

# ***Big Profits, Cheap Lives***



*Preliminary Report of Fact – Finding Study on working conditions in the Sand Stone Mines in Kota – Bundi region of Rajasthan*

***-Supported by-***

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## **Background of the Fact Finding Exercise -**

In July 2006, one journalist from Marburg, Germany approached ***Bread for the World*** (BftW) as the city of Marburg (North of Frankfurt) was planning to pave its city center with sand stones from Rajasthan, India and reportedly a mining company BSGM (Bundi Silica Group of Mines) was supplying the sandstones for this purpose. This company is actually a group of mine owners operating mostly in Kota – Bundi region of Rajasthan and is locally known as KR sandstones (Kanhaiya Lal Rameshwar Das). The journalist expressed his concern that the sand stones exported from India could be extracted with child labour and / or under exploitative working conditions. On his request, the Marburg city administration showed him a letter, in which the mining company assured that no child labour is engaged in the quarry. However, the journalist was not satisfied as he had heard about the violation of labour standards in the quarries and mines in India. Thus, he approached BftW, Germany.

In order to know the overall working conditions in the sandstone quarry and involvement of child labour / bonded labour, BftW requested Centre for Education and Communication (CEC), New Delhi, India to conduct a fact finding study in the quarries owned by BSGM.

Responding to the request from BftW, CEC consulted various local organizations like Mines Labour Protection Campaign (MLPC), Bonded Labour Liberation Front (BMM) and Matsya Mewat Siksha Evam Vikas Sansthan (MMSVS) who are working with the mining communities in Rajasthan and agreed upon the following terms of reference for the fact-finding exercise:-

### **Terms of reference –**

- ***To find out whether existing labour laws and mining laws are applicable to the workers in these quarries.***
- ***To look into the working and living conditions of the sand stone quarry workers.***
- ***To understand the nature and structure of employment, wage and characteristics of the labour market.***
- ***To highlight the plight of women workers.***
- ***To identify the prevalence of child labour and bondage in the quarries.***

The fact-finding team did the study in sites of BSGM in Kota-Bundi region for three days from 2<sup>nd</sup> November to 4<sup>th</sup> November and interacted with the workers, government officials, journalists, mine owners, labour contractors, doctors, trade union leaders and NGO workers. Along with this, a desk research to understand the dynamics of sandstone trade and supplement the findings of the field visit was also necessary based on which this preliminary report has been drafted.

Members for the fact finding team were:-

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2. Dr Sanjay Raj, **Mines Labour Protection Campaign, Jaipur, Rajasthan.**
3. Shri Hari Vallabh Megh wal, **Journalist, Aapka Sakshi Sandhya Dainik, Kota, Rajasthan.**
4. Mr. Abhay Xaxa, **CEC, New Delhi.**

