting licence- you should go for two years to the school of mines, then one year in the underground completing atleast 300 trips, then 75 drilling shifts under supervision of blasting mines manager after which the mine manager recommends you to take blasting licence from the Ministry of Mines. I obtained it after several attempts, I had to fight, it was a world war to achieve this.

**Kuntala:** It is very difficult for women to get equal wages. A lot of struggle took place in the mines in many countries. In Australia when the

Harvester Judgement was given in favour of equal wages for women, the mines threw the women out. This reflects the patriarchal nature of the mining industry.

**Amarjeet:** The equal wages act is applicable to all kinds of mines but it is not being implemented in the informal sector and especially where unions are weak, it doesn't get implemented.

**Hannah to Tina-** how did you achieve the Occupational Health and Safety Act and laws for better working conditions for women workers in Canada

**Tina-** The Steel Workers Union got involved in the health problems of workers in the uranium mines as the doctors appointed by companies would not acknowledge the association of the health problems of the workers to the mining activity. Through a study undertaken by a researcher who presented his findings in a conference in France, the case was highlighted. After these public outcries, the government of Canada had to come up with the Act.

**Maria-** Here at this conference we have women who are mine workers and their concern is that of responsible mining and better working conditions, not closure of mines. We also have here women who are fighting against mining and do not want to lose their lands for mining. Both the concerns need to be respected and I think we have arrived at that understanding among us. But it is also a reality that when mining comes in, it brings conflicts, especially when it takes away people's lands. So how do we look at the future situation and what do we demand for? In Greece our position is to demand for a responsible policy and to demand for recycling and re-using of mined out material, so as to reduce the expansion of mines and for sustainable extraction of raw material.

**Faith:** Mine Succession plan doesn't depend on labour alone- we are moving on the same wave length-we say we should harness our own resources of the indigenous people- that is why we

advocate that laws that have to be in place should be applicable for all the countries- that's why we've got ILO where all the countries which are signatories should be abided by all of them. We understand the atrocities of the mining companies. It is interesting to know that there are laws in India but they are not implemented. That is why we should work closely with the unions and with the communities. We should be able to exercise our rights so that the multinationals do not destroy us. Like we got the platinum mine closed last week because nine people were killed in an accident.

**Amarjeet:** Reckless mining endangers workers, communities and ecology-so we should get together to look at alternatives to mining but where we need these resources, we have to work to ensure occupational health, livelihood of the people whose lands are lost, equal wages. Sometimes the owners themselves go to court with the motive of closing the mines without any responsibility to workers, communities-so environment issues are taken advantage of to get away from accountability. We have to be aware of these dangers where companies put workers and communities against each other. We trade unions also have to come into to assist. Sometimes organized workers fight against the migrant workers who are more helpless. We should work with these dilemmas. So we should be able to decide where we want mining, where we should not have mining and how we take interests of workers and communities together.



# Day IV

## Theme - Water and Health -Impacts on Women in Mining

*The fourth day's session with the theme Water and Health - Impacts on women in mining, started with a very symbolic presentation of the problems faced by workers and communities in Bolivia due to the pollution and contamination of water from mine tailings. The Bolivian team presented a mime-play on the health and suffering of people while mining companies make profits and escape accountability to the water resources leaving the communities to consume toxic water. The play ended with a positive note on how water could be reused by being treated to remove the pollutants.*

### **Kalia Moldogazieva - Monitoring of the Kumtor Gold Mine on Ecosystem and Health Effects**

#### **Introduction**

During the soviet regime, mining – gold, Uranium as well as rare metal mining – became very developed in our country. After the breakdown of the Soviet Union, we became an independent country. The only legacy they left us was of Uranium tailings. The international community as well international donors are now trying to help us by treating these tailings.

We also have gold mining and one project is the Kumtor Gold Mine. It was started in 1994, and was a joint venture by the Canadian company, Comargen and Kyrgyz mine Enterprises. It is the biggest gold deposit in the newly independent states and is located at an altitude of about 3800 msl. This gold is extracted by detonating about 20 tons of explosive substances every time. The dust caused by these explosions settles down on glaciers (as this zone has glaciers in the permafrost state). Due to this, the glaciers are melting, negatively impacting our environment. Located at the source of a river, this gold mine has a trans-boundary impact, because an accident at the tailing

dams will not only impact Kyrgystan, but other central Asian countries, too, for instance, Uzbekistan.

In 1998, a terrible accident took place in Barskaun Village. While cyanide was being transported to the mines, there was a spillage en route, where about 1708 kgs of cyanide polluted the Barskaun River. Many people in the village were poisoned because no official from the company warned the local community that the water was poisoned.

The Human Development Center “Tree of Life” has carried out monitoring of the short-term and long-term consequences of May 20 1998 cyanide spill-out in Barskaun village. The data of the monitoring of the ecological situation and health condition of the population in three villages, Barskaun, Tamga, and Bokonbayevo located at the Issyk-Kul lake coast was conducted. The ecological situation at Kumtor Gold Mine was also analyzed. The analysis is based on official and published materials as well as expert evaluation. The influence of NGOs on the system of ecological procedures, when financing ecologically vulnerable projects by international financial institutions is being considered.

#### **Recommendations**

The degree of ecological danger of the cyanide spill on May 20, 1998 can be regarded as extremely high. The environmental situation caused by the cyanide content in the environment persevered till June 1998. The cyanide explicitly affected the health of the people of Barskaun and around 850 people were hospitalized. They were diagnosed with "cyanide poisoning" of varying degrees, out of whom, fourteen to twenty-four percent of the cases were confirmed by laboratory tests.

Some of the patients suffered the consequences of cyanide poisoning for about two to six months. About a year after the spill, no free cyanides in soil and water of the victim villages were revealed.

The devices available and methods used today by government bodies are not sufficiently sensitive to identify bound cyanides. Modern sensitive equipment and new methods are needed. With this we will achieve independence from state bodies.

In some points higher chloride content was marked. One can only relate this increase with the deactivation of the region with calcium hypo chloride after exact figures of both the amount and localization of its application and mapping of its regional quantitative distribution.

An examination of the population in the victim villages, the USI data a year after the spillage, that in Barskoon as compared to Bokonbayevo, the percentage of healthy population is less than that of people afflicted with allergic dermatitis, cholecystitis, of Grade 1 increased thyroid glands, and of miscarriages in women.

The survey I undertook was, in the most part, for Clinical-biochemical parameters. In the examined of Tamga, it had changed to a great degree. Also there was a bigger percent of miscarriages as compared to Bokonbayevo, and a greater number of [Grade 2] increased thyroid glands. As far as other nosologic cases are concerned, there is no special difference in the three villages.

The results of the survey in the three villages showed that actual nutrition of the population in the three villages is below established specifications, particularly in Barskoon.

Average income per head in the three villages is also lower than subsistence wage; the lowest average income per head was found in Barskoon. The correlation analysis of the survey results with the group of inhabitants, in whose kitchen gardens the tests were selected, with the results of medical examination and the results of the water and soil

tests showed, that the complaints to bad state of health, and pain in some parts of the body, and also individual diagnoses correlate with each other, which testifies to the system pathology with the examined inhabitants, which is probably caused by toxic poisoning.

The correlation of skin diseases with the presence of chloride is + 0.450 and + 0.357. Though it is not a high value correlation, it is the highest value of combinations with other chemical elements. Significant positive correlation of zinc, chloride and iron content in the soil and negative correlation with the pH level and copper content was observed in cows. Positive correlation of the zinc content in birds was also marked. It probably specifies a toxicant food chain through certain kinds of animals. With sheep, though, no such relation was traced. The received correlation should be traced in a lot more observations.

Since the cyanide accident, several NGOs were united for the struggle and we applied to international donors who financed this gold mine, like World Bank, the European Bank, and other organizations, asking for an environmental audit, the commissioning plan, emergency response plans, etc. Only after that did the company prepare an emergency response plan. But, we are not sure whether they will implement this plan in the future because, this year the company renamed itself as the Santera Gold Company and the Kyrgyz mine Enterprises sold its share of the company and we are afraid that the control of this company for environmental consequences will be less. We don't know what the situation of this gold mine will be in the future.

Our network also investigated some gold deposits in the Palas area and last year, Newrock Company (it is affiliated to Newmont and ABRG companies), wanted to develop these gold deposits.

We conducted public hearings and we sent a letter to ABRG who wanted to finance this project. But, our ministry of emergency situations gave a

negative conclusion about the potential danger of mining to neighbouring villages of the area. Now, our department of geology, our Consulate license to this gold mine deposit was not conceded. And we are glad that this is our positive, but small, contribution of our network.

### **Erkingul Imankojoeva - Experiences after the cyanide spill in Barskaun**

I come from Barskaun Village, where the cyanide accident took place. I will try and explain how the people of my village suffered due to the cyanide accident. The bridge from where the truck that carried the cyanide drums fell into the Barskaun River is located about ten kilometres from the village. After the cyanide accident, the company tried to hide the accident, as they didn't want to inform us. As the community didn't know about the accident, they continued to use the water from the river for their household needs because they have no other source of water. A Russian soldier had to inform the community about the accident and had to warn them not to drink the water. But, the next day, the villagers became ill from drinking the water. Afterward, there was a big scandal and people were evacuated from the area.

A week later, the villagers, especially women – as the company didn't want to compensate the community for the damage – organised pickets and demanded that the company compensate them because they had suffered, and still were, from the effects of poisoning. There was pressure from the Police and the State Border Patrol on the villagers to stop their pickets and their demonstrations: When the women of the village blocked the road to the Kumtor Gold Mines, the police came in droves and arrested a lot of women. Two women who were arrested were pregnant at the time and had miscarriages later. The men from the village barricaded the

policemen in one house. High drama ensued with the men threatening to burn the house down if the policemen did not let the women out in an hour. The police eventually released the women, who continued to picket.

The president of the Republic of Kyrgyz came to the village and promised to pay compensation for the illness caused by the cyanide spill. The compensation was about twenty dollars for an adult and about ten dollars for children.

Two years after that, the Company organised a medical camp in the village to treat the affected population. When we asked the company how much they planned to invest in the medical diagnostic centre, they said that they would invest five million soames, or about twenty thousand dollars. When we investigated the equipment they were using, we found that it was old. When we questioned them about it, they wanted to know what difference was it going to make to us. We couldn't figure it out as they told us that they are going to invest twenty thousand dollars on the camp, why the old equipment?

It was very difficult to get any information out of the company officials and we worked together with the Department of Environment for two years to get information from the company, Kumtor Gold Mines.

“  
**the police came in droves  
and arrested a lot of women**  
”



## Ellen Pitoi - Newmont Minerals Dumping of Tailings in Indonesia

I will share with you how Newmont Minerals came to our village and the impact they had on the community, especially in terms of health issues. In 1996, a Contract of Work was signed by Newmont in Suharto's regime. Newmont used the military and the police to take over the land dedicated for the mines. Finally, Newmont, the military and the police managed to take over about 600 hectares of land in Ratatoto. They beat people up and forced them to accept compensation of about half a rupiah (in 2004, 1 USD is equal to about 9,400 Rupiahs) to one and a half Rupiah per square metre.

There was a huge protest in 2000 when Newmont took over the land for mining operations. People were arrested and were detained for four months. The community was scared and, therefore, did not take Newmont to court. The land cases have given people, especially women, more workload. They are also harassed by the men in their family.

This is the problem in the lowlands where Newmont is dumping the tailings into the ocean – about two thousand tons per day – since 1996. In 1994, Newmont conducted an Environmental Impact Assessment in union with the government, without informing the communities. In 1996, just three month after Newmont started dumping tailings into the Buyat Bay, communities complained about an accident where tens of thousands of fish died near where Newmont was doing its dumping. Again, in 1997, local communities complained about six such accidents where thousands of fish died because of Newmont's dumping. Also, the pipe broke about four times in 1998 and people were regularly complaining about declining species of fish: Fishermen have estimated the disappearance of anywhere between 30 to 59 species. From 1999 to

2004, people have started to fall ill very regularly in the Buyat Bay area; skin rashes, headaches, etc are very common. Tumours, numbness at the extremities, dizziness, and weakness are scaring the people of Buyat Bay to no end. People dying of tumours, breast cancer, etc. is becoming common in an area where there was hardly any sickness.

The Buyat community consists of about seventy-four families, most of them having some health problem or the other. Some of the children are not going to school because the headaches worsen at school. This photograph shows that there is an abnormal lump on the fist, which was never before seen in the Buyat Bay area.

The major victims of these diseases are women because all their resources have been polluted for instance, their water supply, i.e, the rivers and the ocean have been rendered unusable after Newmont came in. Newmont is dumping tailings into the ocean, which has Arsenic, Antimony, manganese and mercury: Every month, Newmont dumps anywhere between sixty to a hundred tons of Arsenic. Thirty percent of the Arsenic dumped is a weak acid, soluble in water, which makes it easy to dump in the ocean. The sediment at the end of the tailing pipe is also highly concentrated with Arsenic.

If we compare this with its Canadian counterpart, for instance, the concentration of Mercury in the sediments at the end of the tailing pipe is higher here than there. The community uses the river water for drinking purposes, which is also contaminated. They can't even dig wells for water as the pollution has seeped in to the ground water reserves, too. As their diet mainly consists of fish – they are fisher-folk – they end up imbibing concentrated amounts of the pollutants that Newmont has been dumping in their area. This is the current situation.

“ **Newmont Minerals is dumping the tailings into the ocean – about two thousand tons per day** ”

Newmont has shut the mine down by the first of August, 2004, leaving a legacy of more than four million tons of tailings in the Buyat Bay. No clean water, no electricity and with almost eighty percent of the community in Buyat Bay suffering from various disease, thanks to the tailings – more than fifty percent are women – they face a very bleak future.

The people are now demanding for relocation and rehabilitation – including resuming their tradition means of livelihood – because of the contamination of their local environment by Buyat Bay.

Initially, the police did not find any evidence of Newmont polluting the Buyat Bay. But, now after police investigation, five managers were detained and another was under suspension. Last month, the US Embassy coerced the Indonesian government and the police to release the Newmont officials and denied that Newmont was polluting Buyat Bay.

In conclusion, we ask all the participants to support the Buyat Bay and Ratatoto communities by signing on this letter that demands the US government to stop intimidating and pressurising the Indonesian police and the government on the Buyat case.



## **Dr. M. Bhagalaxmi & Shameena Banu - Socio-Economic Status of Un-Organised Women Workers in the Mines of Bellary District**

Bellary is 304 kilometres away from the capital city Bangalore in Karnataka, India. It is an important political and cultural centre that was ruled by many dynasties and has a continuing complex history as it was administered by the Sandur Kingship, Nizam of Hyderabad and later by the Madras province under British domination until 1953. Eastern taluks like Siruguppa, Hospet, Sandur and Bellary are mineral rich along with agriculture and trade and attract large number of migrant labour. The manganese and ferrous ores from this area have a good position in the world market. Some other metal and non-metallic ores are also available here. Recent reports have estimated the ore-treasure to be about 18.81 million tons. More than half the Iron ore produced extracted here is exported.

Most of the iron and manganese ore mines are situated in the Sandur, Bellary and Hospet taluks. At present there are 99 mining-leases of which 63 are operational. 33 mines are not in operation as they either don't have the licence from the Forest department or the licence has not been renewed. Iron ore is deposited below 38,13,073 Hectares and Manganese exists under 9,5,413 Hectares. Three of the mines are operated by the Govt. whilst 60 mines are privately owned. All these mines are open cast mines with more than half the ores being carried to the ports (Mangalore, Karwar, Goa, Chennai, Vishakhapatnam etc) by road and rail. From these ports the ore is exported to China, South Korea, Japan, Australia etc. The remaining ore is transported to Koppal, Maharashtra, Goa, Andhra Pradesh, Bellary and other states for the steel industry. Government owned M.M.T.C. manages the shifting, transportation, export and trade. Thus it acts as a link between the producers and the buyers. We can see mainly two types of works being carried out-extraction and wagon loading. Production of ore has increased as a result of rising demand since

2001. The work of digging and taking out small lumps from the barren and agricultural lands has been added to the main works. Iron ore is being dugout in the form of Lump and Powder. There has been an increased demand for powdered ore since 2003.

