

# Artisanal and Small Mines Study Report



STUDY WAS CONDUCTED IN THE  
CENTRAL INDIAN DISTRICT OF KATNI

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# Katni District:

## A CITY OF LIME

Madhya Pradesh state government website refers Katni as a city of lime. Katni's neighboring district-town of Panna is likewise called the city of diamond. Mining has been a very important part of the economic history of modern Katni, and has been around for over 200 years. The district is dotted with numerous mines, mostly opencast, and of various sizes and for various kinds of repository. There are very many mines in Katni. Some assert they number close to 400 in all. They are mines for bauxite ores, dolomite, limestone, and marbles. The long period of association and the dominance of the activity enable the suggestion that a number of social and economic characteristics observed are linked to the existence of mining in the region.

Katni has developed infrastructure to support its mining operation. Katni is commercial center; it takes the advantage of national highway and train route. Katni Railway junction is one of the largest junctions of India. One of the prime junctions of the Indian railway Katni is located in the heart of the rail network. Train from five direction comes to Katni and is situated at the junction of trunk rail routes connecting north south and east west. It is also advantageously situated on the path of central India coal fields and the power plants of north & western India. Considering the premeditated location of Katni, Indian Railways have developed it as one of the largest yard of India. Complete new township has been developed at new Katni junction there are more then 5000 railway employees at Katni catering to the travelling public needs. Katni has biggest Diesel locomotive shed of Indian Railways having 200 locomotives, it also has electric locomotive shed having 100 locomotives. Katni also has Indian railways biggest wagon repairs shop. All these facilities have greatly contributed to the development of Katni town & Katni district. By the way of increased infrastructure facilities, higher potential for business opportunities, and larger employment potential railways are now establishing a new zone at Jabalpur. General public has now access to almost all part of the country by direct access through mail and express trains.

Katni became a district in 1998. The region is the geographical centre of Indian subcontinent, lying perhaps at the conjoint of tectonic plates of South and North. Katni district is located in the Northeastern part of Madhya Pradesh it forms the northern district of Jabalpur commissioner division. Mudwara was the biggest (area wise) Tahsil of Jabalpur before Katni came as district in 1998. The district extends from 23 °37'N to 24 °80' N and from 79 °57' E to 80 °58' E. and its height from sea level is 392 m.

There are three major rivers in Mudwara *Katni, Chhoti Mahanadi and Umdar* and the name *Katni of Mudwara* is given after the *Katni River*, which is two km away from *Mudwara*. The shape of this district is roughly oval. As per the census of 1991, the population of *Katni district* was 881925 out of which 333373 and 93796 are in rural and urban area respectively. Total population of women and men in urban and rural areas respectively are 684417 and 197588.

Katni is conglomeration of culture from three different cultural regions of central India viz. Mahakausal, Bundelkhand, and Baghelkhand. Since the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century Katni has been given the status of town so the development work of the town has started along with the British rule. In 1998 Katni was declared as district and the district administration was setup by the government. It was a major task for the district administration to bring Katni as the matured district. Katni is an ancient city in which many industries are located in whole district. As minerals are found in large part of Katni so the industries are largely mineral based and are growing rapidly. All these have made a position for Katni in commerce and industry field. It is connected to major cities of India and this makes Katni a vantage point for businessmen. Mainly pulses, floor stone-marble etc are commercial product. There are more than 50 pulses mills. Cloth market of Katni is important place for surrounding places. After 1947 many sindhies(Resident of Sindh state of Pakistan) came here from Pakistan and they are among the main businessmen of Katni. Katni is enjoying the luxury of all kinds of communication media. Since the advent of mobile in market of major cities in India, Katni had never been behind in the race. All the major player of mobile has given connectivity to Katni since starting; this may be because of the trade and commerce of Katni. The following are list of main industries in Katni.