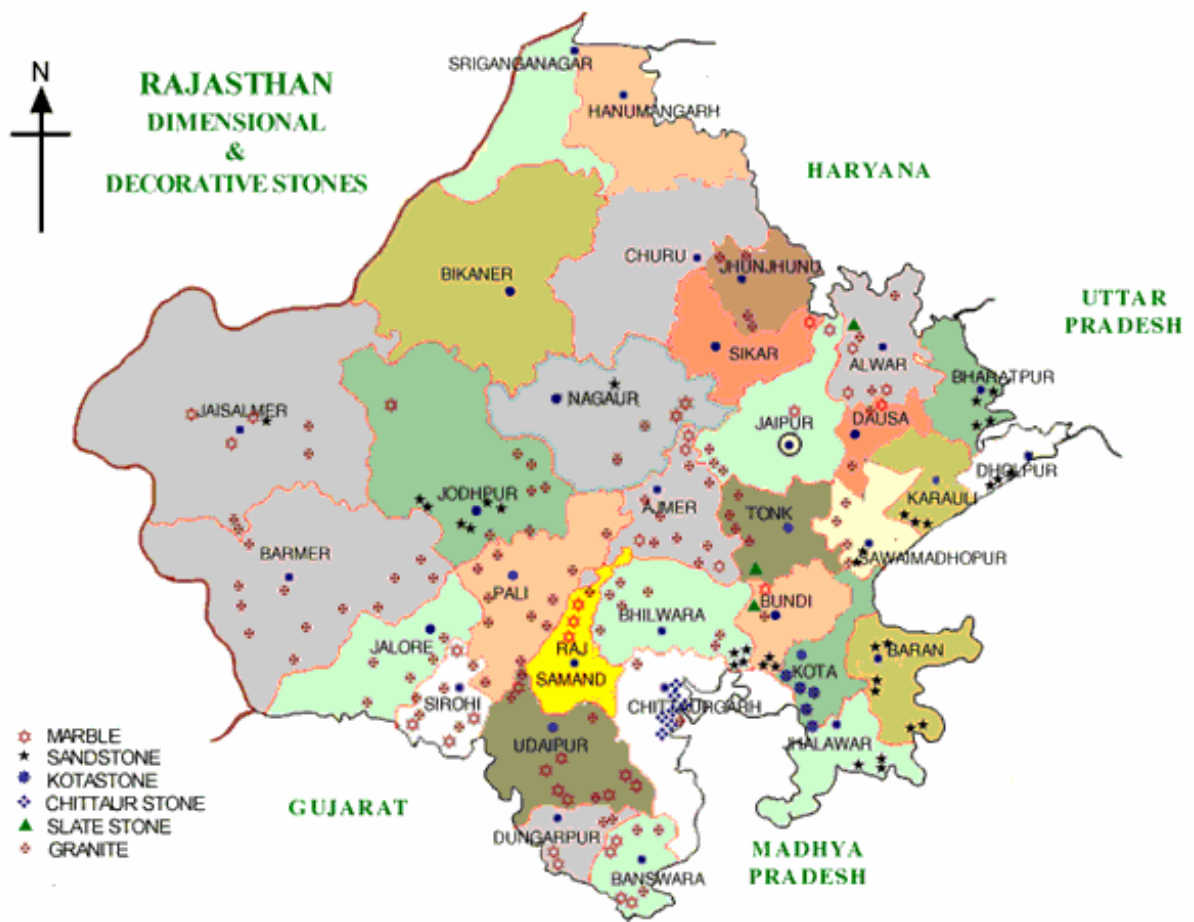


### **Background information on Sandstone quarries in Rajasthan -**

Minerals found in Rajasthan constitute 70% of India's mineral production. This state also produces about 30% of the minor minerals in India. The total value of mineral production during 2005-2006 in this state is estimated at Rs 75121.61 crores and out of this fuel minerals are estimated to account for 75 % of the total value, metallic minerals constitute 12 % and the remaining include the non-

metallic and minor minerals (*Government of India, Ministry of Mines, Annual Report 2005-2006*).

Rajasthan produces around 66 minerals, which are also exported in the raw form or after value addition. This state is the largest producer of Sandstone (classified under dimensional and decorative stones) which is made up of grains of quartz and other minerals and these grains are held together by a cementing material (which is generally siliceous). It constitutes a good building stone and is quarried and is especially useful for exterior covering. They come in various colours (red, pink, buff and brown). The Buddhist Stupas of Sarnath, Red Fort, Sansad Bhawan, Rashtrapati Bhawan are made of sand stone (*Department of Mines and Geology, Government of Rajasthan*).



The eastern and southeastern parts of Rajasthan is rocky and form a plateau of sandstone, shale and limestone. Sandstone is mainly found in the main Vindhyan and Trans-Aravalli-Vindhyan sequence, in an area of about 34,000 sq. km. It covers parts of eastern and western Rajasthan and spread over the districts of

Bharatpur, Dholpur, Kota, Jodhpur, Sawai-Madhopur, Bundi, Chittorgarh, Bikaner, Jhalawar, Karauli, Nagaur and Jaisalmer.

In the year 2004-2005, the total mineral production (major and minor) stood at 1385.39 lakh tones and in case of sand stone (minor mineral) it was 8382.15 tonnes. The total mineral production in the state provides an employment (as per official records) of about 5.06 lakhs and indirect employment to about 20 lakhs in the secondary and tertiary sectors (*Department of Mines and Geology, Government of Rajasthan*). The total number of mining lease granted to the sand stone sector is 1193 and the number of quarry licenses is about 11466.

The dimensional stone production in Rajasthan amounted for over 14 million tons in 1999-2000. Stone production in Rajasthan of various dimensional stones is as follows:-

	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
Marble	3025	3527	3441	3573	4279
Granite	55	56	52	46	50
Slate & quartzite	6	11	10	7	12
Sandstone	4106	4781	4915	5679	8368
Kotah Stone	1161	1179	2118	1428	1620
Total	8353	9554	10536	10733	14328

(IN THOUSAND TONS)

Source – Centre for Development of Stone (CdoS), India.