The involvement of men, women and child labourers in the mining activities often has serious socio economic consequences for these communities. This paper is predominantly intended to discuss the socio-economic status of the un-organized women labourers working in these mines.

According to an estimate by a labour union, 20,000 workers are involved in mining work in the aforesaid regions. There are 5,432 permanent workers, both in government and private mines. The rest are un-organized and work without any facilities like health, education, cleanliness, drinking water etc. Some of the leaseholders, contractors and agents behave like small capitalists by paying less and extracting more work from these labourers. Only 5-6 thousand permanent employees are getting E.P.F., E.P.S., and other labour benefits through the Ministry of Labour and the Iron and Manganese ore labourers' unions while majority receive no legal protection or labour benefits.

In pursuance of a brief study of these un-organized female labourers, 30 labourers have been interviewed from the taluks of Bellary, Sandur and Hospet at the points of Papinayakanahally, Kariganur, Vaddu, Torangallu, Yashvanthnagar, Jaisingpur and Nandihally.

Bellary district has a geographical area of 1270.33 sq. kilometres in which 84.20 sq. K.M.s is forest. 44.50 % of labourers are below the poverty line. This is a district that has more agricultural labourers than peasants and also has more female labourers than males. Most of the agricultural wetlands, mines, industries, and commerce are in the hands of the people from the upper classes.

### **Earning as a curse**

The people who depend upon mining labour (except the selling of fuel wood) are the migrants from the states of Andhra, Goa and Maharashtra. They do not have any facilities like housing, shelter, ownership of land, education etc., unlike the local labourers. They are not in a position to provide even basic literacy for their children. Here the female literacy rate is 46.4% and is very low especially among SC (scheduled caste) and ST (scheduled tribe) women. They work mainly as coolies and casual labourers in the mines earning very low wages.

A gender-based division of labour is part of the social system, and this also holds true in the mining industry. Our study revealed that women workers are engaged in more manual and physically hazardous activities like stone breakers, sifters, stone carriers, diggers, loaders, sweepers, sievers and such other unskilled and unprotected work while the men are mainly mine owners, managers, engineers, supervisors, technical operators, drillers, contractors and other less hazardous activities. Being daily wage labourers, the women do not get paid holidays, work for longer hours than permanent workers, work along with their children and especially adolescent girls for low wages, are not given any protective gear or do not have other workers' benefits. Consequently, children, mainly girl children, are absent from school and constantly face health problems.

Even in the case of female mine ownership, the women will have little if any managerial or operational control over the mines, and will generally be owners in name only. As an example there is a mine with the name of 'Parvathamma Mines', which is being managed by males.

The Factory Act 1948, Estates Act 1957, Mines Act 1957, Contract Labour Act 1970 and Inter-State Migrated Workers Act 1980 have legislated for Crèche facilities at the work place, to be provided by the mine owners, however, such facilities are rarely provided. The responsibilities

for girls at home make it impossible for them to even attend night school. Illiteracy has diminished their potential working capabilities and has consolidated their lower social standing in comparison to men. Gender-discrimination is less where the degree of literacy is high, and high where the degree of literacy is low. As such, wage earning itself has become a curse for women labourers.

### **Earning through sweat, blood and tears**

As most of the female labourers are from migrant families, they do not possess their own house or land in the same way local labourers. Most of the labourers live in tents by the side of the mining hills where dust and pollution dominate the landscape. Local labourers are not an exception. A few will live in tents and some others will live in their huts and rented houses nearby. From these makeshift homes, after performing household duties, the women walk 8-10 kms to work. Whilst a few try to hitch hike on lorry, bus, tractor etc which go only half the distance, most of them walk all the way to the mine site.

Most of the women workers are from lower castes. Being illiterate and middle aged, these women cannot earn equal wages to their male counterparts. As such they often need to work two jobs, often doing up to 18 hours a day, to be able to provide for their families. These women labourers do not have autonomy (regarding skills, work, time, sexual activities, family planning etc.) over their own lives. They are in constant fear of their owners and contractors to speak out their problems. They are always living in fear at the work place. Workers in the mine never have any contact with the mine owners. Only the contractors and supervisors have direct contact. The workers have to do all sorts of tasks ordered by them, and they have to bear any discomforts, extra workload or injuries, without complaining. They are never provided with protective equipment like masks, goggles, shoes, helmets etc. Women labourers have to cover their faces with a towel or their sari. Red dust from the manganese gets into their eyes and nostrils causing serious

respiratory illnesses, skin problems and injuries and long-term disabilities to the eyes. The women often get chest pain from carrying heavy pieces of stone, lung diseases from the dust, aches and pains, anaemia, white discharge, fatigue, chronic back problems etc. There is a high incidence of HIV-AIDS among the workers but accurate data is difficult to obtain on this front. The sprouting of hundreds of private clinics, diagnostic centres, medical pharmacies, skin and sexual diseases specialists in the area is evidence of the scale of the health problems being faced in the area.

As the women are casual labourers they do not get any medical care either from the owners of the mines or from the government. In spite of hundreds of these private clinics due to the lack of public health services, even these are beyond the reach of the women labourers. The Labour welfare department has opened hospitals at Kariganur and Sandur but they do not have any casualty unit, operation theatre or expert doctors working there. Medical facilities provided by the owners are available for only a few workers. Proper clinical examinations are not being carried out to ascertain the kind of diseases the labourers have and their causes. If such tests are conducted the results are not made public. Nowadays the number of patients suffering from chest pain, lung and respiratory disorders and Aids is increasing significantly. When health centres were visited to collect the statistics concerning this, the medical officers try to hide the data and information.

Women labourers are also being sexually exploited. This is something they cannot talk about in public. Adult women are being exploited to the greatest degree but if they try to object or protest against this exploitation, they invariably lose their jobs. Therefore, they obey all the instructions of the contractors and supervisors, and if any problems arise, they are left to be resolved invariably by the male manager. They do not have any collective bargaining capacity to solve their problems as there are no trade unions which take up their issues. The capitalists and their followers are vehemently opposed to unionisation.

Thus, one of the greatest impediments for women getting better work conditions is their inability to organise and hence 'hired and fired' indiscriminately. Agents, contractors and supervisors exploit them, as they know that the earnings of these women workers are crucial for their family's income, and that they can ill afford to resist such coercion and exploitation.

It is observed that the owners of mines are trying to protect their powers and profits by violating all the rules and regulations even where they exist. The most worrying fact is that mining is being enormously mechanized by a change brought about by new economic policy. The number of women workers constantly being reduced and replaced by machines. Traditionally the whole family used to be involved in wagon loading. Usually one railway wagon has 50 compartments, each compartment having a 55-60 ton capacity. Each worker was capable of loading up to 5 - 6 tons; so to load a whole train took 500 workers, each one receiving Rs. 80 for their few hours of work. A total family could get Rs. 250/-. Now, however, machines can do this work cheaper and in lesser time, so manual labourers are being displaced by mechanization.

Earlier, the loading points for the ore were few in number which helped the families get better wages. With the increase in demand for the ore in the world market, the contractors have increased the loading points, so more number of families and labourers are involved, reducing the incomes of existing labourers. The works of breaking stones, powdering etc are also being carried out by big machines. Likewise, work near the mines is also being done by machines. This is creating a sort of labour-less mining. Both the local labour force and the migrant labour force are becoming redundant.

Mining is also creating deforestation. Most of the workers are also cutting wood for fuel. Mine owners, with their exclusive emphasis on making profits, try to pay less to the workers whilst also trying to buy the properties of nearby private

areas. In some areas people have to fetch drinking water from distant places, whilst others consume the contaminated canal water.

Violence within the family against women workers is also very common. Men abuse the women and although women's wages are an important contribution to the family, they are still exploited and abused within their own families and communities. Though they earn, they cannot save or utilize their incomes for themselves. They often also have to bear their husbands' squandering of this vital income on alcohol, cigarettes or other unnecessary evils. They face caste, sexual and categorical discriminations. They have to work in the fields and at home without any support. The main intention of this paper is to highlight the status of the women-workers in the mining industry in Hospet-Bellary area of Karnataka and to create an awareness of their problems which have never been brought to light before.

### **Sunita Faterpeker**

I come from the Western Ghats of India from the tribal belt. I am from the Gouda tribe. We have a strong traditional culture. The Kushavati river flows through our village. We depend mainly on agriculture and forests. After the mining operations started, our village started getting destroyed. We put up 8 years of struggle to stop the mechanisation and the pollution of the rivers. The mining lobbies are strong and they have the support of the government, so we face a lot of pressure. After we got the mining activities stopped, the local politicians started divide and rule policy. But we have not lost confidence, we are continuing our struggle. We have both mine workers and community people in our struggle. The executive enginee of the Water Board Authority prepared a report showing how the water from the mine pits is polluting all the river systems of Goa. This report has been suppressed from the public and so the kushavati river is getting more and more polluted. We are not able touse this water for any purpose now.

Mining activity is concentrated in Forest, Agriculture and Residential areas. Village wells have dried up. 300 wells of Mayem regularly go dry from January to May due to mining activities in Mayem, Bicholim for past 25 years. The anti-mining struggles of the affected villagers are going on currently in Gavane and Nagargaon on Sattari and Colomba in Sanguem.

In Mushcaurem, mining activity rendered 325 people in a loss following the depletion of water. Agricultural crops suffered total loss. Number of people who are employed in a mining company is 11(eleven). Hence employment argument is mere eyewash. Mining is creating more unemployment than employment. In Pissurlem 80 Acres of Agricultural land is destroyed due to mining dumps.

Because of the manganese ore pollution into the water, we are facing a lot of health problems. In our lands, we had very good horticultural and agricultural crops. Today ground water has dried up, the forests have been cut down and we are not able to grow any of these crops and neither do we get any compensation for these losses. We have started anti mining agitations and we need help from outsiders also.

I invite each one of you present here, organizers, delegates, from India and abroad, Resource persons, Media, Film makers and other friends to visit Goa and see the degradation of life taking place in Goa in the name of Development.



## **Dr Catherine Coumans - Community Based Health Research: Addressing Cause and Effect Barriers to Assessing Health Impacts from Mining<sup>19</sup>**

As research coordinator at MiningWatch Canada I have been working this year in partnership with two women's groups in a remote mining community in Canada. One group represents English speaking women (The Labrador West Status of Women's Council) and one group represents French speaking women (Femmes Francophone de L'Ouest de Labrador). The project is called "Overburdened: understanding the impacts of mineral extraction on women's health in mining communities." It is an exploratory effort, using Community Based Research methods, to start to map women's health concerns related to mining in their community.

In this paper I will argue for the efficacy, cost effectiveness and validity of community based health research as an empowering alternative to large scale epidemiological studies.

The community of Labrador West (Lab West as locals call it) is made up of the towns of Labrador City and Wabush. It is in the eastern Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Lab West community was literally built up by, and immediately around, two major iron ore mines and as such, it is a typical example of a "mining town" in Canada. The community is in a remote northern location that was only opened up to modern transportation, air, rail and road as a result of the mines. As the mines were developed the native population, known as the Naskaupi, were displaced and, reportedly, in part forcibly evicted – their homes burned down (Lab West Report-Draft). The first mine started production in 1954, followed by the second in 1964 (Lab West Report-Draft).

The two mines, the Sculley Mine and the Iron Ore Company of Canada mine (now known as IOC) are the largest iron ore producers of Canada and

<sup>19</sup> Please refer to appendix for bibliographical references.

are second in iron ore production in North America. The mines have been in operation for about 50 years and the expected lifetime of the IOC mine is at least another 50 years.

Health concerns related to the mines, particularly related to air contamination, were identified early on. By 1982 a university study identified pneumoconiosis (a deadly lung condition) among mine workers. Over the years, data on potential contamination from the mines has been collected for studies by a university and by the provincial government, as well as by the mines themselves in their routine monitoring. However, as we discovered in the course of our project, not all studies and data are publicly available. Even data held by the provincial government was not released to the women's centers; the women were advised to submit a formal Freedom of Information request to get the data released. Furthermore, studies that are available, primarily from a university that was commissioned to do the research by the provincial government, have not been presented or interpreted to the larger community. Apparently no effort is made to communicate data gathered by the corporation, the government and the university to the community.

The two women's centers of Labrador West expressed an interest in a community based approach to better understanding, documenting and communicating the health concerns of women in Lab West and so they entered into a research partnership with MiningWatch Canada. MiningWatch Canada was interested in the project because it has been our experience in working with communities affected by mining that it is often the women who express health concerns and seem motivated to address these. This finding on our part is also documented by Health Canada in "Health Canada's Women's Health Strategy" (Ottawa 1999), which notes that women tend to be the guardians of health for their families and have tended to be more concerned about health than men. Women also make up the vast majority of health sector workers (Criaw: July 2001).

As preparation for this Community Based Research project MiningWatch Canada commissioned a literature review of studies that look at the links between metals and women's health. This literature review was completed by CCSG Associates and is available on MiningWatch Canada's web site ([www.miningwatch.ca](http://www.miningwatch.ca)).

Over the past eight months the Lab West women's groups have held focus group meetings and workshops with women from the community. They have also carried out a health survey among a small sample of randomly chosen women using a questionnaire. The intention was to arrive at a sense of the health concerns of women in the community, their level of understanding of various studies that have been done, and their perception of the links between mining and women's health issues in the community. The definition of health that was used was that of the World Health Organization (WHO), which is holistic, looking at health not merely as the absence of disease, but as the complete social, psychological and physical well-being of a person.

The Lab West women's groups are currently completing the report of their findings and it will be available on the MiningWatch Canada web site ([www.miningwatch.ca](http://www.miningwatch.ca)). From my personal involvement with this Community Based Research project two things are clear:

1. The women at the women's centers feel that community health has been negatively affected by major mines in the midst of their community.
2. They feel a need to "do something" about the situation.

The women differed somewhat in their level of confidence that this community based scoping study would be able to effect change towards greater health in the community. They did feel that the exercise would help raise awareness and could be valuable as an organizing tool. And they recognized this as change in itself and a step towards creating better health conditions. Questions that came up were whether this

community based health exercise could be seen by others (the mining companies, the government, health professionals) as a legitimate health study, whether it might not be better to have a full blown (epidemiological) health study conducted by “professionals.” The women sometimes expressed the hope that this community based work might lead to a larger scale professional health study.

In preparation for this joint community based research project with the women’s groups in Labrador West, and continuously as the project was underway, I grappled with questions about process (how exactly should such a community based health exercise be done) and with questions about the ultimate usefulness of the project to the women’s centers of Lab West and to the community as a whole. I was concerned about raising “unrealistic” expectations (for example that this health project would be able to “prove” negative health effects from the mines). I also worried about raising perhaps unnecessary and even unhealthy fears about potential but unproven health impacts from the mines.

It was also clear that this project could come under attack in some fairly obvious ways related to its limited scope. In fact, the women in Lab West did experience such criticisms even as they explained the project to people in the community.

Lois Marie Gibbs, executive director of the US-based Center for Health, Environment and Justice has identified some of these common lines of attack on community based research projects.

- Laypersons reporting to laypersons;
- You are not an epidemiologist, thus it’s not a scientific study;
- The people who conducted the study are people with a vested interest in the outcome and bring in a strong bias;
- The population is sensitized and thus over reporting their health problems;
- Not enough people were interviewed to make it a valid study. You must interview 95% of the population;

- The population is too small to get a statistically significant difference; and
- There is no “control” population for comparison.

The most obvious alternative to a community based health study is an epidemiological study. It is important to take a hard look at the pitfalls associated with an epidemiological study. An epidemiological study identifies a hazardous material, or exposure, which reaches the population through a single medium – air, water, or food - and looks for an adverse health effect in larger than expected numbers in the population (Bertell: 1994:1). Epidemiology has also been described as a “natural experiment” (Ozonoff and Boden:1987) as, unlike in controlled lab experiments, it attempts to identify causes and effects in a wide open natural environment in which many influences may impact on the study such as different exposure times of subjects, personal habits of subjects, physical differences between people creating different responses to similar exposures.

