

Case Study No. 15, written by Rana Sengupta, 2007

Plight of Women in Jodhpur District's Mining Communities: A Case Study of Women in Mining Camps, Rajasthan, India

Overview

This case study looks at the plight of the women living and working in the mining camps of Jodhpur district, in the state of Rajasthan, in Northwest India. Indian society is traditionally patriarchal, and across castes, classes and regions Indian women are almost always marginalised by the male-dominated system. But the female population of the mining camps of Northwest India are especially hard done by, and the male segment of the community, especially the power elite and mine owners, feel that they can mistreat and abuse them with total impunity. Our research team set out to gain a deeper insight into this grim reality by holding interviews with local women. Below are our findings.

Background

On a sweltering day at the end of April, our team of four researchers, including myself, set off along a dusty track that lead to the a handful of mining villages, where the desert meets Jodhpur city, in India's Northwest state of Rajasthan. Representing different NGOs, we were to undertake a series of interviews with local women to gain an insight into their experience living and working in and around Jodhpur district's mining settlements and mines (see **Box and Maps on page 2**).



A desert beauty of Rajasthan. Courtesy of www.actionaidindia.org.

During the length of the survey, all of us were overcome by feelings of sadness and outrage, as woman after woman bared their souls, telling stories of hardship, persecution and inhumanity. Despite the sensitive nature of this study, our aim was to remain as objective as possible, and produce a report that raised local and international awareness on the plight of the female population of Jodhpur's mining communities. Following two case studies illustrate the situation.

Summary of Issues

- Since time immemorial, women have suffered unimaginable injustices in India's mining settlements, being sidelined by the male-dominated community who persecute them with impunity and total disregard for the women's rights and dignity.
- The women living in the mining camps just north of Jodhpur are no exception, and this case study highlights their plight, having to deal with sexual abuse and violent attacks on a daily basis coming from all quarters of the male population.
- Comparing two neighbouring mining camps, we see that thanks to an initiative to issue all workers with official working cards, the living standards are vastly better in one, while the other sinks further into poverty, disrepair and moral decay.
- Despite these differences, both villages suffer equally from an epidemic of violence and sex-based crimes against the female population, who accept it with neither complaint nor recourse.



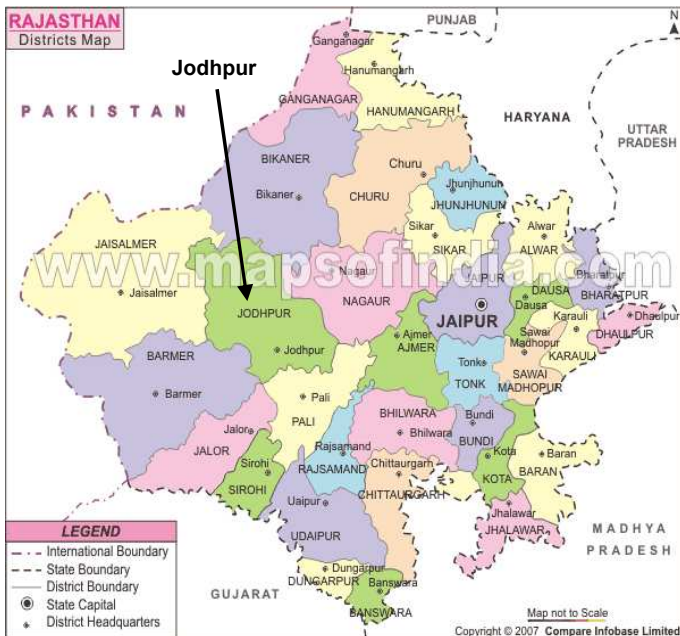
Map of the state of Rajasthan located in Northwest India, on the border of Pakistan.

An Overview of Jodhpur District

Jodhpur District is a district of the state of Rajasthan in north-western India. The historically significant and stunning city of Jodhpur is the administrative headquarters of the district.