Name
Ordinance factory Katni
A C C Katni
A C C Kamore
Averest asbestos Kamore
SAIL India Kuteswer Barhi

Main crops of Katni are paddy wheat, gram and pulses. In cash crop mainly vegetables are grown and sent to market of Satna District and Umaria also. There is a good market of cereals and other agro-based product in Katni. KRASHI UPAZ MANDI Katni has been given the status of A class mandi in India. Total area of Katni district is 4949.59 km<sup>2</sup> and cultivating land 34593 hectares in 2001 and total forest area 71155 hectares. Private land is 279020 hectare, government land is 214072. Area wise distribution of land and crop

S No	Crop Name	Total Land In Hectare
1	Wheat	71008
2	Paddy	111410
3	Gram	14905
4	Jwar	3817
5	Maize	4096
6	Kudo Kutki	7166
7	Mutter	5093
8	Fruits	1672
9	Oil Seeds	10509
10	Vegetable	2612
11	Roots	1672
12	Other Pulses	15057

## Natural Resources

**Mudwara:** In Katni lime stone, dolomite, bauxite, latrite clay, fire clay, soapstone quartz batrize colsite etc are found in the form of minerals

**Vijayraghavgarh** is a historical place. Lime stone, dolomite, fireclay, latrite are found in this reason.

**Bahoriband:** In this tehsil dolomite bauxite, laterite, fire clay and marble floor stone are found. Recently various companies have applied for lease to mine marble, which is also being exported to foreign countries.

**Dheemarkheda :** In this tahsil main minerals are dolomite, bauxite, latrite, fire clay, soapstone iron ore etc are found. Various department of central government and state govt. has done survey in this area.

Given the importance of stone-mining in Katni, the Government of Madhya Pradesh has established a Stone Park in the format of institutional or industrial zone. The Stone Park is cluster of industries working in the field of minerals and mines. Here mainly processing plants shall be established by different mining concerns. Stones park will be on the basis of marbles found in the Slimnabad (Slimnabad is the village established by Colonel Saliman in 1832 after taking land from Kohka village. It is situated 25 km from Katni Railway station) of Katni district. This park will be cluster of industries for increasing marble production & export. It will be commercial centre for marble processing and sales. The proposed stone park is 25 km from Katni



and 69 km from Jabalpur in Hardua Khadwal village. 120 acres of land is completely devoted for the development of basic infrastructure for marble cutting & polishing industries. At present only few marble companies have opened their plants at this site. very soon 25-30 units are to be established in Stone Park. MP industries Development Corporation has been appointed as agency to develop the infrastructure for Stone Park.

### **Mining of Manganese ores**

In nearby Katangi block of Balaghat district, where high quality of Manganese ores is found, the whole area has become site of illegal mining. Local newspapers regularly report of arrest of one person or another, with even instances of high political linkages, who were illegally mining manganese. People are digging manganese in their farm-fields, in private gardens, in common village land. In early May, a leader of local Congress party was arrested on the charges of illegal mining. Police also discovered large deposit of mined manganese in the field belonging to a local BJP leader who is absconding thereafter. People with political contacts and with economic strength, are engaged in carrying out the illegal mining.

This illegal mining practice has begun in the last two-three years when good quality manganese ores have found ready market. Good quality manganese ores fetches ten to fifteen thousand rupee per ton. Earlier manganese mining was limited to far-flung mountainous areas but now it has become an open activity given the complicity of the administration in the whole process. Illegal manganese mining is a flourishing business here. The illegal aspect of mining has devastating impact over the environment of the area. It is estimated that to mine a tone of manganese ore one need to dig up 10 to 15 ton of upper soil and stones which are recklessly being deposited in to big mounds. The mined digs are also dangerous to lives of human and livestock as they are left without being filled. Land being left is unfit for crops or habitation. In many places illegal mining of manganese has acquired a status of small scale industry as people are using their own domestic gardens or farm fields for digging out the manganese ores. These illegally mined manganese ores are being bought by middlemen at prices much below the market price. Such illegal mining obviously robs the administration its royalty from sales-tax and other levies. Because of mining being less capital intensive and more profitable, people with political linkages are primarily involved. Because of their political linkages, most often officials comply in the illegal activity. The illegal mined manganese is being sent to processing plants located in Chattisgarh and Maharastra.

## Stone Quarry of Sahnagar

At Sahnagar, near Katni, there are dalits as well as adivasis quarrying stones from a stretch of land which the Forest Department claims to be under its supervision. It is an arid, rocky zone with no forest within visible distance but still it is the Forest Department, which exercises authority over it. Sahnagar's poor residents, with primitive tools break rocks to make slabs which sell in the market as building material. They face constant threat from the forest Rangers and the police. For them quarrying is illegal. But illegality is an issue limited only upto the payment of the bribe. Some 500 rupees is given monthly by the poor people to these officials whose very sight make them flee. The incoming jeep is the sign of a corrupt and troublesome government. If caught, their implements would be confiscated. Refusal to pay could mean officials indulging in callous act of breaking the slabs so as to make it unsaleable.