In order to “minimize” the impact of these “interfering” influences on the study, epidemiologists have to work on very large populations. This makes epidemiological studies very complex, time consuming and costly.

An epidemiological study is beyond the financial and skills capacity of most communities to carry out themselves. For that reason they must rely on outside “experts” which alienates them from the process. For this reason relevant community-specific information that may be critical to the study is often not communicated to the outside experts.

Other problems with epidemiological studies are that they cannot capture important but subtle health problems as they usually focus on identifying terminal illnesses to “prove” a health effect (Bertell 1994:2).

Finally, given the methodological limitations associated with epidemiological studies, it should

be no surprise that more often than not the findings of these studies are interpreted as there being “no evidence to link a particular source of contamination to ill health in the community. This initial denial of a health impact, based on an epidemiological study, has even been the case in situations where contamination was severe, and health impacts eventually had to be acknowledged, such as in the example of the infamous Love Canal toxic waste site contamination in the United States (Ozonoff and Boden 1987:1).

Given the concerns associated with epidemiological studies, a Community Based Health Study is a viable alternative. Thanks to some very important pioneering work done by women, such as, Dr. Rosalie Bertell, this approach has been refined and systematized (Bertell 1994). It has proven to be so highly effective that its results have been robust enough to stand the scrutiny of the court room, forcing the US government to pay large sums in compensation to Pacific Islanders effected by nuclear testing there.

I want to close by introducing another approach to dealing with the thorny issue of proving that a specific source of contamination has the potential, in general, to cause ill-health. This approach was proposed by Sir Austin Bradford Hill in 1965 (Lemen 2004:233). Hill identified nine criteria for determining a causative link between a specific substance and a negative health effect. These criteria are known as: temporality, biologic gradient, consistency, specificity, biologic plausibility, coherence, experimental evidence and analogy (Lemen 2004:233). If a specific substance meets the nine criteria set out by Hill, then, he argues, a cause and effect relationship between a particular substance and a health effect must be accepted.

Dr. Richard Lemen recently applied Hill's causation model to the question of whether Chrysotile Asbestos can be a cause of Mesothelioma. He concluded that chrysotile per se can induce mesothelioma even when tremolite or other amphiboles are not detected.

## **Susan Moodie - Overburdened: Understanding the Impacts of Mineral Extraction on Women's Health in Mining Communities**

My presentation is about the report entitled *Overburdened: Understanding the Impacts of Mineral Extraction on Women's Health in Mining Communities* my consulting company CCSG Associates researched last January for MiningWatch Canada. It is available on the MiningWatch Canada web site.

First, let me tell you a bit about my home the Yukon Territory. It is a vast land base with mountains, rivers and resources – fish, wildlife and minerals. The population is only 30,000 people, 2/3 of which live in Whitehorse. For many in the Yukon, there is a strong pride in the north being a last frontier full of rugged individuals. Some of this identity is tied to the mining industry, the Klondike Gold Rush of 1898 and the placer gold miners still actively mining Yukon river valleys.

I would like to share a less heard version of the gold rush, because it is a story that is still relevant even though it happened over 100 years ago. There is a town in the Yukon named after George Carmacks, the man who discovered gold that was so thick they said it looked like a cheese sandwich on Rabbit Creek. That was in the year 1896, but news was slow to reach the south and the gold rush didn't happen for two more years. By this time the entire Klondike area had been staked and the southerners heading north would not be able to find their own claims.

George had a Tagish First Nation wife, Kate, and a three year old daughter. He was helped to find the gold by Kate's brother and nephew. When they became rich and took a steamship down to San Francisco, the southern media ran racist and risqué stories about them. George soon denied his 13 year marriage to Kate and she was left without financial support to return home to the Yukon with her daughter. George re-married and when their daughter was 16 years old he arranged for her

to be taken from her missionary school and brought south without her mother's knowledge-they never saw each other again.

Often mining is presented only in a positive light of economic success and stories like that of Kate during the gold rush are not heard. Mining is an industry of extraction that intensively uses resources, both human and environmental, often times at the expense of the community. In addition to exploiting mineral resources, mining uses large quantities of water and disrupts land that might have been otherwise used for other purposes such as subsistence, agriculture or housing. Mines pollute other resources, making water and food unhealthy. Mines require human resources too, which takes community members away from other roles they might have in the community. It is not just minerals that are extracted. This has been termed an ethic of exploitation and it is a gender differentiated ethic-women experience the exploitation in different ways than men.

Most academic health research to date has focused on occupational health and safety data for white men of working age and has represented, or misrepresented, this information as "human health." This is not surprising since the vast majority of mine workers are men. However, the result is that the health of the families and community, as well as the increasing numbers of female workers, has generally been overlooked. Similarly, acute toxicity from high occupational exposure is studied rather than the chronic effects of long term exposure which is more commonly experienced by communities near the mine.

Some reports provide health statistics for women that are different than men, but provide no gender analysis to determine the cause of the differences, or simply state that it is because women get pregnant without reasoning how this makes a difference. Even toxicology studies tend to use male animals and even cells and tissues of male animals.

A woman's health changes at different times in her life because of physical changes that occur during childhood growth, puberty, pregnancy, lactation and menopause. Because a disproportionate number of women in the world are poor, without safe and stable housing or personal environment, and have enormous stresses in their lives-these are often underlying and contributing factors in women's health.

I would like to give an example of how one metal has different effects at different times in a woman's life. Lead is moved in the body the same way as calcium and zinc. This allows it to cross the blood brain barrier, placental barrier, be stored in bone and enter nerve cells. Lead can be stored in bones for durations of upto 10 years and be mobilized during pregnancy and lactation. This is a serious concern because exposure to very low lead levels can cause harm to the cognitive development of children. A high calcium diet is important to lower risk of lead impacts, so where there is poverty and poor nutrition, lead effects may be greater.

Prenatal and childhood lead exposure has been linked to alteration in growth and endocrine function in adolescent girls. Higher blood lead in adolescents has been associated with decreased height growth and delayed puberty.

Lead exposure early in life is associated with a seven times greater chance that an adolescent will quit high school and a six times greater chance of reading disabilities. There is a link between early-life lead exposure and the chance of adolescent pregnancy. Violent crimes, such as assault, rape, murder, and robbery have been associated with early-life exposure to lead. Here we see links between physical and social health.

Postmenopausal women have been found to be particularly sensitive to very low levels of lead in their blood, this increases their blood pressure. After menopause, bones naturally release calcium (through demineralization), bone density decreases, and lead is released from the bone,

increasing blood lead levels. Osteoporosis is very common in elderly women, a condition where extreme bone density loss results in the bones becoming weakened, brittle, and vulnerable to fractures. Blood lead levels are high in postmenopausal women and even higher in osteoporotic postmenopausal women because the lead is released from bone to blood in the same way as calcium.

In conclusion, women are affected by the mining industry from work to home, at all stages of their lifecycles, by all types of mining, and in ways that include physical, emotional, sexual, and spiritual aspects of their lives.

Improving women's health in mining affected communities will require that women's status be raised in all social and economic sectors. Without this, as natural resources grow scarcer, women's health burden from mineral exploitation will only continue to grow.

### Recommendations

Some of the key recommendations include:

- gender-sensitive occupational training, safety and technology
- opportunity for economic alternatives and self-sufficiency
- health education outreach and support
- women-specific health research, medical care and community planning.



### T. Laxmidevi, Gilani Begum -Case Studies of Women Mine Workers in the Mica mines of Gudur district in Andhra Pradesh, India

The main mica-sites in Andhra Pradesh are found at Atmakur, Ravuru and Gudur of Nellore district. Large deposits of Mica are also found at Tiruvuru in Krishna District, Madhira [Khammam District], and Ankannagudem of West Godavari, all in AP.

### Field Visits

RRDS volunteers travelled to over six Panchayats and ten villages and interviewed over thirty – sometimes fifty – in each village with a questionnaire prepared expressly for this purpose.<sup>20</sup> This preliminary report features basic data about the population of each village, sex ratio, location of the mining area, the number of working as well as abandoned mines, the problems that are being faced by women mine-workers, etc.

### Villages visited

#### *Dadichettipalli, Eddarangapalli*

In the Sydapuram Panchayat of Gudur District, the mines are about a hundred and fifty feet away from the mine-workers' homes, where – consequently – they are continually exposed to the dust from the mines. The mines have been operational for the last twelve years.

The total population of the area, which include the Maadigas and the Yadavas, a backward caste, is about four thousand and ten. The total number of women that have been working in the mines, though, are only about forty.

The average wage of women labourers is only about Rs 25, or about 50 cents, a month. This translates to about Rs 800, or \$ 17, a month. Hardly enough to have *two* square meals a day. Besides, the dust from the mines, which causes

<sup>20</sup> Please see Annexure I for questionnaire details.

mine induced diseases like Tuberculosis, Silicosis, Eosinophilia, cough, stomachaches, arthritis, heart diseases, etc. The average mortality rate of women here is around forty years. The other reproductive problem of women are facing here is an unusually high rate of miscarriages.

The chronic health problems of the mineworkers have a direct link to the mica mining activities. Yet, neither the mineowner or the public health departments admit the association or provide for medical services to the workers. As a majority of the workers are casual labourers, they are not given health cards to avail of public medical services as mandated under the Mica Mine Labour Welfare Act. As the workers cannot afford the medical treatment at private clinics, they are either constantly caught in a web of indebtedness or suffer the illnesses silently.

### **Women Mine workers**

Women are in a worse situation. The mines are operational only sporadically, so they have permanently shut down the crèche and the hospitals in the site. Thus, women mineworkers are burdened with the additional task of taking care of their infants at the work place.

When the mining operations were in full swing, crèche facilities were provided, but now, this is no longer economically viable for the miners. The workers' children are left behind at home to fend for themselves, and as there are no schools nearby, there has been a spurt in dropout rates in the nearby school.

Water and air-borne diseases induced by the mica ore and tailings have a serious impact of the health of the children in these villages.

Women work in shifts from 2 pm to 10 pm. Women are mostly involved in crushing and sorting of stones while the men, most of the time, do the loading, and are, therefore, more exposed to dust pollution.

In Dadichettipalli, the water from the bore-wells is murky and people claimed it caused gastrointestinal problems when used for drinking purposes. But, they have no other source of potable water.

### **Jogipalli**

Around a hundred families, belonging to the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Backward Class and Other Backward Classes, live here. The total population of the villages, which include Japhalapuram, though is only about 197. The number of unwed mothers is about twenty while the total number of widows is about thirty. The number of widows who have got compensation from the company is none.

Here, as in other villages, most of the population work in the mines. The cyclone caused a breach in their irrigation tanks and borewells have depleted the ground water in these parts.

The daily wage for male labourers is a mere Rs 50, or \$1.11, per day, and for the women, even less at about Rs 30 [65 cents]. Even this amount is not guaranteed, as it depends on the amount of Feldspar they can collect from the overburden. Crippling heat and mine-related illnesses aggravates this insecurity. This is evident in the fact that absenteeism is widespread.

### **Turimerla**

Around forty-five people from here work in the nearby mines, seventeen of whom are from the Scheduled Caste. They are mostly involved in drilling, mucking and jockey work.<sup>21</sup>

For jockey work, they are paid around Rs 52, or about \$ 1.15. For drilling and mucking, about Rs 32, or about 50 cents. Here again, there are no guaranteed wages and no retirement benefits. Take, for instance, P Penchaiah, who worked as a

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<sup>21</sup> Jockey: b) A self-acting apparatus carried on the front tub of a 'set', for releasing the tub from the 'haulage rope' at a certain point.

driver for twenty years in the Kalyanaram mines. He retired with absolutely nothing coming to him. About four hundred people from this village used to work in the Seetharama mica mines every shift in Kalichedu a few years ago. Now, this number has halved to about two hundred mineworkers in total. They work in two shifts of a hundred each. People here, too, have been complaining of highly contaminated water from the bore-wells. People have reported illnesses ranging from gastrointestinal problems to enervation to fatigue after drinking the water, *even* after it is filtered.

### **Kalichedu Village**

Around three hundred locals work in the mines as pump drivers, in jockeying and drilling work, as mine mates<sup>22</sup>, and other such odd jobs. The women, about a hundred of them, work as loaders, sorters and cutters. Most of them, as is expected, are widows as their men have succumbed to silicosis-tuberculosis.

The total population of the village is about 1328, out of which 659 are women and 669, men. The total population of unwed mothers is about fifty, of widows, seventy and the total population of unmarried mothers is about 180.

Most of them are contract labourers. The permanent labourers, though, are in the same position as the rest: They alleged that the Company is defaulting on paying them their share and that they are not in any way better off than the contract labourers in terms of retirement benefits.

The workers also said that the system is so callous that to get a possible pension of Rs 500, one has to slave in the mines for about thirty years. Most don't make it till there as they succumb to various mine-related illnesses long before their middle age.

<sup>22</sup> Mine mate [Butty]: A mate or working partner in the pit. Several men could work a 'butty system' together in a working 'place' or 'district' within a mine each and every one would be known as a 'butty' or 'butty collier'.

### **Women mine workers**

All the widows now work in the mines as contract labour for Rs 25, or about 35 cents per day, on a good day. When their husbands died, these women didn't get any compensation, retirement benefits nor compensation even for the expensive treatment that their husbands had to endure after they were afflicted with Tuberculosis, Silicosis or other diseases. Women workers are generally more vulnerable than the men. As many of them are widowed, their income depends on the amount of feldspar they can collect in a day. And they are all on 'contract', which means that they do not have a 'permanent' job at the mine-site and are therefore not entitled to free treatment from the hospital. The welfare hospital in Kalichedu has made it mandatory for patients to carry their ID card for providing free relief in terms of medicines, as the Company contributes to the welfare fund of the hospital for 'free treatment' of the 'permanent' mineworkers. This has been made obligatory for the companies by the temporary welfare boards that have been set up to ensure the welfare of the workers of mica mines. The welfare boards were set up with a lot of well-meaning intentions – to set up schools, housing, etc. but the system of contract labour has undermined the Act itself.

A visit to the Kalichedu Hospital, which has been created under the Welfare Act, confirms one's suspicions. The hospital was deserted, although there were thousands of workers suffering from Silicosis, Tuberculosis and such ailments.

The Kalichedu Hospital which, although, takes care of eleven working mines, hospital records show that it gives free treatment to only about 354 mine-workers.

The other hospital at Talupur has been shut down, ostensibly for the 'lack of funds'.

### **Ootukur Village**

Meenakshi and Sundaram both own Mica mines in the Ootukur Panchayat. The wages paid to the contract labour here, too, are very little when compared to the permanent labour. Most of the

mineworkers here are contract labour. For the men, life is difficult enough with dangerous conditions and poor wages. For the 600 women from Ootukur, who undertake unskilled work above the mines, the situation is worse again with a significant wage disparity, no work security (as they are hired on a daily contract basis), no benefits at all to speak of and subjected to life threatening working conditions. Since 1884 the women of Ootukur have served the mines, which sit 300 feet from their village. They do not, of course, have paid holidays, VRS schemes, child-care facilities, nor perks or facilities for pregnant women. There are no educational or health-care facilities, no training facilities for the mineworkers, no insurance covers and no facility to organise a labour union for the women either.

Due to the desperate economic conditions the women live in they experience a high rate of reproductive illnesses. The health issues faced by women are drastic and consequently the average age of women who work in the mines is only 40 years. Amongst the most significant health problems faced are T.B., Silicosis, Eosinophilia, cough, stomachaches, arthritis, and heart diseases, plus the additional threat of accident caused by falling rocks at the blast site. If a worker is injured in such an accident the mine offers no compensation to victims. To date, the companies have made no effort to address the problems faced by women, despite the stark evidence that their employment practices are devastating the health of the men and women as well as the extended community. For those families widowed by the death of fathers and husbands at the mine site, no compensation is provided, often again increasing the pressure on women to undertake dangerous work at the mines to make ends meet.