The district is bounded on the north by Bikaner District, on the northeast by Nagaur District, on the southeast and south by Ajmer District, on the southwest by Pali District, and on the west and north-west by Jaisalmer District.

Jodhpur is the historic center of the Marwar region. The district contains Mandore, the ancient capital of the Pratihara Rajput kings (6th-13th centuries), and the Pratiharas' temple city of Osian. Jodhpur was founded in the 15th century by Rao Jodha, and served as the capital of the kingdom of Marwar under the Rathore Rajput dynasty until after Indian Independence in 1947.



Map of Jodhpur District located in the central west of Rajasthan.

Case Study 1 - The story of T* in Bhat Basti

A Cruel Existence

Forty-five years old and a married woman, T* has been living in the illegal slum settlement, Bhat Basti, for the past 16 years. Squeezed into a strip between a major road and a local mine, this cramped mining village is made up of a cluster of tiny houses occupied by fifty families. Made out of dry rocks, with no doors and bare on the inside, these houses offer little protection from the harsh elements - dust clouds blow in from outside coating everything in sight, and soaring temperatures turn the rock houses into ovens, making life unbearable.

There is no access to clean water or sewage treatment facilities, with pools of dirty water, human excrement and other waste clogging up the narrow alleyways. Although there are few places to get clean water, bottles of alcohol fill the shelves in many family-run grocery stores, explaining the chronic alcohol problem plaguing the area. Despite frequent mine-related accidents, and widespread illness caused by the miserable conditions, the nearest medical clinic is more than 6 km away. With limited transport options and bad roads, the residents of Bhat Basti often have to walk all the way to the clinic, often while sick or injured.

In interviews, T* talked about her life story, telling us what her life was like before she moved to Bhat Basti. She explained that she used to make a reasonably good living as a bail gady, someone who sells assorted goods transported on the back of an ox. When a number of well-stocked shops opened up in her area, however, she lost many of her customers and her business quickly lost money. The knockout blow came when her ox died, and she was forced to look for another job.

Since her family couldn't afford to give her a formal education, and she had no vocational training, she didn't have any skills. With no where else to turn, she made her way to the local mines and begged the managers to give her a job. But T* never imagined that her life in the mines would be full of so much suffering, and that she'd live in constant fear.

Fear came in so many forms, but the most sinister was the constant threat of sexual abuse by male mine workers. In a desperate attempt to protect her daughters from marauding night prowlers, T* would guard the entrance of their stone hut, sleeping on the ground outside while her teenage daughters slept inside. Usually the most aggressive offenders were the mine contractors or supervisors who sped through the settlement's alleyways in their trucks at night, drunk and unruly, and looking for easy victims to sexually abuse. Drowning out the chirp-

ing night insects, the sound of their blaring truck horns signified imminent danger.

Unfortunately, this peril didn't end with daybreak, and the nightmare continued for T* and her daughters, and the rest of Bhat Basti's female population. Sadly T* and her family are trapped in a societal bubble where negative forces such as poverty and hopelessness breed aggression, alcoholism and corruption.

Often supported by shady government officials, the local power elite trample the impoverished community into submission, making them do backbreaking work for pitiful incomes. Mine owners and supervisors often adopt the brutal tactic of using violence and sexual abuse to both satisfy their depraved desires, and also to crush the women's dignity and take away their self-worth so they're easier to exploit.

Although most mine labourers get paid meagre salaries, wage rates are divided along gender lines, with women earning far less than men. Both men and women toil away in the opencast mines twelve hours a day, from 7am and 7pm, with an hour off for lunch at midday. They work seven days a week, with only one unpaid day off every month, but this is only because local customs forbid anyone to touch heavy tools during a new moon phase.

Usually men work in the quarry pits, extracting stones, and women work as porters, stacking the stones on top of their heads, hauling them to waiting trucks and loading them into the truck's carriage. While men are paid about INR 100 (AUD 2.40) for a day's work, women usually earn a fraction of this, at INR 40 (AUD 0.96) a day.