India is a leading exporter of stones and ranks third (in terms of tonnage) after Italy and China, with Spain as a close competitor at the fourth place as is illustrated in following Table -

<b>INDIA RANKS THIRD AMONGST STONE EXPORTING COUNTRIES</b>						
<b>(Thousand tons)</b>						
	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000
Italy	3121	3391	3438	3563	3508	3429
China	2218	2393	3095	3130	2568	3156
India	1197	1335	1346	2070	1724	1888
Spain	1409	1514	1497	1593	1586	1659
Others	7138	6940	7964	8835	9295	10673
World Total	15083	15573	17340	19191	18681	20805

Source – Centre for Development of Stone (CdoS), India.

India's position in the world export trade (in terms of tonnage) is:

- 3rd in world stone exports with a share of around 10% in the world market
- 1st in Raw Siliceous product (Granite & Sandstone) exports. India is a global leader in terms of granite exports and has consistently maintained its position
- 5th in Raw Calcareous product (Marble, flaggy limestone) exports.

Indian Stone Exports comprise mainly Granite Cut Blocks, Granite Slabs and Tiles. The share of marble, slate and sandstone are steadily increasing for the past few years. The major importers of Indian stones are USA, Italy, Taiwan, Japan, Germany and China.

### Export Trends:-

India is amongst the leading exporting countries of stones in the world, being a close competitor to China and Italy who are the leaders. Indian Stone exports amounted to Rs 34 billion in 2003-04, with Granite alone accounting for Rs 26 billion . Sandstones are fast emerging as a leading export segment with an 11% share in exports.

<b>STONE EXPORTS FROM INDIA (Million Rupees)</b>									
Product	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
<b>Granite and Products thereof</b>	10827	11388	9577	10130	16712	19540	20463	24606	26538
<b>Marble and Products thereof</b>	826	1035	1243	1111	1580	2362	2085	2292	1993
<b>Slates</b>	360	426	566	867	1101	1436	934	1391	1460
<b>Sandstones &amp; other stone products</b>	832	1401	880	911	1401	1530	2664	3502	4096
<b>TOTAL</b>	12845	14250	12266	13019	20794	24868	26146	31791	34087

Source – Centre for Development of Stone (CdoS), India.

### Findings from the field -

#### 1. Enforcement of labour & mining laws in quarry areas of BSGM:-

In India, the subject of mining completely comes under the jurisdiction of Central government and Labour comes under the concurrent list (central as well as the state government), as such there are wide range of enforcement



agencies as well as legislations which apply to the sandstone quarries. Since most of these quarries are operating in the forest areas, several laws related to forest conservation and environment is also implemented in the region. Some of the major legislations are listed as follows:-

- Mines Act, 1952
- Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957
- Minimum Wages Act, 1948;
- Bonded Labour System Abolition Act, 1976;
- Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986
- Inter-state Migrant Workman (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979;
- Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970;
- Workmen’s Compensation Act, 1923;
- Maternity Benefit Act, 1961;
- Environment (Protection) Act, 1986;
- Forest Conservation Act, 1980;
- Indian Forest Act, 1927;
- Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980;

**Minimum Wages Act, 1948** - The fact finding team found out that none of the labourers are paid minimum wages as per the amount prescribed in the official Gazette in any of the sandstone quarries. The labour department of Rajasthan Government through its official extraordinary Gazette (RAJBIL/2000/1717) dated 20<sup>th</sup> July 2004 has fixed the minimum wages for following category of workers:-

	Category	Minimum Wages	
		Per Month	Per Day
a.	Unskilled Labourer	1898 /-	73 /-
b.	Semi-Skilled Labourer	2002 /-	77 /-
c.	Skilled Labourer	2106 /-	81 /-

Source - Extraordinary Gazette (RAJBIL/2000/1717) dated 20<sup>th</sup> July 2004

The team interviewed around 20 labourers both men and women and found that they were being paid around 50 Rupees per day on piece rate basis, which generally applied to a period of 10 hours. The workers usually start work at 8 am and finish at 6 pm.