### **Thalupur Panchayat**

The Rajeshwari, Sarojini, Janakirama, Yashoda Krishna and Baladurga Jayalakshmi companies operate Mica mines in the Thalupur Panchayat, which is comprised by the Thalupur, Cherlopalli and Orupalli villages. The situation for women in respect to the mines is almost equally as drastic as

it is for the women of the Ootukur panchayat. Once again they are paid miserly wages, receive no benefits whatsoever and face severe health problems. Though the women receive 870 rupees per month, or 19 dollars, compared to their counterparts at Ootukur who receive 800 rupees, the women receive no paid holidays, no VRS scheme, no child care facilities, no perks or facilities for pregnant women, no educational or health care facilities, no training facilities, no insurance facilities and are prevented from organising a labour union. Then again, they are daily wageworkers and what they get is dependent on how much feldspar they collect. This translates to about Rs 30 [65 cents] a day. The pressure to make ends meet also manifests in a high instance of child abortion in these villages and they face the scourges of T.B., Silicosis, Eosinophilia, cough, stomach-aches, arthritis, and heart diseases. Whilst a lower percentage of women work at the mine site than at Ootukur, the women and the extended community are still deeply affected by the cold-hearted employment practices of the mine owners. One hundred and fifty women have been made widows by accidents at the mine site for which they have been provided no compensation. In sum, the situation at Thalupur Panchayat paints a distressing but common picture of the hardships faced by both women and the wider community as a result of crude employment practices by Mica mine owners.



## Day IV: Open Discussions

**Mai:** Sue's recommendations in her paper are important. Gender sensitive training on occupational health, safety and technology, on opportunities for economic and self-sufficiency, opportunities for health safety and prevention, women specific health research are very essential. My question is, when we need to respond to health problems that communities face due to mining, is there a way of conducting community based health surveys as government wants scientific, epidemiological studies for communities to prove what they are suffering.

**Catherine:** The problem you state is very typical, even when companies and governments acknowledge the health problems, they do not acknowledge the link between mining and the health problems. Dr. Rosalie Burtell pioneered the community based health research and her methods could be used to establish the link between the source of contamination and the impacts on communities. It is possible to use these methods.

**Sue:** It is possible to look at the symptoms of health problems which are mineral specific. We know what impacts specific minerals have on physical and mental health. When we do health studies, it is difficult to describe and establish these intangible symptoms, but we still have evidence as the symptoms are well known.

**Matilda to the Bolivian group:** In your role play you showed that after the mines polluted the waters, you are able to treat the water for re-use. Are people asked to decant on their own or do the companies do it and is it sold to the communities or given free.

**Bolivia:** Women can easily purify the water on their own at home and it is normally done by women. It is also not costly and can be done practically by keeping the water in the sun for about 18 hours and use sodium sulphate to decant

the water. Through this process zinc is removed from the water.

**Norly to Catherine:** If the study is done with the communities, will they be able to interpret the data they have gathered or will they need an external consultant to do that.

**Catherine:** The methodology is a bringing together of experts and the communities and health professionals- but community plays an important role in providing the information on the situation.. The process of research also involves training in methods of gathering samples, filling questionnaires, lab testing, etc and it is very important to go back to the community and tell them the result of these test and studies.

**Vernie:** I am concerned about the community based health research- we have concrete experiences. What is important is to gather people from the medical field and health workers and medical professionals and get them to do the research together with the communities affected. That's how we conducted our health studies.

**Philippines to Indonesia:** What was the response of the government to the diseases brought out from your reports?

**Mai:** The environmental minister gave press conference along with Newmont. There was a fight in the national media between communities and the government and the industry where the latter two were protecting each other. The local governments accused communities of not having health problems. But the community is facing serious health problems, for example they can no longer eat the fish due to mine contamination of rivers. We are taking the community to the national media in Jakarta, and as a result, government provided temporary health service to appease the people.

**Sizayi:** In Zimbabwe we have company doctors- the disadvantage is, it is difficult to get them to certify that the disease is related to the mineral.

**Smita:** Single mothers are increasing and sexual exploitation is increasing in coal mining areas-are there similar problems in other countries also.

**Aloysia:** What is the economic status of women working in the mines in comparison with agriculture. Education is affected by mining as children partly work in the mines and do not go to school, so attendance is poor. Parents also don't send them as they lose wages.

**Matilda:** Mining is responsible for environmental damages and water pollution. Communities affected by mining are left out in discussions. We don't have the money to carry out these investigations on our own. Ok Tedi disposes 80,000 tonnes of waste into our lands everyday. When we object, they say it is alright and want us to give proof of the impacts. The company spends two million every year on environmental monitoring but does nothing to clean up our lands and rivers. I want to see where the justice is. They are playing this game with people living around the mines whose rights are denied for the sake of profit. I want us as women to understand each other. It is good to see the Latin American women taking a lead in finding some solutions. Our country is rich in natural resources, we are the fourth country in the world with very high biodiversity and we'd like look after that and maintain that. We need time and space to make decisions on our lives.

**Dr.Satyalakshmi:** Women participation should be made mandatory in public hearings and other processes of decision making

**Rebecca:** Women don't do mining but men bring AIDS to women. So women have to encourage education, get girls to go to schools. We can't sit and wait for compensation which will not come. I want us to take the challenge as we women also have a brain and we can do what men can do-mining is ravaging our communities and our lives.

**Maria:** In the developed world there are environmental policies and laws where we can

fight. But I feel guilty because we push out the mining from Europe and push it onto the third world countries. So we need to address this at an international level, as the problems of the third world and also that of the first world.

**Hannah:** Mining activity is an emotion. People become rich –even where people work in the mines and get occupational diseases they spend 10 times more than they earn to cure themselves – a young man in a company in Ghana has developed kidney problems and spends huge amount for dialysis-the company supported him for some time and now they washed their hands off-now the man is dying and his family cannot survive. So my message to all- we call for measures in all our countries to sensitive our people- companies should declare their mine closure plan-the communities should be allowed to participate in EIA's and only then they can protect their health and lives

**Lakshmi:** The conditions of the workers is very bad. We want to know what should be done to the abandoned mines. From the experiences we have, we feel that the mica mines should be closed as they lead to serious health problems and are not giving enough livelihood to the workers.

***The post-lunch session of Day IV had group discussions where participants had a closer interaction with each other to identify the critical areas of concern on women and mining and to come up with recommendations for the network to develop our perspective. Presentations were made by each group at the end of the day. Based on these recommendations, a task group worked during the three days of the field visits and put together the Conference Statement, Declaration and Resolutions. These were presented to the participants on Day VIII and were finally approved and passed by the Network on Day IX.***

# Day V, VI and VII

## Visits to mine sites

The participants were divided into two groups and were taken to two of the biggest public sector mines in the country, both located in interior forest areas in the midst of tribal villages. It involved three days of traveling by road and visiting the mines.

One group was taken to the Singareni Coal mines in Andhra Pradesh where we obtained special permission to visit the underground mines and interact with the workers and the unions. Unfortunately we could not organize meetings, as there was no community representative group working locally.

The second group was taken to the bauxite mines in Southern Orissa where one of the oldest public sector companies, NALCO, operates. Despite obtaining prior permission from the management, the sight of almost forty women of different colours and languages across the world, alarmed the company officials and the lengthy red-tapism to gain entry into the mines prevented the group from having a detailed tour of the mine site. However, the group was also taken to tribal villages – Nimmalapadu and Borra – in the neighbouring state of Andhra Pradesh, where the communities have been putting up a strong resistance to large-scale private mining, with the help of local groups like Samata and Adivasi Mitra. The interaction with these communities provided a good glimpse into the traditional cultures and economy of tribal people in the country and why these communities wanted their lands to remain greenfields.

### **The National Aluminium Company Limited, Damanjodi**

Incorporated in 1981, as a public sector enterprise of the Government of India, National Aluminium Company Limited (Nalco) is Asia's largest

integrated aluminium complex, encompassing bauxite mining, alumina refining, aluminium smelting and casting, power generation, rail and port operations. It is located in Damanjodi [Koraput, Orissa]. NALCO's mining operations include opencast mining [Panchpatmali hills]. In operation since September, 1986, the Refinery is designed to provide Alumina to the Company's Smelter at Angul.

About two hundred kilometers from Vishakhapatnam, the conference, the six-hour journey takes one through picture-postcard locales and dense forests.

### **The Singareni Collieries Company Limited, Kothagudem**

The Singareni Collieries Company Ltd. (SCCL) is a public sector company with its headquarters at Kothagudem in Andhra Pradesh. There are 69 working mines under SCCL, in four districts of Andhra Pradesh. With one lakh (0.1 million) employees, it is the only coal company in South India and caters to the needs of power, cement and all other coal based Industries spread over the Southern States. Today Singareni produces about 10 per cent of the country's coal production. Its mining operations encompass both open-cast as well as underground mining.

About 500 km from the conference venue, the journey takes all day passing through beautiful landscapes and raw scenery that is the trademark of the Eastern Ghats.



## Day VIII

### SHARING OF FIELD VISIT EXPERIENCES

#### **Singareni Coalfields**

**Satyalakshmi:** Conditions within the mine both underground and open cast-no equipment, safety gear, workers directly exposed to mines – the officials were cooperative but when we asked some questions like where the water was going- they said they allow water to seep in and then pump it up. There is no air ventilation and it is the same with deep mining – it looks like it is safe – there is already lot of digging – but the site of the digging is humid and hot and only one air chamber for fresh air to enter – blasting and digging were going on. The women are not to be seen-no women workers and when we asked union members, they said there is a ban on women working in the mines and were also defending the ban because of some accidents in the 50's where leaders persuaded company to ban women's labour. They finally agreed to put in their agenda for women's participation – only some women were working in the deceased quota where widows get jobs but only as sweepers and other petty jobs, but no women in technical jobs. Only 3000 women totally in Singareni in 13 plants in A.P

**Tina:** There were no women – poor ventilation – air vent at the end of the tunnel – protective equipment was bad – soft shoes, no clothing, no shirts, only pants, no gloves – so most of the contamination is through the skin – no covers, everything is bare – muddy, damp environment – they have no eating facilities and so have lunch where they work – but the supervisors and bosses go up to the office to eat while workers eat there – that's not fair. The union said they won some issues like wages, benefits-union defended ban on women- they kept justifying it with all sorts of reasons- I mentioned that I work underground and so also in many countries-in Canada it was banned but the union helped the women to get them to work. So finally they relented – we talked to the media afterwards and we told them about the need to lift the ban on women because if its bad for women, it's bad for men.

**Sanjukta:** I want to tell about singareni mines trade union AITUC-I met someone from AITUC. We saw both INTUC and AITUC and we came to know that (sattar) unions of which only two are with the big unions. Aituc is working still 1940's. secret ballot is used for elections of the union. There is no achievement without agitation and that is the work of the unions. Tina raised the point that in Canada when women can work underground, why not here. I will take this to our federation and it is my responsibility as national women's secretary of AITUC, to take this agenda to our federation.

**Fatima:** We saw polluted water being pumped into fertile lands- evasive answers from company-INTUC and AITUC had divergent views with regard to women's work in mines. Certain concessions to widows of workers are not being given to all workers now.

**Kar:** When we went to guest house they gave fresh water but when we went underground mine they told us this is the water they pump up and treat-so we were scared of drinking the water again- open cast only for 8 years, we don't know exactly when open cast and underground mine will meet and it may be a big disaster-in the book it is written that they should not do both in the same place but they said India needs coal and needs to expand, so they are doing it.

**Hannah:** An experience of a life time-I want to say that the focus shifted from underground to surface, the manager answered that it was because of economic reasons. What was worrying was the environmental and community livelihood issues which the mining is overlooking- water pollution was visible but said they were treating the water, it is pure-in Ghana we saw this where companies walk away and refuse to pay and the govt and communities have to take responsibility- mine closure plan of underground mine- they said since there was no human inhabitation, they will just leave it-the whole terrain is changed, I don't know what is the future of the people around these areas.

**Matilda:** they were flexible with our time-I was concerned that we didn't meet up with communities or with the people who were working in the mines from the local community.

**Aloysia:** first time I saw such a vast mine- land has gone and no agriculture – it seemed that daily wage work is minimal- in the underground mines, water in big pipes was flowing- smell from the water-we heard a lot of sounds- workers were in a bad condition-no proper clothes, smelling and I didn't like their condition.

**Shahnaz:** the water coming out after mining is being used for drinking and agriculture-how much is used and how much is wasted, we don't know- underground and open case mining.

**Sudha:** I was very amazed with the experience- I am worried about the water which they saw is purified but I'm not sure- this is my first visit to a mine site.

**Rebecca:** I want to say we are special-we went to the bauxite mine-the biggest bauxite mine in the country- we were just there and had a very poor view of the mine-we couldn't make out anything-manager said it was 15-20 kms deep. We women also can do the work of men-they said this place is owned by govt and they didn't know that there were people- the next day we went to kolab reservoir- from there we went to the plant-the protocol, the delaying tactics to prevent us from going inside-they say it is number one bauxite mines in asia and why so much of protocol to show us the plant- they took us around in a vehicle-there was no protective equipment-no women were found, only in the gardens to plant flowers-we then went to the villages- we saw the wonders of god like caves-I felt like I got a new life after listening to the people in Nimmalapadu and how they fought for their lands. This is the kind of mission that we need to take back to our homes to fight for our lands and our natural resources

**Bidulata:** I am from the same state of bauxite mines-but it was my first visit to go into the mining site- lot of machinery working but the lighting was very poor-just dim lights-all of them male workers-

the first displaced were 1,25,000 people and till now, they have not got any compensation properly and nobody knows where they have gone. We went to nimmalapadu and borra. The place is so beautiful and fresh and cool. We learnt a lot from the people who told us about their struggle, the legal case, the people's movement and now how they are peacefully living in their lands. We want to bring people of our villages for an exposure to learn about the struggle.

**Ellen:** I found the community very interesting there- they faced problems but finally they won the case- in my experience, we did not have much time to visit the mine site and wasted a lot of time waiting for permission-we finally went in the evening, so there was too much fog and we couldn't see anything. The management said women are not capable of doing the work, so they have no women workers.

**Maria:** this mine is fully mechanized – this district there are many other mega projects other than Nalco- for the entire area, the displacement must be huge-we heard many of them live in the shanties around the project-the other side is the resistance of communities to mining with the help of samata-they are now living in dignity.

**Vernie:** the experience in orissa- the situation where communities affected by mining and displacement-can forge strong solidarity with workers through such field trips-visit to community is an important component of a conference like this- the human touch and interaction and seeing children and babies made me remember my family- our struggle in the Cordillera is a similar one and it is a great experience to see the tribal people's struggle here.

**Joyce:** this is the beginning of the struggle- some have fought and lost our loved ones-There's nothing we can get easily-we need to have guts, we need to stand in togetherness, we won't win this war-as women we need to come together and fight for this struggle-people who are working are affected twice-because we are affected at work and at the community- we should not feel isolated but we need to fight thrice.

# DAY IX

## The Network Beyond the Third Conference Regional Coordination and Thematic Coordination

### Open Discussion on the Structure of the Network

The main focus of the discussions on day nine centred around defining the role of the network, organisational structure, criteria for membership, and future actions. Some of the issues that were raised were:

**Structure:** some of the discussions related to whether the network should have a formal structure, representation, whether it should be registered and how it would function. We also discussed whether we should have a centralised structure or a more distributive one. A majority of the participants were of the opinion that it should not be formally structured. Most of the networks and alliances that we are part of within our own nations or at international levels are undergoing similar processes of defining their structures and experiences have shown that the functional and administrative tasks of running such formal structures limit the role and time of members to developing structures rather than concentrating on actions. Therefore, we should think of lateral ways of strengthening our identity and intervention as the global platform for campaigning on Women and Mining.

Most of the members felt that it would be an enormous task to have one centralised secretariat or coordination. It was decided that the structure should have representation at different levels and different geographical, thematic, social and sectoral interests of members. It was also felt that the conference should decide on the key areas of intervention and coordination. Since it is a global network, the difficulties of communication, language and cultural differences and diverse areas

of interests, requires that we make the functioning and decision-making de-centralised. Therefore, there was a consensus on having regional coordination based on continental representation and thematic coordination based on issue-based representation.