“Mine owners and supervisors often adopt the brutal tactic of using violence and sexual abuse to both satisfy their depraved desires, and also to crush the women's dignity and take away their self-worth so they're easier to exploit.”

Mine operators justify this pay scale by saying that the men's work is more labour-intensive and there is much more risk involved. The stone-crushing machinery used to pulverise the stone into pieces churns out clouds of silica powder, and if the male labourers inhale this dust for long period of times it can cause silicosis (see **Box on**

Continued from page 3 - Case Study 1 - The story of T* in Bhat Basti

page 4). Silicosis is linked to severe respiratory diseases, often resulting in premature death.

This is a flawed argument, however, as the women's duties are just as gruelling, and they too are exposed to the deadly silica dust clouds that blanket the surroundings. In fact, the women's job of transporting the stones is so hard they can't fulfil their daily quota of stones without the help of their children, who don't earn a single rupee for toiling away in the mines, when they should be at school. Also, carrying the heavy and unwieldy stones causes many injuries, including chronic back conditions, severe bruising and broken limbs if they drop their loads.

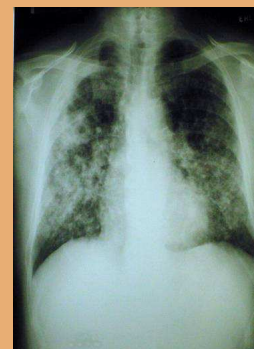
During interviews we discovered things only got worse. Several women described how they rarely held onto their earnings for long, as all too often their husbands yanked the forty rupees out of their hands as soon as they entered their stone huts, threatening physical violence if they resisted. T* told us how she experienced this almost on a daily basis, and how her husband often took the money to the local shopkeeper, spending every last rupee on liquor. In the end, explained T*, they got beaten up anyway, as their husbands returned home drunk to the point of collapse, unleashing all their anger and frustration at their wretched lives on their wives and children.

“Several women described how they rarely held onto their earnings for long, as all too often their husbands yanked the forty rupees out of their hands as soon as they entered their stone huts, threatening physical violence if they resisted. T* told us how she experienced this almost on a daily basis, and how her husband often took the money to the local shopkeeper, spending every last rupee on liquor.”

When interviewed, women nervously told our investigation team that sexual abuse doesn't only occur at night, when the contractors, supervisors and other male workers are drunk, menacing and full of machismo, but also during the day right on the mine sites. Female workers told us that both women and girls were sexually abused by mine supervisors and owners during the day shifts. Mine owners and supervisors even had the audacity, explained T*, to ask mothers to send their young daughters

What is Silicosis?

According to the WHO Report on silicosis, “... silicosis, one of the oldest occupational diseases, still kills thousands of people every year, everywhere in the world. 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 depend 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.”

A chest x-ray of a silicosis victim showing the telltale signs of the disease - nodules in the lungs. (Source: http://www4.umdj.edu/cswaweb/rad_teach/silicosis.html)

Source: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs238/en/>

Continued from page 4 - Case Study 1 - The story of T* in Bhat Basti

to work alone, but they refused their demands flatly, their maternal instinct to protect their children stronger than any threats from the mine foremen.

But despite this constant threat of sexual abuse every moment of the day and night, the mining village's women nervously explained that they can't tell anyone, for fear of reprisals or losing their jobs. Unskilled and with mouths to feed, these women have no choice but to stay silent, earning pitiful wages and avoiding the sleazy come-ons from bosses and supervisors, that often turn into brutal attacks.

T* explained that the mining camp's women have neither legal recourse nor law and order agencies to keep them safe from lecherous local men. Often the greatest menace, however, is when they return home to their husbands, who, in terms of violence against women and sexual abuse, can be the worst perpetrators, especially when they're in a drunken stupor.