**Bonded Labour Abolition Act (BLSAA), 1976** – It was observed by the team that there are certain elements of indebtedness through “peshgi” (advance) system widely practiced in the stone quarries. Before the beginning of the mining season in September – October every year, the labour contractors assigned by

the mine owners start looking for labourers mostly in neighboring states of Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat and tie them with advance ranging from Rupees 5000 to 10000 to ensure sufficient labour force in their own mines. Most of the labourers were found indebted to the mine owners through the contactors. A Labour Department Official (working in a lower rank) was interviewed and he said “The practice of Bonded Labour is rampant all over the sandstone mines but the department cannot do anything because of the threat of the mining *MAFIA* and their nexus with the local politicians”. In Kota and Bundi districts, the Vigilance Committee for monitoring implementation of BLSAA is not formed according to the rules rendering them non-functional. All the members of the committee are government officials with no representation from any NGO as required by the law.

**Child labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act (CLPRA), 1986** – Part II of the CLPRA prohibits the employment of children in the mines (Part A of the schedule). The CLPRA makes it clear that the provisions of this Act shall be in addition to, and not in derogation of, the provisions of the Mines Act, 1952. The Mines Act, 1952 (section 40) says that “no person below eighteen years of age shall be allowed to work in any mine or part thereof”.

However, the visit to the area reflected that law related to prohibiting child labour is not implemented. There were a number of boys and girls around 12 to 14 years of age were found to working in the quarries. Since most of the work in sandstone quarries is done on piece rate basis and family labour is involved in loading and clearing the sites, many children were found working to support their parents in the quarry. While talking to some of the leading NGO’s in the area they said “We have been seeing young children from the age of 12 onwards working here for the last 10 years, the Government does not do anything. There have also been some informal studies and these have been submitted to the Government but nothing changes”. In the past there were several accidents in which children have died but no action has been taken. “There seems to be a nexus between the labour department and the contractors”.





**Inter-state Migrant Workman Act, 1979** – Migrant labourers from neighboring states of Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat are employed in large numbers in the sandstone quarries through labour contractors. Most of the migrants come along with their entire family from Jhabua district of Madhya Pradesh. They are largely tribals and had been coming to this area every year. They are bonded to the labour contractor. However, these agents were not registered as per the requirements of the Inter-state Migrant Workman Act, 1979.

**Maternity Benefit Act, 1961** – This legislation is also not implemented in any of the quarry sites. A number of women have been working in the mines for around 7 to 10 years but there was no instance of getting paid maternity benefits. According to the Mines Act, 1952 (Section 58) the Central Government has the power to make rules for the maintenance of suitable rooms (in the mines where women are employed) to be reserved for the use of children below the age of six years. Though there were a number of small children on the site no such arrangements were seen. In some places they were tied in a small make shift cradle in the middle of the working area, there were no special facilities at all.



## **2. Living and working conditions of the sand stone quarry workers:**

### **Health and safety conditions -**

Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) is a major area of concern among the quarry workers in sandstone mines of Kota and Bundi. No protection equipment such as ear muffs, face masks, shoes, helmet etc. was provided to the quarry workers by the employers. Such equipments are absolutely essential but were not seen anywhere. People, both men and women were seen working in extremely difficult and dangerous conditions all the time. A private doctor from a nearby dispensary was interviewed, where most of the labourers and their families go for their treatment. He said that malaria and tuberculosis were very common among the mine labourers in the area. Though the labourers have access to the local DOTS (Directly Observed Treatment, Short course) centre, they are unable to go there for regular treatment. Besides this, there is extra burden on women's health due to frequent pregnancies. Women do go in for the family planning operation but that is only after the birth of the 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> child.

Apart from this, Silicosis is a major threat to the lives of the workers but in absence of any basic health facilities for the workers, most of the deaths from this killer disease go unreported. Inside the sandstone mines and also in the periphery where the families of labourers reside, there was continuous dust and suspended small particles of stone in the air. Inhalation and deposition of silica particles in the lungs results in silicosis, which leads to pulmonary fibrosis and premature death (Health for the Millions, Volume 25, No. 4). But not only the quarry owners but also the government is least interested in ensuring proper safety equipments for the poor quarry workers. Lack of awareness coupled with poor economic and nutritional status worsens the situation. But what makes this “quarryman’s disease” in sandstone mines even more deadly is the fact that none of the public health centres around the area is properly equipped to intervene as a result of which patients are forced either to consult the expensive private doctors or quack practitioners pushing them into a vicious cycle of poverty and indebtedness.