The Network coordination was finalised by breaking into five regional coordinations and three thematic areas and nominated a coordinating office/organisation for each of these. The five regional coordinators are:

Asia – Cordilerra People’s Alliance, Philippines

Africa – WACAM, Ghana

Pacific – Oxfam CAA, Australia

Americas (North & South) – Centramin, Columbia

### **The thematic groups are:**

Indigenous people and local communities – Tebtebba Foundation (U.K) and Samata (India)

Labour – Cepromin, Bolivia

Health and Environment – Miningwatch, Canada (Mining watch has later expressed its inability to accept this responsibility due to its current work load but will continue to be an active member of the Network)

The above coordinators will act as the international steering committee or working group for the Network which will initiate actions and intervention in their respective groups and coordinate with each other for maintaining the international coordination. The regional coordinators will dialogue with their regional level

members to develop action plans for the Network's intervention areas.

Greece came up with the problem that they were the only group in the Network from Europe and that it would be difficult to develop a regional coordination as there are very few groups working on mining issues. Joji reassured that there are some indigenous people's groups asserting for their rights and it is possible to involve them on mining issues. Moreover, there are many mining networks based in Europe and since the mining industries are based in Europe, the advocacy groups in Europe can play a vital role in assisting the Network in terms of information, campaign support and monitoring of mining industries. So Tebtebba would help Greece in developing such collaboration efforts in the European continent.

### **Role of the Network:**

There was a common agreement that the role of the Network was to facilitate exchange of information and solidarity among members, take up advocacy at international level on women's issues in mining, address training needs, and any other needs that may arise. It was also felt that we should maximise the existing international level networks and spaces that many of the members are already participating, in advocating for gender concerns in mining. The Statement, Declaration and Resolutions prepared are drawn from extensive experiences of different countries and from the exhaustive deliberations that took place at this conference. So it was emphasised that members and coordinators could work on the areas relevant to their situations and take up campaigns and intervention and use these as benchmarks for developing regional or thematic actions or even by networks within their own countries.

Many of the members also participate in international bodies or lobby with international bodies as human rights organisations or as indigenous peoples' representatives or as workers' unions. The members. Each of us are lobbying

on different sectors of mining like oil and gas industry, coal, issues related to mining protected areas and forests, biodiversity, indigenous peoples' rights over territories vis-à-vis mining, monitoring of international financial institutions, World Bank projects and policies, UN bodies and UN events, Commonwealth bodies, conflicts in areas of militarisation in mining regions, and several other spaces. We are already raising issues of people, community and workers rights.

It was strongly felt that in each of these sectors and spaces that we are already advocating, we should strongly focus on the gender concerns in mining and facilitate NGO's, community groups and other representative institutions also focus on women and children in the mining sector. For example, when we are lobbying for the rights of the indigenous people, we should also advocate for the rights of indigenous women with regard to mining, as they are the worst affected. Where we are fighting on issues of biodiversity, we should highlight the impact of biodiversity loss due to mining from a gender perspective as these losses have never been directly attended to.

We also decided that members could effectively make use of these spaces by planning common programmes on mining during international events or meetings if members attending these meetings could communicate to each other about the participation. Some of the forthcoming international events were discussed like the World Women's Conference in Beijing in 2005 where some members are participating. Tebtabba has volunteered to take an active role in highlighting the women and mining issues at this conference.

We also felt that we need to cut across sectors and network with other human rights groups working on gender, labour, indigenous people and other common areas of work.

### **Membership:**

The participants had many questions regarding the eligibility for membership. Questions revolved around who could be members, whom does the

network represent, whether it is restricted to participants of the conference or to certain sectors alone, whether association with the network should be determined by financial contributions, how many groups/individuals can be given membership from the same country and how should decisions of the network be taken.

Again members felt that defining the criteria for membership is a very tricky issue, so we should not make it very rigid. In this regard all participants broadly accepted and emphasised that the Network will:

Represent the rights of both women mine workers and for the women who are displaced or affected by mining in their communities and that the aim of the network is to bring more women and groups representing both these sections together on a common global platform.

The network will not accept membership from corporates, representatives, organisations, unions, federations, consultants, etc representing corporates or interests of corporates.

It was decided that new members can be accepted when one of the existing members or the regional coordinators propose or support their application for membership. More than one group/member can be taken from the same country as there may be different groups representing different interests (workers, communities, indigenous people, etc). At present there will not be a membership fee as it involves administrative work and resources will be raised with members' assistance, based on the needs.

### **Conclusion:**

The conference ended with a review of the decisions taken on day nine with regard to the Network's role, concerns and responsibilities in taking the international work forward. All the regional and thematic coordination teams emphasised their willingness to accept the responsibilities and develop action plans and campaign strategies and to draw the participation of members in their respective regions or thematic

areas. The conference concluded with the message for all of us that the urgency to fight for the gender rights in mining and against the exploitation of communities and workers in post liberalisation economies in all our countries has been heightened and that we draw upon each other's struggles, experiences and solidarity. An international conference like this gives us a renewed strength and conviction in our struggles and gives us the confidence that our voices are getting more audible and articulate. All participants re-emphasised the inspiration that we draw from all our experiences and especially from the direct interaction with the communities during the field visits. One of the main achievements of the conference has been in developing a symbiosis between workers and communities and that, as Faith aptly said, we are not enemies but co-sufferers and by supporting each others' movements we are not working against each other but fighting together against the common exploiters of the new economies of liberalisation, privatisation and trade deregulation. We have made our position very clear to the world, first in our Pact for Life and now in our Resolutions and Declaration of the Third International Women and Mining Conference.

The message of the women from all across the world who gathered at this third conference was finally released through a press meet organized on 10<sup>th</sup> October with all the participants addressing the Indian media and appealing to the public at large to pay attention to the communities and workers affected by mining. The Conference Statement and Declaration were read out to the press as the position of the International Women and Mining Network on what we want to demand from our nations with regard to gender justice and mining.



## Conference Statement

We are the **International Women and Mining Network** having members who are women affected and displaced by mining and women who work in the mines or live in the mining regions and human rights organizations concerned with the gender justice issues in mining. We have created an international platform for ourselves as our voices from the mine pits and from the remote hills, forests and deserts we hail from, need to be heard by the world all over to understand that extraction and processing of minerals has serious negative impacts on women and communities, which are invisible.

We strongly believe that this platform we have created for ourselves will help us reach out to each other from different backgrounds as women workers, as communities and as indigenous women to challenge the exploitative global economics, policies and mining practices. We want to collectively define our perspective of sustainable development and utilization of the world's resources and to rebuild our lives and identities, which are being destroyed by the mining industry.

Therefore, we have met at this **Third International Women and Mining Conference from 1st to 9th October 2004 at Visakhapatnam, India**, to renew our collective strengths and to emphasise our demand for gender justice and gender sensitive policies with respect to mining in all our countries. In togetherness we reassert our commitment to the Pact for Life to bring peace and justice for all our sisters and children suffering due to mining.

The Third International Women and Mining Conference has clearly brought out and re-emphasized the impacts of mining on women and children that we had identified in our earlier two conferences, with the only difference that the problems have grown in their intensity and scope.

The global and national policy frameworks imposing the processes of trade liberalization, privatization and deregulation pushed by institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and regional development banks, implemented by our weak and complicit governments at national and local levels in the interests of transnational corporations and the private mining industry have completely undermined the larger common needs and development of the society and the health of the planet.

From the experiences we have shared at this third conference, we state that mining has serious negative impacts on women's lives, livelihoods, social and cultural status, physical and sexual rights, ecological spaces, access to and control over natural resources, legal and customary rights and traditional knowledge systems. Mining has also generated serious development myths, which we challenge from the gender perspective.

We reassert our respect for the earth, our natural resources, our uniqueness, diversity and commonality. We want to lead healthy, peaceful and productive lives that will promote human well being and ecological richness. We want the participation of women in positive economic activities and sustainable livelihoods.

Therefore, our collective statement at this conference is:

Mining is an unsustainable industry and does not lead to economic and social well being of people. It forces a situation of unfair trade, economics, health and social relationships. Our experiences of mining struggles whether for the rights of women in communities or women in mine labour show how the State and the Mining Industry frustrate our social movements through diversionary (for example, corporate social responsibility), military or divisive tactics destroying the peace and well being of our people. Mining has also led to the

increase in communal conflict, violence, and corporate crimes.

Mining is one of the most unfriendly, masculine and gender insensitive industries toward women and excludes them from the formal and organized sector. Privatisation and liberalization have completely marginalized women in the mining industry by largescale retrenchment and denial of employment facilities to women. These processes are aggressively being implemented in almost all our countries.

Increasingly, mining is providing opportunities for women only as casual, contract and daily wage labourers and in the small scale, artisanal and informal sector where legislative protections do not exist. Moreover, women engaged in small scale and artisanal mining are being marginalized by the entry of transnational mining companies which are over riding community mining activities.

We state that mining is essentially a consumer and market oriented economy geared towards corporate profits and not for the larger development needs of societies as proved in majority of our countries. Many mining affected countries today have the worst indices of human development. Women in mining pay the highest price of human degradation for the extraction and enjoyment of minerals and metals by the world. The valuation of the world's minerals does not take into account these invisible human costs and subsidies especially that women and children pay.

Most women in mining communities are forced into illegal mining activities due to displacement, loss of access to natural resources and for lack of proper livelihood options when land based economies shift to mining economies.

Mining has not only marginalized women in the industry but also destroyed all other livelihood opportunities on which women have been dependent with respect to traditional land, forests and water based occupations. Thereby, it has led to the reduction in the social and economic status

of women, especially indigenous women as a result of forced transition from land based traditional systems to mining based economies.

The societal myth, induced by the mining industry that the world cannot live without the current scale of mineral extraction and production is highly questionable from our perspective of sustainable development

The mining industry is perpetrating prejudices that women cannot handle technology and that they have to be largely confined to the unskilled labour.

We are angry that the global mining industry is influencing many of our governments in the developing and under developed countries to amend our constitutions and social welfare policies and laws where ever they are to the detriment of private and transnational corporations expropriating our lands and resources. Many of these pressures are coming from international financial institutions and banks, especially the World Bank in the guise of economic reforms. All these 'reforms' have direct negative impacts on women mine workers, poor and rural and indigenous women.

Where communities and workers are rising against these lobbies, the international financial institutions and transnational corporations are denying their responsibility or withdrawing from projects without accountability and passing on these crimes to our national governments. This is unacceptable.

We dispute the industry's voluntary codes of conduct being promoted in lieu of legislative and judicial safeguards, especially the processes of engagement and dialogue through mechanisms like corporate social responsibility currently being practiced as they undermine the impacts of mining on women and do not address the basic issues with respect to their rights over lands, livelihoods, employment, safe and dignified life and working conditions.

Mining has had serious impacts on women workers' health and has caused irrevocable illnesses like silicosis, tuberculosis, asbestosis, chronic, debilitating, terminal and reproductive health problems which are deliberately suppressed by the industry, ignored and neglected by our governments.

Women mine workers are exposed to high levels of pollution, contamination and toxic substances at the work place and are especially employed in the more hazardous and polluting sections of the mining activities like processing plants and milling units.

Communities are forced to consume contaminated water with high levels of toxicity and thereby cause serious reproductive and life threatening health problems to women.

Participation of women in decision making roles is negligible whether they are women mine workers or women displaced or affected by mining.

Finally, we expect that governments, industries, international bodies and consumers all accept responsibility to this earth and to the women of this earth who are affected by mining.

## Conference Declaration

We, the International Women and Mining Network, which has substantial representation from indigenous women recognise that mining has had and continues to have a disproportionate and destructive impact on indigenous women and indigenous women mine-workers and their communities. We recognise that it is the experience of indigenous peoples that the exploration and exploitation of minerals and metals has brought serious social and environmental problems, so widespread and injurious that that such development cannot be described as 'sustainable.' Indeed, in the experience of indigenous peoples and especially, indigenous women, we acknowledge that the mining industry, rather than contributing to poverty alleviation, has created poverty and social divisions in indigenous communities, and continues to show disrespect for indigenous culture, customary laws and rights.

We, the International Women and Mining Network, therefore assert:

Commitment to, and solidarity with the Indigenous Peoples Declaration on Extractive Industries from the Oxford Indigenous Peoples Workshop held in April 2003, the Kimberley Declaration of Indigenous Peoples to the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 and

the International Labour Declaration Convention No. 169.

Recognition and respect for the call of indigenous peoples for a moratorium or ban new mining projects and the expansion of existing project that may affect indigenous peoples until all human rights are secure and until the respect for the rights of indigenous peoples is assured.

Governments, the mining industry, international financial institutions and existing international laws must recognise indigenous peoples citizenship and the collective rights of indigenous peoples and indigenous women to self-determination, including a secure and full measure of self-governance and control over the territories, organisations and the cultural development of indigenous peoples.

Governments, the mining industry, international financial institutions and international laws must respect the rights of indigenous peoples to their territories, lands and natural resources and that under no circumstances should indigenous peoples, including indigenous women be forcibly removed from their lands.

The rights of indigenous peoples and indigenous women to free prior and informed consent as

expressed by indigenous representative institutions must be upheld and respected and not manipulated by mining companies, international financial institutions, international law and governments.

That such consent is not a static one-off process but is required for the life of any mining project and should include:

- the submission of independent baseline studies, undertaken by professionals chosen by the indigenous peoples and women themselves on a proposed exploration or mining activity and how it will impact on the land, sacred sites and environment and the social, economic, gender and cultural rights of the indigenous peoples, especially indigenous women
- the submission of a mine closure plan, which identifies financial capacity, mitigation, remediation and precautionary post-closure measures and strategies that will be utilised
- the promotion by companies and government for conditions for the active participation of indigenous women in decision-making,
- the complete disclosure by companies and governments of all risk assessments prior to any project,
- the timely disclosure of information, upon demand, to indigenous women and communities in an appropriate manner and language,
- the respect of communities and women's own development plans by mining companies and governments
- the submission of a companies track record in respect of the impacts on local communities and especially women of a mining company in respect of its past and present operations prior to any new operation

- the provision of independent technical and legal advice for indigenous peoples, especially indigenous women
- the provision of information about the financiers and shareholders of a proposed project
- the recognition by governments, consultants, academics and the mining industry that indigenous women and communities have ownership and intellectual rights over their local knowledge and information

Recognition of the right of indigenous peoples and indigenous women to legal and customary ownership over sub-surface resources and, as owners, to share as equal partners in the benefits of these resources.

Households headed by women should be recognised and treated in the same way as households headed by men, with respect by decision-making and compensation.

Demand the establishment of independent oversight mechanisms for the redress of grievances, arbitration and judicial review, which are credible and accessible to indigenous women and indigenous communities

Companies must recognise that HIV/AIDS is not an indigenous disease and must provide HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness programs for their employees and for indigenous women and their communities.

We oppose mine development that compromises human rights and dignity and that appropriates and destroys community and indigenous culture and cultural property.



## Conference Resolutions

We oppose the present global economics and processes of liberalization, deregulation and privatization of our natural and mineral resources and challenge the paradigms of sustainable development which impose the current mining activities on our countries and communities and workers by the transnational corporations and national governments.

We demand that our governments and the mining industry admit the social, cultural, economic, livelihood, physical, ecological and sexual abuses on women and children as a result of mining operations and projects so far undertaken in each of our countries and demand that they take accountability and responsibility for all the losses and suffering experienced in existing and abandoned mines all over the world. We demand cleaning up of our lands, rivers, forests and compensation for our injuries, ill-health, proper rehabilitation for the loss of livelihoods, especially of women affected and women working in the mines.

We reject the mining operations of national and transnational corporations that destroy our lands, fragment our societies, displace our communities, perpetrate violence and conflict and influence the legal and policy frameworks in all our countries in order to gain access to the mineral resources. Therefore, from our gender perspective, we believe in harnessing our own resources and demand the withdrawal of these companies, where demanded by communities and that governments promote public sector or community/workers' ownership of mining.

We oppose the retrenchment and marginalisation of women mine workers and demand for their inclusion in the formal and organized sector and demand that they be protected by legislative, executive and judicial norms and safeguards in order to promote the full exercise of their rights to dignity of life, incomes and healthy work environment.