But T* never once has considered leaving her husband, explaining that for Indians this is the most shameful act and that, ironically, she wouldn't feel safe without him. Reflecting the ignorance brought on by no education and a life lived on the fringes of society, these women simple lack the judgement and experience to know that they are being mistreated.

In an attempt to entrap mine workers, mine owners offer new recruits financial loans and ply them with free booze. Very few workers turn down either of these, and before long the new employees find themselves plunged into debt and suffering from alcohol addiction. The workers soon become a type of indentured labourer, borrowing larger sums to fuel their growing drinking habit, and spending all the rest of their wages on paying off their debts to their bosses.

“But T* never once has considered leaving her husband, explaining that for Indians this is the most shameful act and that, ironically, she wouldn't feel safe without him. Reflecting the ignorance brought on by no education and a life lived on the fringes of society, these women simple lack the judgement and experience to know that they are being mistreated.”



Labourers have been quarrying stone in Jodhpur district for hundreds of years, providing building material for stunning structures such as Jodhpur city's Mehrangarh Fort, which is one of the largest forts in India, looming 122 metres above the city, and was built in the 15th Century. Courtesy of Eulogio. (Source: <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/730975>)

Directly impacted by the mine owner's brutal double-barrelled tactic, T* told our investigators how her family borrowed INR 5000 (AUD 121) when they first moved to Bhat Basti, an enormous sum for a family barely struggling to survive. Already saddled with debt, the mine owners and supervisors encouraged T*'s husband and his workmates to drink, offering free booze on the job, and before long most workers had developed dependency problems, pushing them deeper into the red.

T* explained that the family's income has quickly whittled away to almost nothing, as husbands often spend about IRS 70, more than half of their daily salary, drinking local firewater either at home or with workmates. With owners deducting another INR 100 (AUD 2.40) off each labourer's monthly salary to pay back their loans, the typical family income can shrink to below INR 2000 (AUD 48) by the end of the month.

To make matters worse, living in filthy settlements with appalling sanitary conditions, breathing in silica dust, and working in precarious settings with no safeguards, means that employees and their families are constantly falling sick and getting injured. It's no surprise that unskilled labourers aren't covered by insurance, nor do they enjoy benefits, so they get no pay for the days they miss, even if their injuries are work-related.

With a family budget that's all but dried up, parents still have to contend with other costs. For Indians, a bride and groom's wedding marks the most significant event of a lifetime, evoking every social facet central to Indian society, including kinship bonds, traditional values, im-

Continued from page 5 - Case Study 1 - The story of T* in Bhat Basti

passioned sentiments, and a family's socioeconomic standing (Heitzman and Worden, 1995). The wedding ceremony is an extravagant affair often lasting for a week or so, and even for the poorest families, no expense is spared. Well beyond the means of most families, they typically turn to mine owners to take out another loan, plunging them even further into debt and ensnaring them in self-perpetuating cycle of poverty.

“T* explained that the family's income has quickly whittled away to almost nothing, as husbands often spend about IRS 70, more than half of their daily salary, drinking local firewater either at home or with workmates.”

In an effort to regain their rights and dignity, twelve women from Bhat Basti have banded together to form a self-help group and they are boldly taking on the powerful mine owners and tribal leaders from the region. Although they're struggling to find financial backing, they have approached a number of local banking institutions, and are hoping to win their support.

True, this fledgling group offers a brief glimmer of hope for the future, but today T*, and the mining camps other women, still fight the same daily battles, trying to support her family on a handful of rupees, while protecting

daughters and herself from the brutal mines bosses and supervisors, and at the same time avoid the wrath of her own husband.

Despite these unimaginable hardships, T* showed her big-heart and tremendous hospitality when it came to the end of our survey and we were saying our farewells. When one of my colleagues presented T* with a bracelet as a token of the friendship that we had all formed, and the way she bared her soul to strangers, she burst into a radiant smile and invited us to all return soon.