The team looked for the public health facilities in the area, there were some primary health centers, but whenever a visit to these centre were made they were found closed. Finally, a medical doctor was interviewed who had a private practice in the nearby town close to the mining area. The doctor said “we have a lot of patients from the area, who come for treatment for missing fingers and limbs. A number of small and large accidents take place in the mines however, recently no one has died. The accidents occur during loading or unloading the stones or chiseling the stones”. Answering the question as to what were the common ailments the doctor said, “Mostly people suffer from tuberculosis, various skin ailments and of course silicosis and the life span for the people here is not very long. Men and women do not live beyond 50 years of age”.

It was observed by the team that majority of the quarry workers were in the age group of 12 – 30 years and none of the workers in the quarry was beyond 35 years of age. Considering the kind of work involved, it is expected that aged people may not be able to work in the mines but 30 years of age is too small for a person to end his economic life. When inquired, one of the labourer told that people become very weak after crossing 30 years of age and most of them suffer from serious ailments and become unfit for quarry work. Hence the life of a quarry worker which starts as early as 14 years (or perhaps earlier) is restricted to around thirty years of age beyond which he is rendered useless.

The labour colonies where the labour lived were within the principal core zone of the mining area. Hence the mineworkers are forced to continuously live in these highly polluted atmospheric conditions, around the year.



Along with this, there was no provision for supply of clean and safe drinking water within the mining area. Workers opined that they drank water from open wells, the other sources were very far away, if at all available.

There are no regular medical check ups of the mine workers. When asked they said that they themselves provide first aid to the others, otherwise they have to rush them to Kota (about 40 kms from the mining area) for any casualty and several workers have died on the way. The road to Kota is extremely treacherous and very difficult to travel on.

#### **Living conditions –**

The houses in which the workers live are located within the precincts of the mining area and there is no electricity, sanitation or clean drinking water facilities available for the families of the workers. The height of the tenements in which the workers lived was around 6 feet high and each room accommodating around 6 to 7 persons was about 100 sq ft in size. The food is cooked outside in a very dusty atmosphere as there was no space for kitchen within the house.

A visit to a banjara village called “Pilava” was made where the entire village population worked in the mines. It was found that the living conditions there



too is very poor, characterised by high degree of illiteracy, poverty and ill health. Some of the families have been working in the mines since the last 10 years .

The major tribal communities working in the area are Bhils, Banjaras and Kalbheliya. These tribes work in the mines and are contacted through the local labour contractors based in the village. Besides this there are a number of migrant labour from other states like Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Bihar.

The three main villages of Kota in which a large number of mining takes place is Dabi, Dhaneshwar and Budhpura. Most of the labourers whom the team met were from these areas and they migrate to the mines after Diwali (festival of lights, usually held in the month of October) upto the end of May every year with the entire family. The main reason for migration was the lack of work and single crop cultivation in their area. They go back to their villages and are involved in agriculture during the rainy seasons as the mines also remain closed during this season.

#### **Educational facilities -**

While some of the workers said that they send their children to the Government primary school at Piliya, however, during the field visit (working day) the school was found closed. A visit was also made to a middle level school in Rajpura, there were around 11 staff members (of which 6 were teaching and 5 were non-teaching support staff, there was no trained science teacher) and about 400 children were enrolled. The staff as well as the principal was well motivated but they expressed a lot of difficulty in enrolling children from the Bhil, Banjara and Kalbheliya communities. The staff was less than what was required for proper functioning. The mid-day meal was a motivating factor to ensure good attendance in school. The teachers themselves say that a number of children are not attending school as parents leave for work around 8 am and the school only starts at 10am hence the parents are forced to take the small children to the work site and the older children are there to look after the young ones at the mines. One of the senior teachers said "We would like all the children to come to school but this gap between 8 am to 10 am is a big problem, small children cannot even be kept in the Anganwadi which also opens only at 10 am, so the mother takes the small children with them to the site and many of the older children who cannot stay alone from 8 am to 10 am also end up joining their parents in the site". "On one hand we want to fulfill the objective of 100% enrollment but on the other hand, these are the problems". The tribal children from the nearby areas also find it very difficult to attend the school regularly. All children appeared malnourished.



**Families of Sandstone quarry workers** - The average family size was around 9 with 6 to 7 children per family. Often the mother had lost two children at birth or when the other children were very young. Early marriages in the age group 6 to 7 years was rampant. Now such early marriages are rare but, marriages usually take place when a girl is around 12 to 14 years of age and boys are a year or so older. We met some girls working in the mines who were married at around age 5 or 6 but they are still living with their parents and will go to their in-laws house only after she attains puberty.