We reiterate the significance of indigenous peoples, especially indigenous women, their

cultures and knowledge systems and reject the present models of development being imposed on them through mining. The indigenous peoples must have a right to free, prior and informed consent with regard to the utilization of lands, forests, waters and other resources in their territories and to the choice of livelihoods and development activities with or without mining. We oppose the amendment of existing protective legislations of the indigenous peoples under the influence of privatization and transnational lobbies for exploitation of the mineral resources.

We support the rights of indigenous peoples and communities as owners and stakeholders to the mineral resources under their land and territories. If mining should exist communities must have priority and first right of exploiting the mineral resources.

We demand the recognition of artisanal, traditional and community mining where women play an important part, and that governments provide economic support, development facilities, technology interface, safety measures and market linkages to improve the condition of the women mine-workers and their environment.

We oppose the use of waters, oceans and lands for the dumping of mine tailings and call for a complete ban on riverine and sub-marine tailings disposal and mining in sacred sites, cultural lands and protected areas because they directly impact the livelihoods and sentiments of women.

Transnational mining companies must not be allowed to implement projects, use processes and commit violations that are prohibited in their own countries.

Where countries and communities have alternative economies to mining, we demand for national governments to support the priority of other land based economies that communities choose over mining. All communities must have the right to reject mining.

The revenue made by the mining industry should be made available or returned to the people to be invested back in the development of the local community.

We demand gender just and responsible mining in existing mines and where communities choose to have mining.

We demand for the right of women to participate in community decision making and for governments and companies to provide proper, timely and detailed gender disaggregated information for the entire project cycle from proposal to post closure stages, and the full disclosure of all risk assessments on demand. Women in communities and women mine workers should be given the right of reviewing the projects during the process of mining.

Governments must not allow closure or abandonment of mines without the industry first cleaning up and taking responsibility for rehabilitation of the workers and the community and the environment in a sustainable manner. Rehabilitation and compensation of communities and workers before and after mine closure should particularly include women whether with regard to land ownership, employment, alternative livelihoods or development activities.

We state that the mining industry is as legally and socially responsible as our governments are for the child labour directly or indirectly working in the mining sector and demand that they immediately abolish child labour while providing sustainable alternative incomes for their families and education opportunities for the children.

We demand for positive gender sensitive public policies and laws nationally and internationally which protect, safeguard and promote the rights of women mine workers and local communities. Existing laws and regulations that discriminate in respect of gender must be amended.

We demand that it be made mandatory for governments and mining companies to undertake

independent and periodical gender impact assessment and gender audits in addition to social impact assessments of mining projects and present these to local communities and public/civil society before any new projects are permitted.

We dispute the current methods of valuation of mining projects and demand that multi criteria analysis of mining projects be undertaken from a gender and ecological perspective and to provide for legal safeguards and guidelines for communities' consent or objections.

The international laws that protect women and provide for sex discrimination on the basis of gender must be implemented and enforced by our governments and applied in respect of mining.

We demand for the active participation and equality of women in the decision-making processes at all levels in the context of mining.

### **Resolution on Indigenous Peoples and Women**

We, the International Women and Mining Network, which has substantial representation from indigenous women recognise that mining has had and continues to have a disproportionate and destructive impact on indigenous women and indigenous women miners and their communities. We recognise that it is the experience of indigenous peoples that the exploration and exploitation of minerals and metals has brought serious social and environmental problems, so widespread and injurious that that such development cannot be described as 'sustainable.' Indeed, in the experience of indigenous peoples and especially, indigenous women, we acknowledge that the mining industry, rather than contributing to poverty alleviation, has created poverty and social divisions in indigenous communities, and continues to show disrespect for indigenous culture, customary laws and rights.

We, the International Women and Mining Network, therefore assert:

Commitment to, and solidarity with the Indigenous Peoples Declaration on Extractive Industries from the Oxford Indigenous Peoples Workshop held in April 2003, the Kimberley Declaration of Indigenous Peoples to the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 and the International Labour Declaration Convention No. 169.

Recognition and respect for the call of indigenous peoples for a moratorium or ban new mining projects and the expansion of existing project that may affect indigenous peoples until all human rights are secure and until the respect for the rights of indigenous peoples is assured.

Governments, the mining industry, international financial institutions and existing international laws must recognise indigenous peoples citizenship and the collective rights of indigenous peoples and indigenous women to self-determination, including a secure and full measure of self-governance and control over the territories, organisations and the cultural development of indigenous peoples.

Governments, the mining industry, international financial institutions and international laws must respect the rights of indigenous peoples to their territories, lands and natural resources and that under no circumstances should indigenous peoples, including indigenous women be forcibly removed from their lands.

The rights of indigenous peoples and indigenous women to free prior and informed consent as expressed by indigenous representative institutions must be upheld and respected and not manipulated by mining companies, international financial institutions, international law and governments.

That such consent is not a static one-off process but is required for the life of any mining project and should include:

- the submission of independent baseline studies, undertaken by professionals chosen by

the indigenous peoples and women themselves on a proposed exploration or mining activity and how it will impact on the land, sacred sites and environment and the social, economic, gender and cultural rights of the indigenous peoples, especially indigenous women

- the submission of a mine closure plan, which identifies financial capacity, mitigation, remediation and precautionary post-closure measures and strategies that will be utilised
- the promotion by companies and government for conditions for the active participation of indigenous women in decision-making,
- the complete disclosure by companies and governments of all risk assessments prior to any project,
- the timely disclosure of information, upon demand, to indigenous women and communities in an appropriate manner and language,
- the respect of communities and women's own development plans by mining companies and governments
- the submission of a companies track record in respect of the impacts on local communities and especially women of a mining company in respect of its past and present operations prior to any new operation
- the provision of independent technical and legal advice for indigenous peoples, especially indigenous women
- the provision of information about the financiers and shareholders of a proposed project
- the recognition by governments, consultants, academics and the mining industry that indigenous women and communities have ownership and intellectual rights over their local knowledge and information

Recognition of the right of indigenous peoples and indigenous women to legal and customary ownership over sub-surface resources and, as owners, to share as equal partners in the benefits of these resources.

Households headed by women should be recognised and treated in the same way as households headed by men, with respect by decision-making and compensation.

Demand the establishment of independent oversight mechanisms for the redress of grievances, arbitration and judicial review, which are credible and accessible to indigenous women and indigenous communities

Companies must recognise that HIV/AIDS is not an indigenous disease and must provide HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness programs for their employees and for indigenous women and their communities.

We oppose mine development that compromises human rights and dignity and that appropriates and destroys community and indigenous culture and cultural property.

### **Resolution on Local Communities and Women**

We, the International Women and Mining Network, which has global representation from women from local communities that are affected by mining or which may be affected by mining, recognise that mining has disproportionate negative social, economic, environmental, cultural and gender impacts on women living in local communities.

We, the International Women and Mining Network, therefore assert:

Where communities demand a moratorium on new mining and the expansion of existing mines this should be respected and upheld by the governments and by mining companies.

Governments and the mining industry must respect that 'local communities' does not just mean those living on the mining concession or leasehold area, but all those who are affected by the operations of a mining project, include those living downstream our the boundaries of the mine concession site.

Governments and the mining industry must prevent and recognise even the small impacts in communities.

Governments and the mining industry must respect the right of local women and communities to define what is appropriate development and participation for themselves and to develop appropriate timeframes for development.

Governments and the mining industry must ensure that all projects are gender sensitive and recognise conditions of women subject to social exclusion and traditional marginalisation.

Governments and the mining industry must ensure that there is active participation of local women affected by a mining project in decision-making and uphold their right to be heard and have their concerns taken into account in project design and implementation.

Governments and the mining industry must obtain the consent of female landowners and local community women to any exploration and mining activity. They must take direction from local women about the appropriate ways for ensuring that their views are heard and their rights are not violated throughout the life of any mining activity.

We believe that such consent is not a static one-off process but is required for the life of any mining project and should include:

That such consent is not a static one-off process but is required for the life of any mining project and should include:

- the submission of independent baseline studies, undertaken by professionals chosen by the indigenous peoples and women themselves on a proposed exploration or mining activity and how it will impact on the land, sacred sites and environment and the social, economic, gender and cultural rights of the community women.
- the submission of a mine closure plan, which identifies financial capacity, mitigation,

remediation and precautionary post-closure measures and strategies that will be utilised

- the promotion by companies and government for conditions for the active participation of community women in decision-making,
- the complete disclosure by companies and governments of all risk assessments prior to any project,
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- the respect of communities and women's own development plans by mining companies and governments
- the submission of a companies track record in respect of the impacts on local communities and especially women of a mining company in respect of its past and present operations prior to any new operation
- the provision of independent technical and legal advice for communities peoples, especially women
- the provision of information about the financiers and shareholders of a proposed project
- the recognition by governments, consultants, academics and the mining industry that indigenous women and communities have ownership and intellectual rights over their local knowledge and information

Households headed by women should be recognised and treated in the same way as households headed by men, with respect by decision-making and compensation.

Governments and the mining industry must not only consider the practical needs of women such as the provision of food and water, but also women's strategic interests , such as ensuring that men and women have equal men and women have access over the resources and benefits from the mine.

We demand for responsible mining both for community women, women workers and indigenous women where mining is already occurring.

## **Resolution on Women Mine Workers**

We, the International Women and Mining Network, which has substantial representation from women mine workers, from the formal, informal mining and small scale mining sectors recognise that mining is a masculine industry that has not been friendly for women mine workers and where women's work is invisible. The formal large-scale mining industry has low participation of women workers due to the family unfriendly working hours and locations, the discriminatory attitudes of many of those involved in the industry, unequal work and pay conditions and restrictive laws that unfairly inhibit the equal participation of women. However, the informal mining sector has high participation of women workers who depend on this sector for their livelihoods.

We, the International Women and Mining Network therefore assert:

Women mine workers must have protective labour laws, which safeguard them with equal pay for work of equal value, property rights in cooperatives and a safe and healthy working environment that is free of discrimination, violence and sexual harassment.

Women mine workers must have proper occupational health and safety laws and conditions with appropriate safety equipment and work clothing that is designed for women and the provision of proper rehabilitation, compensation and insurance in case of accidents.

Women mine workers must have active and equal participation in occupational health and safety committees, to investigate and ensure safe working conditions

Women mine workers have the right to have a mandatory women's committee which is recognised by the government and the company that has full decision making power for women's issues and concerns.

Women mine workers must have the access to paid maternity leave and child-care leave, breast-feeding

and creche facilities on site, the right to alternate employment during pregnancy and early motherhood where they are not exposed to hazardous substances and/or dangerous work, which could be a threat to their pregnancy or their child.

Women mine workers are entitled to the protections of the 8 core International Labour Organisation Conventions, including the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining.

Mining company policies and internal monitoring, evaluation and verification systems must have the active participation of women workers and ensure that management and all employees protect and promote women's rights and equality.

Governments must have and implement laws banning child labour and develop plans and programs for the progressive elimination of child labour in the mining sector, through education, training and the provision alternative means of livelihoods of the family. Mine workers must guarantee their children will not work in the mine.

The maximisation of employment opportunities for women workers in the formal mining sector must be pursued, not just in the traditional jobs allocated to women mine workers but training and transferable skills must be provided for non-traditional jobs. Women must have the opportunity for written examinations for non-traditional jobs, such as their blasting certificate or truck driving.

Mining companies must immediately cease the retrenchment and marginalisation of women mine workers, especially the contracting out of women's work and an end to the bonded labour.

Women must have standard retirement criteria and benefits.

Governments must extend the coverage of existing laws and measures to protect women working in the informal sector and implement them.

We reject the privatisation process and women being pushed into the informal sector

## **Resolution on Abandoned Mines and Mine Closure**

The mining industry has left a legacy of destruction, with thousands of mined out areas and abandoned mines throughout the world. Often, the mining companies have been able to simply abandon a mine, leaving tax-payers and local community men and women to live with the on-going social, economic, environmental, gender and cultural impacts, while women mine workers have lost their jobs and livelihoods, with little if any compensation.

We, the International Women and Mining Network, therefore assert:

Before any new investments and projects are embarked on - government, companies and development agencies must rehabilitate despoiled land and fragmented communities. All abandoned mines should be cleaned up and fully rehabilitated by the mining industry. Compensation for damages must not only be remuneration for economic losses but also reparations for the social, cultural, environmental losses that women have endured.

Governments should not grant a lease to mining companies without the company developing and disclosing the mine closure plan to communities prior to negotiation and consent processes. The mine closure plan should be developed and agreed with the consent and full participation of women prior to any mining activity occurring

The mine management plan developed prior to any mining should include a gender analysis that identifies the employment and development provisions for women in the mining operations and after mine closure. It should also set out how the project will impact on the social, economic, cultural and political rights, roles and responsibilities of women and how the company intends to avoid, mitigate and rectify these impacts.

Companies should post a cashable bond based on an independent assessment of the closure costs, which equates to the full costs of reclamation plus 15 % in case the government has to contract a company to do the closure, includes maintenance, calmer monitoring and water treatment, as well as pays for social economic impacts in the communities.

Mine closure plans should assess the economic impacts on labour after the project and provide for just transition of women mine workers and communities.

Companies must leave the mine site in the same state as how they first found it or better.

Updated closure plans must be submitted every three to five years and independently assessed. The cashable bond must be adjusted accordingly.

### **Resolution on Mining, Health, the Environment and Women**

The environment and health of women mine workers, local community women and indigenous women have been detrimentally impacted by mining activities for hundreds of years. Such impacts include the contamination of our rivers, oceans, land, fresh water sources and air through the toxic emissions of the mining industry. The influx of mine workers with rapid economic and social changes and the introduction of new diseases, new substances, including alcohol and drugs, migrant populations and sex workers, all have more pronounced impacts on and risks for local women, migrant women and women workers, who often bare the burden as the caregivers for the sick, food and water providers, home makers and wives and mothers.

We, the International Women and Mining Network, therefore assert:

We demand that all women, women workers, local community women and indigenous women have the right to a non-threatening healthy and safe

environment including emotional, spiritual, physical, cultural and sexual good health

We demand that the precautionary principle must apply in its most stringent form to all mining operations given the disproportionate impact of environmental and health impacts on women. Thus mining companies should bear the cost of using environmentally-sound technologies and should not use unproven technologies or methods that jeopardise the safety, environment and livelihoods of local community women. As a result:

- Destructive practices such as riverine tailings disposal, submarine tailings disposal and the mining of sulphide bodies leading to acid mine drainage should be banned as they disproportionately impact on women
- Companies must not mine in protected areas, such as sacred sites, Protected Forests, marine reserves and World Heritage listings.
- Companies, cooperatives and mine-workers in the informal sector must maintain a system of environmental monitoring of an area that has training for and participation of local community men and women and women mine workers

We demand that women mine workers and community women have the right to control the use, access to, the quality of, and the consumption of the water in our communities.

We demand the immediate cessation of the liberalisation and privatisation of our environment, water and natural resources and the modifications of the legislation that protect these.

We demand the implementation and enforcement of the environmental and health laws made by governments and all international environmental and health agreements and that violators are held criminally and civilly accountable in the national and international courts.

We demand the prevention of contamination, the clean up of wastes, compensation for damages

including damage done to the health of women mine workers and the community and the rehabilitation and economic recovery in mined out areas

We demand training on the health and environmental impacts of mining contaminants and the appropriate ways to protect individual health for women mine workers, local community women and indigenous women

We demand not only Environmental Impact Assessments but also integrated Social Impact Assessments that include the social, economic, environmental, gender and cultural impacts of mining on women workers, local community women and indigenous women

We demand gender impact assessments and audits on all new and current mine projects.

We demand that studies be carried out on the specific impacts of mining on women by unions, governments, technical experts and affected communities with the full and active participation of women

We demand that governments and the mining industry acknowledge that their operations and employees pose considerable risks to local community women, for example by introducing illnesses such as HIV/AIDS and spreading malaria through pits filling with stagnant water. We therefore demand the governments and mining industry take all precautions to avoid, mitigate and compensate communities for damages caused.