It takes hard work and time to convert rock into plain slabs. Two men working for six days can make some 100 slabs of 3x2ft each. One slab of 3x2ft sold independently to the local buyers could fetch Rs. 5. If sold to contractors, it would fetch only Rs. 3. The contractor sells the slab at Rs. 35 each. Mostly, it is contractor who buys the slab. Any refusal to sell them would provoke their wrath fall on slabs. A man roughly earns around rupees 125-150 each week. And, then there is the menace of the police and Forest Rangers' demands which each of them has to fulfill.

Nai Disha, a NGO, has organized these people with the aim of enabling the people to have control over the natural livelihood resources. The methodology is to form peoples' co-operatives and demand lease of land for quarrying. The poor people have to confront not just the menace of a greedy and corrupt administration, they also have to face the machinations of the local dominant caste people. Village upper castes do not want the poor to get organised and have their own co-operatives. Their interests are multifarious. They too have quarrying zones where poor people work on minimal wages or are bonded to the local lords. They too are illegal diggers but they can withstand or tilt the corrupt administration in their favour because of their financial power as well as social influence.

To some extent, NGO personal Ramalakhn Tiwari has succeeded in making Sahnagar's poor residents a united force. They have formed a village committee of some 22 members who shall have stakes in the future co-operatives. Each member is to contribute rupees 150 towards raising a fund of rupees 2,500 necessary to register the cooperatives. They have managed to somehow collect 1,400 rupees. Leading a hand-to-mouth existence, all of them are below the poverty line, but have got no official certification. On the other hand, ironically, the dominant and comparatively well-off families in the village have easily got such a certification by official connivance. Collection of money is not the end. It is just the beginning of an effort, which would face enormous obstacles from a corrupt administration to unjust laws that catered to colonial dispensation. But the battle will go on. Greater organisational strength would entail greater control over their natural surroundings.



## Politics in Panchayat and of Resource Appropriation

Tulsa Bai, 55, was elected Sarpanch of Bargawa Number 2 Panchayat of Katni district in January election to local bodies of Madhya Pradesh. She was elected from a Panchayat that was reserved for backward-women candidates. For the last six months despite her repeated pleas to officialdom, she has not been given the charge of her Panchayat administration despite being an elected representative.

The policy of reserving Panchayats for specific groups is without any rules and is based merely on lottery system. Designated officials at the block office decide through lottery system on the status of Panchayat. There are a number of categories for which panchayats are reserved. They are women, adivasis, scheduled-castes, backwards, backward-women, and likewise. Tulsa Bai's Panchayat was not a reserved constituency earlier and general candidate had stood and won last time. This time it was reserved

for backward-women candidates although the panchayat itself is dominated by Gond adivasis. Provision of reservation therefore is not indicative of constituency's demographic structure but on the lottery. Reservations are applied not just at Panchayat level but also at Ward level. This makes Panchayat election a massive organizational exercise.

It is due to this that an elaborate structure of local governance exists. It is a three-tier system that is prevalent. At each tier there is elective representative and nominated representative. Like at Panchayat, if there is elected Sarpanch and ward members, there is also Panchayat Secretary who is nominated by the Sarpanch after obtaining approval from Gram Sabha. It is Secretary who becomes link between local elected representative and government machinery. It is he who maintains record and liaison with the officials. It is because of this there is a required educational qualification for the appointment of a Secretary. The first election to local Bodies in Madhya Pradesh was held under Digvijay Singh's first tenure. It was in 1985-6 that first Panchayat elections were held. When local governance was established through Panchayat elections it was realized that there was extreme paucity of eligible candidates for Secretary's job. In a far-reaching decision, Digvijay Singh's government took an administrative decision to appoint Secretaries of Panchayat on the recommendations of the Sarpanch. In that year about 80000 new appointees were recruited for the Secretary job in Panchayat. Most of these Secretaries were directly appointed by Sarpanch because of which most descended from the families of Sarpanch. It was highest form of nepotism. The Secretary's tenure is not fixed and is dependent upon the pleasure of Sarpanch but also approved by Gram Sabhas. His tenure is fixed to Panchayat but is not a permanent job. As most Panchayat never have full fledged Gram Sabha, appointees were certainly relatives or friends of

Sarpanch. Such appointees raised the hackles of politicians and government faced strong opposition on this point. Pressured, the government changed its policy and in its new amendment urged the Sarpanchs to shun relatives for the Secretaryship. The new amendment made it against law to appoint anyone related in anyway with elected members of the Panchayat. But law has not made much headway on the ground. In most Panchayats, earlier appointees remain entrenched in their position. Because they are mostly first-appointees they are also in know of all the intricacies of the Panchayat functioning which makes them strong contender for continuing power in the management of Panchayat. Secretaries are also fighting for permanent tenure from the government. They have formed Union to fight for their cause.