The “nata system” is common. If a woman loses her husband she is forced to live with the younger or older brother of her husband and his family. The woman has no say in this at all. It is understood and accepted. During the visit to the area it was observed that in few families middle aged women had very small children and they were basically from the second marriage. Children were born at home but if the midwife detected that there was a problem then they were advised to go to the hospital in Dabi.

**Status of Below Poverty Line (BPL) card holders -**

In India the Public Distribution System (PDS) is charged with the responsibility of providing the poor households with food grains at subsidized rates for ensuring food security. The PDS is a joint responsibility of both the central and state governments. BPL cards are issued to those households whose income falls below a specified norm. A number of families in the sand

stone quarry area were asked if they had BPL cards. But none of them had it. It is important to note that many family heads approached the concerned government officials and applied for BPL cards but they faced a lot of difficulties and were not successful in getting the cards issued in their names. Therefore, none of the families had access to the food items meant for the poor households.

#### **Prevalence of Child labour in the quarry -**

Most of the workers in the mines are between 12 and 30 years of age and many of them are less than 14 years, which is clearly prohibited under the Child Labour (Prohibition and Abolition) Act of 1986. However, not a single case has been filed by the labour department against an employer for employing a child. Recently officials of the labour department conducted a raid after the Supreme Court direction on child labour and 200 children were released from the site but still no case has been filed on the employer. This would anyway be a tip of the iceberg as the number of children working from the migrant communities who came there and work during the months - November to May was still unknown. One of the NGOs that the team met said that "We have been working here on children's rights for a long time and the condition of the children here is very bad. We have tried to talk to the Labour Commissioner but there is no sympathy. It is important to note that the Labour Commissioner has not been either transferred out or changed for more than 10 years. Government is very apathetic"

#### **Nature and structure of employment, wage and characteristics of labour market-**





Mining is the main occupation for the poorest communities particularly the tribals from the adjoining districts as well as from neighboring states of Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat. Although agricultural activities provide seasonal employment, this is far from adequate and in spite of the very difficult conditions of work in the mines, it provides a constant wage to the worker which agriculture does not provide. Hence, these communities are forced to migrate to the mining areas.

Contrary to the marble mines, sandstone mines are largely based on manual labour, however machines and tractors are used in certain areas only for lifting and transportation. The rest of the activities which includes clearing of the dust and the small and useless pieces of stone, grading, breaking and carrying stones is all manually done.

Some mines in which most of the processes were done by large Tata-Hitachi cranes were also visited. In such quarries the number of labourers employed was much less and it was suggested that the wastage in terms of unused stone was also less. While talking to some of the people it was found that if machines are used to cut the stone and pick it up in the trucks ready for transportation, there would be higher profits and less wastage. But these high-tech machines generate finer dust particles which remain suspended in the air for longer periods and therefore more easily inhaled by the quarry

workers exposing them to serious diseases like silicosis, tuberculosis and bronchitis.

The government rate for leasing 1 hectare land for sandstone quarrying activities is Rs 23000 annually for the first 5 years and after 5 years there will be a reassessment and a revised rate will be put in.

There are many of the small producers who only produce for the local market. The main profiteers are the traders who do not produce at all but live in the big cities and do trading through samples for bigger orders. All that they do is making phone calls and finalising the orders.

The quarry workers explain that there are a lot of casualties during blasting and even more when the transportation is done. In many cases, trucks are overloaded - prone to accidents and a lot of workers sit on the top while it is being transported and are killed or seriously injured when accidents occur. A number of people have lost their fingers, hands and some casualty also takes place at the quarry sites.

### **Wage structure –**

For the unskilled labourers, the wage structure is in a piece rate basis hence families work together. They get paid at the rate of loading 1 tonne of waste onto the tractor at the rate of Rs 10 per tonne. Each tractor is able to load around 6 to 7 tonnes. Calculating this, each worker gets around Rs 35 per day.

For the workers who are semi-skilled, they earn around Rs 100 to Rs 200 per day for cutting the sand stone. The rate is calculated at the rate of Rs 2 per feet of the sandstone.