Even though she struggles from day-to-day scraping together enough rupees to feed her family, she still apologised for not being a better host and having little to offer in the way of food and drinks.

“Despite these unimaginable hardships, T* showed her big-heart and tremendous hospitality when it came to the end of our survey and we were saying our farewells. When one of my colleagues presented T* with a bracelet as a token of the friendship that we had all formed, and the way she bared her soul to strangers, she burst into a radiant smile and invited us to all return soon.”

Neighbouring Village of Chopper is Starkly Contrasted to Bhat Basti

Even though we had wrapped up our survey in the Bhat Basti mining camp, our plan was to move on to the nearby mining village of Chopper to gain a deeper insight into the lives of women in and around the quarries skirting Jodhpur city. When our jeep pulled into the village, we were shocked by the striking difference between this mining camp and the one we had just left behind. Bhat Basti was only a few miles away down the dusty road, but was a world away as far as housing, utilities, sanitation and standard of living.

Unlike T*'s village, Chopper's roads were paved, dramatically reducing the amount of dust in the air, so we could breathe easier and things weren't blanketed in a thick coat of grime.

Walking down the streets, we saw healthy-looking villag-

ers using electrical pumps to draw clean drinking water out of the ground, chattering away absorbed in village gossip. Houses looked much sturdier, appearing to provide more protection from the harsh desert elements.

“When our jeep pulled into the village, we were shocked by the striking difference between this mining camp and the one we had just left behind. Bhat Basti was only a few miles away down the dusty road, but was a world away as far as housing, utilities, sanitation and standard of living.”

Continued from page 6 - Case Study 1 - The story of T* in Bhat Basti

Small Union Organisation Wins back Local's Rights

Our team was baffled. How could two neighbouring mining camps occupied by villagers from similar castes differ so much? The answer stood at the entrance of the village, directly opposite us in the form of a small, dingy office with a sign outside saying Jodhpur Jila Patthar Mazdoor Sangathan (JJPMs). Under-resourced and understaffed, this small union organisation has still managed to enjoy considerable success in ensuring the villagers of Chopper have access to basic provisions. By making certain that each labourer is issued with an official worker's card, JJPMs has helped the workers gain legitimacy they've never experienced before.

Now that the village's mine labourers have been legally registered in the government records, local and state authorities are more inclined to provide them with basic services. Also, with legal recognition it's easier for labourers to make compensation claims, so there's greater onus on employers to ensure that measures are put in place to protect the worker's basic rights and safety in an effort to avoid costly insurance pay outs.

Previously bosses ignored workers' claims for accidents in the working place, sickness or premature death due to mining, and cases when wages aren't paid, but these can no longer be brushed aside so lightly.

“Now that the village's mine labourers have been legally registered in the government records, local and state authorities are more inclined to provide them with basic services. Also, with legal recognition it's easier for labourers to make compensation claims, so there's greater onus on employers to ensure that measures are put in place to protect the worker's basic rights and safety in an effort to avoid costly insurance pay outs.”

True, JJPMs's actions have greatly improved the lives of Chopper's residents in so many ways, but, sadly, they've had little success in curbing the high incidence of physical and sexual abuse against local village women. Union representatives deny receiving complaints from any women regarding physical and sexual assaults, but our interviews with female residents proved otherwise.



Jodhpur City is often called the *Blue City*, due to the indigo tinge of whitewashed houses surrounding Mehrangarh Fort. The colour is said to deflect the heat and keep mosquitoes away. Even though the city is packed with tourists and is a stunning sight, stone workers work and live in unendurable conditions only miles away, on the outskirts of the city. (Courtesy of Sophia W., <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/402743>)

Case Study 2 - The story of G*

When we sat down with G* in a bare and dusty resting shelter close to the mines, the thirty year old widower and mother of five small children started telling us about her life in Chopper, revealing a gloomy story.