Officials recognize secretary as keeper of records and an officiating agent of supra-government. He is responsible for all official interaction. Secretary is not a valid and permanent authority in the eyes of self or in the eyes of law and yet he gains not only access to official papers but is sitting authority in the Gram Sachivalaya. In year 2000, corruption in Panchayat so disturbed the Government that it decided to introduce Treasurer's post to break the complicity between Secretary and Sarpanch. In 2005, the post of Panchayat Treasurer was abolished and a new post of Panchayat Chairman was brought in. But it is not yet accepted as the proposal has faced stiff opposition from Sarpanch. The protesting Sarpanchs have petitioned High Court against the measure. In turn the government has suggested appointment of two Chairmen, one for Permanent Committee and another for Development Committee.

Tulsa Bai's panchayat comprises of seven villages. There were a total of 1100 votes of which Tulsa Bai received 250 votes and was declared successful candidate. She is a Soni, a caste of jeweler. Of the total population in her



Panchayat only 5% belongs to backward community. Her was reserved Panchayat for backward-women. She is illiterate except for the fact she can sign her name. She is down to earth and her son, not very flamboyant either, is leading the charge on her behalf. For the last six month, since the time she was elected Sarpanch of her Panchayat, the Secretary has not given her charge of the Panchayat, which makes her just a nominal representative. Removing the old Panchayat Secretary is out of question when she is yet to receive all the relevant files regarding her Panchayat from the Secretary. Obviously the reigning Secretary has efficient collusion with government officials vested with powers to see such things to not occur. Tulsa Bai has made numerous visits to district Panchayat chief and his all-powerful secretary, who again is an IAS officer. But her visits have not yielded any results. She continues to wage a lonely battle with the officialdom to gain access to the very Panchayat she was elected. Tulsa Bai's predicament is not an isolated instance. Numerous such Panchayat Sarpanch is thus placed all over Madhya Pradesh.



From resource use dimension, such powerless representative, encircled by officialdom, even if given power to manage the local resources, shall be singularly lacking in teeth and eventually be powerless. Panchayats and reservation system in them have brought many people who are elected with less margin owing to caste or filial backing but are singularly incapable of comprehending the functioning of Panchayats. Because of this base of their mandate, they sometimes do not even receive full backing of village in carrying out their mandated functions and become prisoner of officialdom.

Panchayats were initially given power over the minor minerals in their jurisdiction, which was later withdrawn as it was thought that they would not be able to manage.

### Exert The Rights

**Village : SAHLAWAN PIPARIYA**

**District: KATNI**

Navrachna Samaj Sevi Sanstha, a NGO working in the area, is working in the Bundelkhand-Baghelkhand region of Madhya Pradesh. Its workers are entrusted with the task of organising rural women into Mahila Mandals (Women Committee). It is Sahlawan-Pipariya, a village in the Katni district, where one of the worker, Saroj, has organised

women to assert their rights. These women are landless dalits who were dependent on natural resources for their livelihood. In a courageous move the village Mahila Mandal was inspired to cultivate a tract of forest land, cleared of trees due to the official connivance with the local rich. A 10 acre tract began to be cultivated collectively, yielding crop which went into *gram kosh* (Village Bank) for the utilisation of the members of the Mahila Mandal. As the land is officially an illegal holding, no government support is forthcoming for its development. Most of the women either made bidis, which has its own exploitative circle, or made leaf-plates. Saroj has succeeded in inculcating these women an understanding of their economic worth and has made them aware of their rights. Mahila Mandals have been turned into the agencies of change in the rural sector. Navrachna advocates people's control over the natural livelihood resources and for it leads people to struggle for their rights. On turning village women into an organisation, it gives them more than mere training for agitation. It gives them power to undertake constructive work to re-invigorate the rural economy.

As the inhabitants of Sahlawan Pipariya are Kol adivasi whose primary source of livelihood was foraging, they knew little of agriculture. Last year their crop failed, as they could not irrigate the land properly. The failure of crop has made a visible dent in the Mahila Mandal's moral. There is an attempt to forge Mahila Mandal into an economic co-operative body to get maximum benefit of their skill in gathering the forest produce.