In case of migrant labourers, usually the labour contractors give them an advance ranging from Rupees 5000 – 10000 before the beginning of the season either at their native place in Madhya Pradesh or once they reach in the site in Kota. The contractors complain that many labourers come and ask for advances for different purposes. The workers then work in the quarries to pay back their advances. The contractors make advance payments to the workers whenever they need it. In some cases a worker works on a daily wage basis. He comes and works for a day and leaves in the evening after receiving his daily wages. Thus, there is no consistency in terms of the mode of payment. Workers have no insurance facilities. The labour contractor takes no responsibility towards the worker.

### **Plight of women workers -**

The names of women workers who were working in the quarries are not entered in the employer's register and the reason given is that as they are unskilled and are involved only in clearing the site and as headloaders. They do not appear as workers at all, and are seen only as a part of family labour. In spite of working and carrying heavy stones on their heads and loading it onto the tractors, their work is not recognised. They earn only Rupees 35 - 40 per day, and it was found that only very young women were working in the quarries right from the age of around 12 years. There were no older women in the work site.

In an interview with activist from a local NGO, it was found out that several women labourers are raped or sexually harassed by the labour contractors but nobody can raise their voice against such atrocities because the mine owners operate like a *MAFIA* and do not let any news come to light and try to suppress a lot of the information. They indicated that there was a lot of corruption in the Labour Department, which is entrusted with the responsibility of monitoring the implementation of the labour laws. This was the reason why the Labour Commissioner who was a woman had not been transferred for a really long time and that the whole situation for the poor labourer is hopeless. Women were in a really difficult state and they were at the total mercy of the contractors. Many were young and carried heavy loads on their heads and worked in the open with temperatures in the area going up to even 45 degree Celsius.

### **Recommendations:**

- The government needs to set up a 'Mines monitoring cell' immediately which should have some members from the labour department (state government), the health department, trade unions, police, NGO activist etc. A report of this committee should be submitted every month and the Collector should be the head of this committee.
- A code of conduct incorporating welfare of labourers, local communities and environment protection in the sand stone industries must be formulated and strictly followed to ensure good and sustainable practices of trade in this export oriented sector.
- Immediate and proper implementation of minimum wages should be ensured at any cost. If the minimum wages prescribed by the government are not paid, the labourers have no choice and are trapped into vicious cycle of debt leading to bondage in the quarries. Along with this, there should be an immediate revision of minimum wages for unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled labourers so that their income is sufficient to cover all basic needs of their families as well as their work is also appropriately remunerated.

- The authorities should properly enforce legislations applicable for quarry workers. Women workers should be provided with maternity benefits and proper educational facilities for the children of workers.
- Vocational training programmes for youth in quarry related technology such as driving, carpentry etc or other related skills must be added to the entire programme so that the youth will have an opportunity to be exposed to other skills also. Employers should be made responsible for providing them alternative employment.
- A study of the area from where migration takes place must be conducted to address some reasons for migration so people are not forced to work in these difficult and exploitative situations.
- Special emphasis needs to be put on educational facilities to ensure that all the children are able to go to school. Crèches along side the work sites and strengthening of the Anganwadi programme needs to be provided to take proper care of small children. Under SAA program (Sarva Siksha Abhiyan), the government ensures 100% enrollment however in this area it is not implemented anywhere.

For most of the quarry labourers, mining is the only livelihood option but they don't want their younger generations to work in the quarries. As an alternative to quarrying, one option could be cattle rearing and dairy as there is good water grass available in abundant and there is also a possibility to develop this alternative livelihood venture.

It is difficult to say if mechanization would be the long term solution. As even now it can be seen that the big factories and companies are using large amount of mechanization which is not labour intensive. It is only the small contractors that use labour because it is cheaper. There is no enforcement of the rehabilitation of the land itself which is a major problem. The land used for mining should be refilled with the rubble which is removed and then forestation should be done on top of this.

However a multi-pronged strategy is what is necessary, on the legal side, trying to book erring employers who employ children, providing better services to women and crèche facilities for children also ensuring that all children from the families and the villages around who work in the mines do go to school. Ensuring the implementation of labour and other laws could go a long way towards changing the plight of the workers. Special health facilities for women are also crucial.

There are NGOs in the area that are working with the communities and the children but their work need to be strengthened.

A link between NGOs and trade unions in the area is important.

There is also a need of appropriate media strategy to highlight the plight of quarry workers as several stories of exploitation and injustice remains unreported due to fear of the quarry MAFIA. In order to draw the attention of government agencies and policy makers towards the problems of quarry workers, a focused media campaign needs to be initiated in this direction.