Originally from a remote village on the Pakistani border, G*'s parents married her off when she was only 12 years old. She rarely saw her husband, though, since he lived in another village close to the mines where he worked, and he only visited his hometown once a month to spend a little time with his family.

Constantly exposed to silica dust from toiling away in the stone quarries, it wasn't long before her husband contracted silicosis. G* told us that as soon as he passed away she noticed that villagers started shunning her, refusing to help her and her destitute family. Breaking point came when her deceased husband's brothers sexually assaulted her when she was alone, and she knew she had to leave. The village of her birth now offered her nothing except the threat of violence and contempt from fellow-villagers, so G* packed up her meagre belongings, gathered her children, and made her way along the rough track to Chopper in search of a better life.

Things started looking up when G* first reached Chopper, finding a small house for IRS 200 (AUD 4.80), where she felt safe. Local men pursued her, lavishing her with marriage proposals, but she rejected them all when she saw how little they cared for her children.

¹ The Intermediate Panchayat or Panchayat Samiti is a local government body at the tehsil or taluka level in India. It works for the villages of the tehsil or taluka that together are called a Development Block. The Panchayat Samiti is the link between the Gram Panchayat and the district administration.

Despite Worker's New Legal Status, Sex Crimes Persist

To make certain that our interview with G* didn't stir up bad feelings among the local community or reprisals from bosses and supervisors, we asked the group of people that had gathered around our table if they could leave us for a moment before G* told us about her co-workers. Once we were alone, G* began painting a dismal picture, telling us how Quarry bosses and supervisors often ask female workers to join them in rest stations, like the one we were sitting in, to take a quick break or have a cup of chai. Even though the women know these men have sinister motives, they usually

Now she works in Keru just north of Jodhpur city, in the Intermediate Panchayat of Mandor¹, 15 kilometres away from Chopper. G* can't afford to take the bus every day to get there, but walking the 30 km is a gruelling prospect, so she often accepts lifts from strangers leaving herself vulnerable to potential attackers.

On securing a job at Keru, JJPMS arranged an official worker's card for G*, which protects some of her basic rights, guaranteeing that she always getting paid, and allowing brief rests before a truck is fully loaded. This makes life a lot more endurable, admits G*, as in the old days porters couldn't rest until an entire truck carriage was loaded with stones, a backbreaking enterprise.

“On securing a job at Keru, JJPMS arranged an official worker's card for G, which protects some of her basic rights, guaranteeing that she always getting paid, and being allowed brief rests before a truck is fully loaded. This makes life a lot more endurable, admits G*, as in the old days porters couldn't rest until an entire truck carriage was loaded with stones, a backbreaking enterprise.”*

“Vulnerable and ignorant, the victims put up no resistance, quickly making their way to the local chemist to purchase a 'day after pill' so they don't fall pregnant. G explained that there's a kind of implicit arrangement between the victims and the perpetrators, turning the women into unwilling prostitutes.”*

Continued from page 8 - Case Study 2 - The story of G*

accept their offers, fearful that a rejection might mean losing their jobs. Once in the rest station, the lecherous men corner them, and if the women turn down their come-ons, they often force themselves on to the unwilling victims, leading to sexual abuse or other kinds of violence. G* nervously explained that these incidences occur every few days.

Although we heard many stories like this in Bhat Basti, we were surprised that no one had reported these crimes to either the local police or the influential JJPMS office. G* told us that there were several reasons why women rarely reported these events, choosing to stay tight-lipped. After the women are assaulted, their attackers bribe them with IRN 200 to 300 to keep their silence, and threaten that they'll fire them on the spot if they breathe a word.

Vulnerable and ignorant, the victims put up no resistance, quickly making their way to the local chemist to purchase a 'day after pill' so they don't fall pregnant. G* explained that there's a kind of implicit arrangement between the victims and the perpetrators, turning the women into unwilling prostitutes.

Money is traded for silence, and the women are left to suffer unendurable physical and psychological torment, and with AIDS spreading exponentially, the increasing

likelihood of contracting lethal sexually transmitted diseases.