At a minimum, a company must ensure that it does not contribute to the spread of HIV/AIDS in any environment affected by its operations, particularly as women are the most impacted by the increased risk from HIV/AIDS that results from mining activities, by:

- providing basic HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness training for all staff, their families and the local communities; and

- developing appropriate HIV/AIDS human resources policies and programs to protect, support and provide for women workers and their families living with HIV/AIDS

We demand the compensation for women suffering from serious and chronic health complaints due to the mining activity, including local women and women mine workers suffering from silicosis, rheumatism, radiation, asbestosis, tuberculosis, lead, mercury and arsenic poisoning and other such conditions

We assert that mining is inherently unsustainable and that there must be more recycling and of metals at an international and national level.

### **Resolution on Conflict, Human Rights and Women**

We, the participants of the III International Women and Mining Network conference in Visakhapatnam, AP, India observe that mining policies, regulations and laws are flawed, have no gender perspective and insensitive in respect to the rights of women mine workers, women and families of mine-workers, community women and indigenous women.

#### **We, the International Women and Mining Network, therefore assert:**

We demand that our governments implement the human rights obligations that they have agreed to under international law in terms of women's rights and gender equality and all governments ratify CEDAW without reservation or variation

We demand that international financial institutions including the World Bank should recognise their obligations under international human rights law and not fund directly or indirectly mining projects that violate human rights and especially women's rights, and pro-actively commit to protect and promote the rights of women in all activities.

We demand that governments, international financial institutions and the mining industry make

transparent the granting of mining permits and concessions and ensure that there is no conflict of interest amongst the representatives of government and the mining industry.

We demand that the mining industry refrain from corrupt practices, making facilitation payments to governments and community leaders.

We demand that the mining industry have mandatory disclosure of their revenue payments to local and national governments for each project.

We demand that mining companies refrain from mining activities, where the benefits from their activities are being channelled into corrupt and repressive regimes.

We demand that governments and the mining industry must not utilise security forces and the military in the interests of the mining industry against local communities, indigenous peoples and mine workers

We demand that the activities of the mining industry must never help to perpetrate systems of oppression and exploitation.

We demand that mining companies refrain from operating in areas where they require the use of military forces, private armies, paramilitary, police or excessive security to maintain their operation as, in our experience, such situations result in human rights abuses, especially for women and children.

We demand an end to direct and indirect assassinations by mining companies and governments of trade union and other community leaders.

We demand the establishment of local, national, regional and international dispute and grievance mechanisms that are accessible to all, to hold to account mining companies for damages they have caused to communities, indigenous peoples and women mine workers.

We demand that countries must have legislation, which compels companies to make declarations on transparency and accountability, which will be monitored by independent national and international bodies and organisations.



## Annexure - Papers Submitted at the Conference

### **Shanti Sawaiyan - Forcible displacement & land alienation is unjust: Most of the forcibly displaced in Jharkhand (India) are Adivasis**

Displacement is painful for any body. To leave the place where one was born and brought up, the house that one built up with one's own labour can be even more painful. Most of all, when no alternate resettlement has been worked out and one has nowhere to go, it is most painful. And when it comes to the Adivasi People for whom their land is not just an economic commodity but a source of spiritual sustenance, it can be heart-rending.

A very conservative estimate indicates that during the last 50 years approximately 20.13 million people were displaced in the country owing to big projects such as mines, dams, industries, wildlife sanctuaries, field firing range etc. Of this, at least 40% are Indigenous Tribal People. Of all the displaced only one-fourth of them have been resettled. The rest were given some cash compensation arbitrarily fixed by local administration and then neatly forgotten.

Large-scale displacement without rehabilitation is unjust. The reasons are as follows;

1. Arbitrary rates of compensation: there are no standardized norms spelt out by the government for rehabilitation of the displaced resulting in arbitrary compensation without consulting the displaced community. A good example is in Pakur District of Santhal Pargana where one private (Panem) company which has been given license by the Jharkhand Government for mining coal, has announced its rehabilitation policy. It offers Rs.50,000 to the first acre of land, Rs. 30,000 for the second acre and Rs.20,000 for the third acre. The displaced persons were never consulted and there was no logical procedure for setting up rates of compensation.
2. Resettlement is not rehabilitation: resettlement means the Persons who are displaced are given alternate pieces of land for residence and/or cultivation and some cash for putting up the needed structures. What happens in practice is that people of one community are scattered in different places in the midst of alien, and sometimes, hostile people. The aspect of community, which is vital for Adivasi people, is destroyed.

Rehabilitation, on the other hand, implies that a community of persons/families who are displaced as a community should also be rehabilitated as a community. Their places of worship [Sama], the resting place of their ancestors [Sasandri], their common grazing ground, their cultural training center for the youth [Dumkuria], etc., are part of their community life and can never be transferred from place to place.

1. No displaced community has ever been rehabilitated. Rehabilitation includes not only physical resettlement but also other social, cultural and spiritual dimensions of the life of a people being displaced especially for adivasi people. This is some thing the ruling capitalist class, the policy-makers, the government administrators at the ground level neither understand nor appreciate. A historic precedent as part of Koel-karo struggle exemplifies this attitude. In 1984, a case against the dam was filed in the Supreme Court and the Court in its judgment told the government to first construct two model villages based on people's choices before being displaced. Till date there has been no rehabilitation but only false promises. Naturally people have rejected the dam.
2. 'Land for land' for the displaced adivasi has never been considered by the government, although it is a serious recommendation in the 'Rehabilitation Policy' of the central Government. The District-level administrators find an easy excuse by saying that there is no

vacant government land available. You take away land from the adivasi, you destroy him as a social being.

3. Jharkand Government does not have a Rehabilitation Policy in a place where 3.6 million Adivasis have been displaced and many more are going to be forcibly displaced due to the new industrial and mining policies. What comes out clearly is: "We need the resources in your land, but we don't need you".

### **Towards a solution**

It is not to say that there should be no displacement at all. Certain projects of national importance and public interest may demand certain amount of displacement. But the important guiding principle should be: The life-situation of the displaced families and communities should be better off after rehabilitation than it was before displacement.

In order to realize the above objective, the following norms must be adhered to:

1. Displacement should be avoided if at all possible, and if it cannot be, it must be as minimal as possible. Past experience shows that the government/project holder very easily decide on displacement without regard for the dispossession and impoverishment of the people to be displaced. More than the required area of land is forcibly acquired.
2. Prior informed consent of the people to be displaced must be obtained before displacing them.
3. Mining of whatever minerals must be done by people's cooperatives in scheduled Areas. This is in keeping with the Supreme Court's verdict [Samata Judgement, 1996], which prohibits Private mining in Scheduled Areas. Rather, the government should help in the formation of People's Cooperatives, register them as legal entities, provide the technical expertise and arrange initial capital from a nationalized bank.
4. The people are not just stakeholders, but owners of whatever minerals are found in their lands. They will excavate and they will sell to the Government/private company as an equal partner. This proposition may be difficult to digest in our capitalist society where the government assumes to itself the right of 'eminent domain'. But the validity of this claim has been established by some Indigenous Peoples in some parts of the world.
5. The consent of the Gramsabha should be obtained before making the acquisition of land in the Scheduled Areas for development projects and before re-settling of rehabilitation persons affected by such projects in the scheduled Areas. This is as per the 'provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to the scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 [4.i].
6. In situations where mines and factories already exist, a minimum of 20% of the annual net profit made by the mining company should be set aside towards the development of the villages where the mine/industry is located [Samata Judgment, 1996, paragraph 112-113], the people from whose land the mineral wealth is excavated should be the first beneficiaries in the monetary value that is generated.

To conclude, National Development should not take place at the under-development of some communities of people, such as Adivasis, whose only source of livelihood is their land.

### **Smita Rani Patnaik - Case Studies on the Impact of Mining on Social Status of Women in Orissa**

#### **About the study area**

Angul district occupies a place of importance both in the mining as well as the industrial map of Orissa. It has better communication and transport facilities as compared to other mining districts of the state. It is divided into 8 blocks and 1922 villages. As per the 1991 census, the female population was 466,136 and the male population was 494,901 in the district, which is about 3.41 per cent of the total population of Orissa.

During the last two decades a number of public sector undertakings such as NALCO, NTPC, and TTPS have setup coal mining projects in the district.

The huge migration of outsiders to the mines and industries for employment has contributed a lot in creating an imbalance in the socio-cultural values of the area.

### **Unwed motherhood due to casteism**

Urimila Behera is 35 years old, illiterate and belongs to an OBC (other backward caste). She works as a construction labourer in the mining region where she met Gopal Behera, another construction worker from a near by village. Falling in love with each other, they started living together for some days as Gopal had promised to marry her but did not. After a few months, Urimila gave birth to a male child and has since been abandoned by Gopal. The child is now studying at a nearby school.

Sukanti Sethi, daughter of Suresh Sethi, is 25 years old and has completed her 10th grade from a nearby school. She belongs to the Scheduled Caste community. She met Rakesh Behera of Dhenkanal district in her village, who had come to his uncle's house. Falling in love, they started living together for 2 years, before their marriage, when Sukanti gave birth to a male child. Due to family pressure Rakesh left Sukanti. Caste discrimination stands before their marriage as a barrier.

Now, Sukanti and her two and half year old son are living with her parents at Balisahi in a distressed and fearful state. She is still waiting to get social security.

### **Unwed motherhood due to migrant population in industrial and mining areas.**

Mini Bogo, daughter of Helen Bogo, is 29 years, and lives in Balaram Prasad, in the Banarpal block. Mini is illiterate and belongs to the tribal Christian community. She lives with her mother and younger brother.

Ramesh Bandra, of Singhbhum district of Jharkhand came for employment in NALCO. He met Mini in his field area and fell in love with her. Both of them married in an informal way at Mini's home with her brother and mother as witnesses. They lived together for two years after that, but, one day Ramesh left for Bihar and never returned. Now Mini and her one-year-old child are waiting for the return of Ramesh. She does not know how to contact Ramesh and has never visited her mother-in-law's house.

She does not have a BPL (below poverty line) card, ration card nor a voter identity card and therefore no legal status in society. She is now working as a casual labourer in the mines for her and her son's survival.

### **Sexual harassment at the workplace**

Khulana Nayak daughter of Baharati Nayak, at Turanga in Banarpal block of Angul district is about 30 years old and. She is also illiterate. Belonging to the scheduled caste category, Khulana was working as agricultural labour in Benudhar Sahoo's farm. The landlord took a fancy for her and she became pregnant. The child was still-born. Khulana could not able to marry the landlord because of casteism, as Khulana belongs to a scheduled caste (untouchables). The boy is a landlord and belongs to an OBC (Other Backward Class), so marriage was impossible between the two. A family member of the boy abused Khulana's father. They also threatened to kill him if he asks for the boy to be married to his daughter.

### **Sexual abuse within family relations**

Mamata Sahoo is a mere 19 years old. Daughter of Kelu Sahoo, she belongs to an OBC family. She has studied upto the fifth grade at the nearby school. She was forced into an extra-marital relation with her own grandfather and became pregnant. In the fifth month of pregnancy, her grandfather pressurised her to kill the child in her womb by medication. But, the abortion failed and Mamata gave birth to a male child, which lead to her grandfather leaving the village without

anyone's knowledge. She is now leading a miserable life with her 4 years old son.

Lily Sahoo, 20 years and daughter of Brundaban Sahoo is illiterate and belongs to an OBC category. She was forced into an extra marital relation with her own brother-in-law and gave birth to a male child. When her brother-in-law avoided her, she filed a complaint against him with the police and the Panchayat, but neither took any action against him. Her brother-in-law in walking with impunity but Lily is still waiting for justice for her child.

Nari Surakhya is an organization based in Angul district of Orissa and works for the rights of women in Angul district, particularly in the mining belt of Angul and Talcher where women face severe atrocities and abuses from companies, migrant workers, and from their own communities, due to the impact of mining. As part of this work NSS undertook a survey on unwed mothers in the mining belt of Angul and came up with several cases of single mothers.

### **Dr Satyalakshmi Komarraju - Movement Against Uranium Project - The Nalgonda Experience**

The Atomic Minerals Division (AMD) a wing of the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) of the union government of India, has been exploring for Uranium metal in Nalgonda district of Andhra Pradesh state for the last 10 years, as they have been doing else where. But only when Andhra Pradesh State pollution Control Board (APPCB) notified as is mandatory, a month in advance about the Environmental Public Hearing (EPH) to be held on Aug 19<sup>th</sup> 2003, that people came to know about the discovery of abundant Uranium reserves in the region. The massiveness of the project though given as a matter of fact and in a casual manner was mind-boggling.

The salient features of the notification were:

- 1250 tones per day mining as well as processing

- more than 1200 acres of land for mining and 800 acres for the processing to be acquired
- Rs. 5 billion as initial investment
- 50,000 litres per day of water use

What puzzled the people is the complete lack of fanfare that usually accompanies the launch of such a big project on the government side. Opposition parties also seemed to know nothing about the upcoming Uranium project. A few individuals, NGOs, Organizations etc. decided to pursue the matter further and as part of the exercise, the film "Buddha Weeps in Jadugoda" made by Sriprakash was screened by Samatha and Mines, Minerals and People. The reaction of the audience after seeing the film was one of bewilderment and sorrow. This film is a testimony of misdeeds and catastrophe wrought upon by Uranium Corporation of India Limited (UCIL) over a period of 30 years of Uranium mining and processing in Jadugoda. It also showed in vivid detail the callousness and the utter disregard for basic human values by UCIL.

This galvanized us into action; to form and to mobilize public opinion against UCIL. We decided to form an apex organization called Movement Against Uranium Project (MAUP) to deal with UCIL from various angles. We got divided into various groups to deal with different issues, such as

- Understanding the scientific and technical aspects of Uranium Mining and Processing.
- To undertake a detailed scrutiny of Environment Impact and Assessment (EIA) & environment Management Plan (EMP) of both mining and processing.
- To take up a sustained campaign through various fora such as multimedia, debates, discussions, talks at as many places as possible.
- Educating the local people on various aspects such as mining processing and track record of UCIL elsewhere.
- Tackling the UCIL and APPCB at Government level and with Legal procedures.

For e.g., APPCB troubled us by not giving the complete text of EIA and EMP, but finally gave when threatened to go to court. Infact one of our woman members, an advocate, filed a petition pointing out the mischief of APPCB deciding to hold the EPH in a remote and in accessible area with a view to prevent public participation. The court ordered the APPCB to hold another EPH at Mandal (Division) Head Quarters on the same day so that people are given a choice to participate at either of the places. Since the time was short many of us had to work over time to meet he deadlines as the strategy was to generate awareness among the locals in particular so that it would be rejected at the first step itself i.e. at EPH. Sensing the mood of the public the then opposition party called an all party conference in which, all opposition parties appreciated the MAUP efforts in highlighting the issue and in one voice appealed to government to shelve the project. The media, the news papers, the TV channels have positively generated a debate on Uranium Mining and Processing vis – a – vis development. In the process, a lot of credible information has come out on nuclear power and its feasibility in a country like India. People in the project affected villages started asking basic questions like:

- Why the company gave no information about the project to them?
- What about the harmful effects of radiation and who will guarantee that we will be safe?
- Who will save us from any mishap?
- What about the usage of water for the project when we are already having water wars?
- Is this project for people or government?

Women were particularly asking about the land related issues as it involved their very livelihood.

- Without land what shall we do?
- What shall we eat?
- What shall we feed our children with?
- Where shall we go?

They were apprehensive that their men folk may mortgage/trade their land for a job without consulting them

### **The Drama of Environmental Public Hearing**

The UCIL scripted the whole proceedings to suit its own agenda, paying no attention, whatsoever, to the basic Environmental & health issues such as the proposed site being well with in the National Tiger Reserve (Rajiv Gandhi Tiger Sanctuary) and being on the banks of largest fresh water reservoir (Nagarjuna Sagar Dam) and, foremost, the vital issues of potential health risks to the local as well as consumers of reservoir water, estimated to be 20 million people. All these matters are supposed to have been addressed in the EIA report but to the chagrin of the discerning public, no such study was conducted and no proper remedial action was proposed.