Our team members explained that there are now alternatives, and that with new legal status, females had legal recourse and could either bring court action against their assailants or file for large compensation packages. But G* shook her head, explaining that few women had the conviction to take this course, since Indian society often sees the victims of sexual abuse as the sinner. They would be shamed and spurned by the community, and even worse, would probably provoke violent revenge attacks against both herself and her family.

“But G* shook her head, explaining that few women had the conviction to take this course, since Indian society often sees the victims of sexual abuse as the sinner. They would be shamed and spurned by the community, and even worse, would probably provoke violent revenge attacks against both herself and her family.”



Women gather in the streets of Jodhpur. Courtesy Luis Serichol. <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/68074>



Kids play in a village in Jodhpur District. Courtesy John Blighe. <http://picasaweb.google.com/johnblighe/IndiaPart1/photo#5187546583627992866>

Conclusion

Once the interviews had been completed, our investigation team got together to sketch out an action plan on how we could effectively tackle the most serious issues that the subjects during the study. Not surprisingly, we traced the roots of the problem back to the female population's lack of education, and the fact that they had been sidelined and persecuted by both the male-dominated local community and India's mainstream society since time immemorial. Ignorance trapped the women in a blinkered world, where although they suffered unimaginable injustices they didn't really know life could be different, blindly accepting their brutal existences.

“Ignorance trapped the women in a blinkered world, where although they suffered unimaginable injustices they didn't really know life could be different, blindly accepting their brutal existences.”

In an effort to reverse this tide, our team looked at the possibility of setting-up traineeships that were subsidised so women could quit their jobs but still make enough money to feed their families and pay for basic necessities. During these programs, they could learn useful new skills making it easier to find jobs outside the mines, far away from the sleazy mine bosses and supervisors and their licentious overtures. Possible areas of training might include cottage industries such as textiles, leather work, wood work, clay work and metalwork. Our team also strongly recommends that women be encouraged to continue working on farms in their local area, by paying them for their work or increasing the wages, so they're not forced by necessity to abandon their fields for jobs in surrounding mines and quarries.

“Also we recommend that other extra-curriculum programs should be run, where men can start up hobbies and sports that distract their attention away from drinking and other bad habits.”

But even if these new skills help women find non-mining jobs, putting distant between them and their former assailants, they still have to come home at the end of the day to their belligerent husbands. Even in the farming villages, these husbands are known to drink far beyond their financial means, typically resorting to violence as they get more inebriated. Our team suggests that a comprehensive and engaging series of programs should be launched, that target the male population, giving them new skills so they too can supplement their incomes outside of the mines, giving them a greater sense of dignity and self-confidence. Also we recommend that other extra-curriculum programs should be run, where men can start up hobbies and sports that distract their attention away from drinking and other bad habits. In this way they don't have to always turn to booze, which gives them a false sense of self-worth, inflating their egos dangerously.

Bibliography

Heitzman J. and R.L. Worden (eds), 1995. India: A Country Study. Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress.

Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining (ASM) in Asia-Pacific Portal <http://www.asmasiapacific.org>

ASM Asia-Pacific Case Study Series

This series of case studies documents concrete examples of equitable, effective, and sustainable local-level partnerships including small-scale miners or their communities as a guide to develop better policy and practice in the Asia-Pacific region.

The project has been led by Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt. The case studies have been edited by Joel Katz and designed by Rachel P Lorenzen.

Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining (ASM) in Asia-Pacific Portal

The ASM Asia Pacific Portal is the public interface of a loose network of individuals and institutions working on poverty eradication, development and livelihoods in Artisanal and Small-scale Mining (ASM) in the Asia-Pacific region.

The portal's mandate is to disseminate knowledge about ASM in the Asia-Pacific, to document best practice in community development and environmental management, and to promote fellowship and cooperation among stakeholders interested in poverty eradication and sustainable development.