In fact the EIA report did not consider many important issues such as:

- No risk analysis was done
- No base line health data of the project affected people was generated
- No base line health data of the cattle and other animals was generated
- The impact of blasting and the increased movement of the vehicles was not assessed
- No proper listing of flora and fauna and rare species has been carried out
- No mention of proper engineered land fill to contain the radio active wastes that will be generated during the mining and processing
- No mention of even, let alone proper, maintenance of the 9 billion tones of radio active tailings, 20 years after the mining and processing is over

Right from the beginning the intention of UCIL was to down play the ecological and health aspects and to highlight only the infrastructure development and trickle down economic benefits that could accrue to locals.

Unfortunately, it is always the tribal areas and tribal lands that are taken over for mining purposes all over the world. The problem got accentuated because the mineral to be mined was Uranium. UCIL tried to exploit the poverty and ignorance of some of the local male tribals by

offering them jobs though fictitious, and fat compensations to their land, again not possible under state laws. All through this drama women were completely ignored and silenced by their men folk, even though it is women who bear the burnt of the displacement and consequent social & economic hardships, which they have gone through before, during the Nagarjunasagar dam construction, thirty years ago.

After facing total opposition from all sections of people particularly women, the APPCB in its wisdom, rejected the proposal to setup Uranium Processing Plant while conceding permission to the Mining Project, citing the reason of it being site-specific, obviously, APPCB puts nation's interest before national's interest.

Hence with this experience, we from MAUP demand that women participation be made mandatory in EPH. And also, prospective companies, be it private or government, should inform all matters regarding the project and the consequences to the local community with a sense of responsibility. The Pollution Control Board (PCB) should do their home work, that of proper technical and environmental evaluation of project reports and EIA & EMP before they set in the motion of public hearing process. The concerned PCB must also educate the people and inform, before hand, its assessment and opinion about the proposed projects in local language. Up till now the PCBs have been behaving in a partisan manner, siding with industry and Government.

It is high time PCBs functioned as autonomous and environment protection agencies. The spirit of public scrutiny and evaluation behind the new environmental laws mandating the preparation of EIA & EMP and their submission, in full, to the people in Public Hearing must be upheld and followed scrupulously.



## **Stephanie Wright - Mining and Women's Health: The effects Silicosis has caused amongst the Women of India- Article Review**

### **Introduction**

The aim of this Article review is to provide an information resource that creates and raises awareness of the devastating impact Silicosis is having on the Indian mining women workers. Silica sedimentation in the lungs is the result of prolonged exposure to airborne silica which is released when rock, sand, concrete and some ores are broken in mines, quarries, foundries, construction and sandblasting sites. This review will focus on a case study of silicosis deaths of women workers at the Pondicherry BILT Glass Containers factory, in order to highlight some of the impacts that mining companies and processing industries are creating.

### **What is Silicosis?**

Silicosis, one of the oldest occupational diseases, still kills tens of thousands of people worldwide every year. It is an incurable lung disease caused by inhalation of dust containing free crystalline silica. It is irreversible and, moreover, the disease progresses even when exposure stops. Extremely high exposures are associated with much shorter latency and more rapid disease progression.

Silicosis results in conditions such as lung fibrosis and emphysema. The form and severity in which silicosis manifests itself depends on the type and extent of exposure to silica dusts: chronic, accelerated and acute forms are all recognized. In later stages the critical condition can become disabling and is often fatal. A frequent cause of death in people with silicosis is pulmonary tuberculosis (silico-tuberculosis). Respiratory insufficiencies due to massive fibrosis and emphysema (respiratory tissue loss is not always present), as well as heart failure, are other causes of death. The major signs and symptoms include chest pain, coughing, increased sputum production, shortness in breath, weakness and fatigue

Free crystalline silica, SiO<sub>2</sub>, is one of the most common minerals in the earth's crust. It is found in many rocks such as granite, sandstone, flint and slate, and in some coal and metallic ore. The most common forms are quartz, tridymite and cristobalite.

### **Silicosis and the Women of India**

Work in mines, quarries, foundries, and construction sites, in the manufacture of glass, ceramics, and abrasive powders, and in masonry workshops are particularly risky. In particular the women workers of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Backward Classes of these mining and processing plants, are often exploited due to their socio-economic status, often succumbing to poor working conditions and minimal wages. It is important to note that many of the male mine-workers who have died from silicosis are leaving their wives and families not only stranded for income of livelihood, but leaving them with the fatal disease!

Cases of silicosis have been reported all over the nation of India including;

- the Glass factories in the Pondicherry region (a case study will be further explored discussing the fatal impacts this industry has had on the local women);
- the quartz mine of the State-owned AP Mineral Development Corporation at Elkatta in Mahabubnagar district (which was closed down in 1974, however, ex-employees and people of that area were exposed to high levels of silica dust for approximately nine years yet the disease still persists in this region );

The infamous Lal Kuan scenario, where Pali a village in the foothills of Arvalli, in the state of Haryana where by the stone crushing industry closed in 2001-2002, has left many of its ex-workers scarred by silicosis and death and yet there some mining still continues in this area ; there are a large number of stone mines in the Thar deserts of Rajasthan e.g. Jodhpur and Makrana regions, where thousands of women and

children unwearyingly work amongst the silica dust;

Sydapuram mandal, Gudur Mica Mining where the detection of silicosis TB is impinging on the mine-workers health of this area.

Altogether the statistical and epidemiological data on silicosis is very poor, especially in small enterprises and construction industry, where many workers are not registered. The above mentioned areas are only examples of affected areas where documentation has taken place.

### **Case Study**

*Silicosis deaths in Pondicherry, India: Women victims of lack of safety standards, World Socialist Web Site, published by the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), [www.wsws.org/articles/2003/jul2003.ind-j08.shtml](http://www.wsws.org/articles/2003/jul2003.ind-j08.shtml), July 2003, written by Kranti Kumara*

The article discusses the cases discovered amongst the women population who were employed in the local Ballarpur Industries Limited (BILT) Glass containers factory near Pondicherry where they participated in work related to the sand plant and batch house. It states that according to the press reports, at least one woman in every house hold [of the nearby villages of Ballianur and Arum-parthapuram] has been afflicted with silicosis and suffers from chronic chest pain, cough, breathlessness and loss of appetite.

The article recollects the events leading to the death of one young woman, Kavitha who died at the age of 22 years and describes her battle. As a young girl she left school at the age of 14 to assist her family with income, working at the Glass factory. Four years after earning a wage of Rs. 24 per day for 10hrs work she developed chest pain, coughing, loss of appetite, and fatigue. When medical attention was sought, she was misdiagnosed with TB and prescribed with medications accordingly. Her condition did not improve and she continued to suffer and work in the Glass Factory for a further four years, only to

aggravate her condition. When finally she had an acute respiratory attack Kavitha underwent expensive surgery which proved unsuccessful. Further surgery was prescribed to ameliorate her condition. The surgery not only added the extra burden of stress to the family but put them in severe debt! The surgery was unsuccessful and Kavitha died not knowing that the cause of death was Silicosis. One week later, another young girl from the Pondicherry region died with similar signs and symptoms, of which an autopsy revealed the cause of death to be Silicosis.

The deaths of these two young women led to further inquiries into the prevalence of Silicosis within their communities. There are many issues that are highlighted from this young woman's experience including;

- exploitation of child labour and illiterate and poor communities
- absence of unions for mine workers;
- inequitable accessibility to health care for mine workers;
- poor health conditions such as malnutrition, hygiene, lowered immunity;
- negligence of medical officers and health care facilities (i.e. incorrect diagnosis' and inappropriate treatment!);
- extremely poor occupational health and safety work conditions,
- lack of government and corporate responsibility to standards, workers' health, compensation for health problems, either at policy or implementation levels.

**Discussion - Common Health Implications**

The impact of poor mining can have a devastating effect exposing thousands of people to various hazards that affect not only individuals and communities, but the well-being of the states and the nation at large. The environment in which one lives and works affect ones personal health both direct and indirect ways. The National Institute of Health and Family Welfare provides an insight into the mining and extraction of specific minerals and their correlation with the prevalence of silicosis among the Indian mine-workers.

This data reveals a shockingly large amount of people affected by silicosis amongst mining communities. Women are further affected by silicosis, as decreased lung function affects all systems of the body, including increased reproductive problems (e.g, malnutrition leads to irregular menstration) complications throughout pregnancy (e.g, increased incidents of birth defects), and birth and post natal care complications (mother's mortality). The statistics further imply the need to address occupational, health and safety issues, and explore the options of compensation for individuals, women and families affected by Silicosis to support their livelihood and ongoing medical costs.

**Inequitable accessibility to health care for mine workers**

The article expresses concern about the accessibility of health care to unorganized workers, who are not provided with an ID badge that enables them free access to public health care services. RRDS's study indicates that ID badges provided by the mica mines of Kalichedu (AP) supports mica mine-workers by ensuring free health care only to the permanent workers.

The inaccessibility of health care for mine workers is demonstrated by the story of Mohini Devi, who died in 2003 after unsuccessfully seeking treatment three times after vomiting blood. Mohini initially sought assistance at Badapur dispensary. Upon being refused any form of consultation or treatment she sought assistance from Nehru Nagar Chest Hospital, however once again she was denied assistance. Finally, on her third attempt she was admitted to the Safdarjang Hospital, however she died soon after. The deceased's husband wrote to the Health Minister protesting the injustice suffered by his late wife

Minerals being Mined in India	% of affected workers
Mica	34.0
Lead	4.1
Zinc	30.4
Coal	9.3
Abestos	21.0

but received no response! Many such incidents have been documented, raising many concerns such as equality, fairness, and the negligence of the already inadequate services provided.

### **Negligence of medical officers and health care facilities**

As demonstrated in the aforementioned case study article, Kavitha was diagnosed with TB and treated accordingly. Despite the ineffective treatment, she was again treated for TB without any relief. Why was this not investigated further during her illness? Silicosis and TB, as diseases, differ in their nature significantly and as such the appropriate respective medications for the diseases likewise differ significantly. This also suggests a lack of understanding of the illness amongst doctors and also the vulnerability of the medical profession to the threats/bribes of the mining industry to deliberately misdiagnose the diseases. Specifically, greater information on epidemiology, signs and symptoms, pathology and diagnostic techniques does not exist. This is a globally recognized problem, yet as under-diagnosis and under-reporting has been identified in a study involving 3440 tuberculosis patients in a Brazilian hospital which discovered 119 undiagnosed cases of silico-tuberculosis in persons who previously were exposed to silica dust during their working life .

### **Occupational health and safety work conditions**

In India, a prevalence of 55% was found in one group of workers, many of them very young, engaged in the quarrying of shale sedimentary rock and subsequent work in small, poorly ventilated sheds. Studies on silicotic pencil workers in Central India demonstrated high mortality rates; the mean age at death was 35 years and the mean duration of the exposure was 12 years. The death of the two girls mentioned in the case study article is an example of constant exposure to free silica dust in the working environment. The WHO's Silicosis prevention recommendations for OH&S of dust control have not been implemented.

### **Exploitation of illiterate and poverty stricken persons and unorganized migrant labour issues**

Unorganised workers flock to mining areas where they can earn a small income. Large populations of migrant laborers settle close to the working environment in small areas, with limited access to basic amenities. Consequently living conditions are congested, and there is often a lack of clean drinking water. This creates a 'slum' living environment creating perfect conditions perfect for the outbreaks of infectious and communicable diseases, further debilitating the prospects of health and well being for the women and children.

The working conditions provided by the companies often does not comply within safety standards, by providing simplistic preventive measures by using modern machinery to minimize dust generation, and rock wetting prior to breaking/crushing. Therefore, often women forced into the poverty cycle, continue to swim amongst the dirt and grime unaware of the rights or too helpless to demand for better working conditions. Often, they are black mailed or manipulated into such working conditions which provides them with some income which is better than no income at all.

### **Lack of government and corporate responsibility in monitoring and adhering to National Mining standards, policy and laws:**

There are rules and regulations implemented in order to protect the workers from the health hazards in silica working environments such as The Delhi Factories Rule 1950, which outlines the safety methods for extracting materials from Stone or Any Other Materials Containing Free Silica. This includes damping the stone or other material being processed, providing water spray, enclosing the process, isolating the process, and providing localized exhaust ventilation. Such implementations have been neglected as indicated by the significantly high numbers of Silicosis cases amongst the mine-workers of India (refer to % in table above).

The case study article discusses The Indian Factories Act which implies the companies/industries responsibility to monitor hazardous work conditions, and rights of the workers. Monitoring and reporting of inappropriate operations are supposed to be administered to the Government. However, this is often not the case and illegal practices continue with little disruption. It is not until tragic incidents like Bhopal, occur that issues of malpractice are brought to light.

The Environment Act 1986, created post-Bhopal covers all aspects of the environment such as air, water and soil in order to encourage corporation/company responsibility to ensure protection against all forms of degradation and destruction of the chosen area. However, implementation of the Act has been of little avail, as there are many companies and industries which continue to practice illegally. Consequently severe silicosis and silicosis TB continue to affect mining communities due to exposure to harmful pollutants in the environment. Due to the lack of enforcement of such Acts and regulatory bodies such as the Ministry of Mining/Forests (state and national), Central Pollution Control Boards (state and national), Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Urban Planning and Development, Labour Departments, and Local Administrative bodies women and children continue to live in poor living with ill health.

The WHO has a Network Plan 2002-2005, whereby it has created task forces to help eliminate world wide silicosis. Of particular interests is Task Force 4 which has been assigned to the "Elimination of Silicosis" which includes updating agreements between ILO and WHO, preparing brochures for global publicization, development of simple dust control techniques, encourage establishment of a national silicosis elimination programs, development of training packages, preparation of a guideline on health surveillance of dust exposed workers, organizing international meetings exploring the relationship of TB and Silicosis, training of occupational health physicians and other experts, and other projects related to pneumoconiosis and asbestosis

### **Conclusion**

As demonstrated through the case study of the Pondicherry Silicosis deaths, women suffer significantly as a result of poor mining management in mines working with silica minerals. The impact on women not only affects the individual but the whole family unit, forcing health suffrage to continue. The prevalence of Silicosis cases is unknown in India as data and specific information is unavailable. Currently the lack of responsibility on behalf of the Government, private mining industries, is leaving unidentified workers to die anonymously.



# The Conference in the Indian Media

## Many women turn unwed mothers in Orissa coal belt

**Fusion of technology 'n' tradition**

By [Name]

Many women in the coal belt of Orissa are turning unwed mothers due to the fusion of technology and tradition. The women are facing difficulties in finding partners due to the changing social norms and the impact of modern technology on their lives.

## Foreigners learn lessons from tribals

By [Name]

Foreigners are learning lessons from the tribals in Orissa. The tribals have a rich culture and a strong sense of community. They are known for their hard work and dedication to their land. The foreigners are trying to learn from their experiences and apply them to their own societies.

## Govt should abolish obsolete Land Acquisition Act

By [Name]

The government should abolish the obsolete Land Acquisition Act. This act is outdated and does not take into account the current needs of the country. It is time to replace it with a more modern and effective law that protects the rights of the people and promotes economic growth.

## Meet to focus on women in mining sector

By [Name]

The focus of the meeting is on women in the mining sector. Women are playing an increasingly important role in the mining industry, but they are still facing many challenges. The meeting aims to address these issues and find ways to support women in the sector.

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## Meet on mining begins

**Women want network to share woes**

By [Name]

The meeting on mining has begun. Women are expressing their concerns and wanting to form a network to share their experiences and support each other. They are facing many challenges in the mining sector, including low wages and unsafe working conditions.



**protest exploitation by mining lobby**

By [Name]

The women are protesting against the exploitation by the mining lobby. They are demanding better wages, safer working conditions, and more rights. The mining lobby is trying to keep the women in a state of poverty and dependence.

Photo Exhibition on Women and Mining in India



*Travelling for over six months, Sonu Madhavan has painstakingly put together these photographs exclusively for the III International Women & Mining Conference. They say a picture is worth a thousand words. These pictures need no explanation as one sees the pain in a child's eyes or the unbent back of a women mineworker – there is dignity in these women. They don't want to be helped. They want to be enabled to help themselves....*

The Conference Crew



AP Tourism  
Beach Resort  
Bhubaneswar