

PROJECT REPORT

**Collection of Oral History of Coal Workers with
special Emphasis on Impact of Outsourcing
Asansol – Raniganje Coal-belt**

Submitted to
V.V. Giri National Labour Institute

Project Director : Sudipta Paul
Project assistant : Sipra Chakrabarti and Siddhartha Sengupta

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Content

Page No.

1. Objective	1- 6
2. History	7- 12
3. Change within last 15 years	13 – 17
4. Present Status of Coal Workers	17 – 28
5. Conclusion	29 – 34
Bibliography	i
Appendix –1 Interview	ii - xix
Appendix –2 Metadata of Reference Materials	xx - xxiii

CHAPTER – 1

OBJECTIVE

1.1 Introduction

Outsourcing is a global phenomenon today. Outsourcing means that one part or the total production of an organisation is done by any outside agency on contract basic. In the recent phase it is an important feature in the industry with oragnisational structure. This process of doing a job in contract is not new. But the term is new. Traditionally one organized sector or industry purchases different parts of the final product from different oragnisations or industry without manufacturing it themselves. Generally industries under industrial and labour acts firm out some part of their jobs to outside agencies. These agencies may be small manufacturers, big factory or private contractors. Mostly the private contractors have other sub contractors for doing different jobs. These sub contractors also have other sub contractors. They are not necessarily bound to maintain the rules and regulations of industrial and labour acts. Also they do not maintain proper documentation and records about their labours and organization. The main implication of the introduction of contract work in large scale, even in the main production is the generation of two types of workers with different status. One set is the workers of organized sectors who are under the regulation of Factories Act, laws of job security, social security and recognised unions. The other set is the unorganized sector workers in small or large factories, contractors etc. who are not covered by the factories Act, labour laws and are not organized under the recognized tread unions. Two sectors exist side by side. The situation of the organized and unorganized sectors workers are different. Are the differences only in the question of wage, job security and of recognized union. Are there no other factors of differences? Do these differences have any impact on the working class consciousness?

Also the very existence of the public sectors is under challenge in course of the introduction of outsourcing of production through contractual method. In India one such example is the coal sector. Coal is a very important sector in our country because 55% of total energy is produced from coal. Around five lakh workers are engaged the coal sector all over the country. Outsourcing has started in its popular form in Eastern Coal fields Limited (ECL), a subsidiary of coal India Limited (CIL), by shifting the production of coal by the workers of ECL to the workers of private agency or contractors. So a large section of workers under private company and contractors are entering in the coal sector without any wage agreement, lack of basic facilities, job security, recognized unions. In other words National Coal Wage Agreement which is applicable for all coal workers has not been implemented for this new section of workers. Basically they are of unorganized nature. No official documents are available about the proper situation and numbers of them. Side by side there exists a large section of workers under NCWA with economic privilege. So it is quite relevant to document the situation of the workers of unorganized sectors. Also the collection of the viewpoints of different strata of workers will give impression about the consciousness of the workers.

1.2 Objective

The main purpose of the project is to collect the perception of the workers from different economic conditions, different family history in the industry, different community and culture about the present changes in the coal sector and the difference between the organized and unorganized sectors. Organized sector is ECL and unorganized sectors are the followings.

- a. Outsourced mines of ECL,
- b. A Joint Venture company, M/s Bengal EMTA Coal Mines Ltd with West Bengal State Electricity Board, West Bengal Power Development Corporation and M/s Eastern Mineral and Trading Agency
- c. Private company, Sarshatali coal mining project -Integrated Coal Mines Ltd/CESC

And what is the feeling of one group of workers about the other type of workers? Is there any difference in class consciousness. In this project we try to address these questions by collecting oral history of the coal workers of Asansol- Raniganje coal belt. To do this we made considerations to select the interviewee for collecting oral history considering the following features.

1. community ,
2. economic status in terms of wages and skill,
3. different types of job contract,
4. family history

Another objective of the project is to make documentation about the unorganized sectors workers.

1.3 Back ground of the project

History of commercial coal mining started from 1774 by East India Company in the Raniganje coal field along the western bank of river Damodar. To meet the ever increasing demand of manpower a large number of people (mainly tribal) were lured into colliery from distant villages of other provinces. For a long time the working condition remained unbearable and risk prone. The situation improved considerably after the enactment of Coal Mines Nationalization Act, 1973. All small collieries of private owners have been nationalized by this time. The main reasons of nationalization were better conservation, development, full proof safety and maximum extraction of planned quantity of coal . Another important reason was to stop the merciless exploitation of mines' workers by private owners.

After nationalization, with the remarkable increase of production, some basic rights of coal workers were also established by law. Wages increased, jobs became secured, rate of accident decreased, medical facility has also started.

As a whole Coal India Ltd (CIL) is a profit making company. But with a large number of oldest underground (UG) mines, ECL was a loss making subsidiary of CIL from very inception. Cross subsidies between all the subsidiaries of CIL as well as

subsidy by the Central Government have stopped in the era of new economic policy. In 1997 ECL has been declared as a sick company under SICA 1985. By converting the government loan to equity ECL came out from BIFR. Again ECL was referred to BIFR in 2001. State Bank of India (SBI) as an operating agency of ECL has given eleven proposals in their revival packages for ECL. One of the proposals is outsourcing of some coal patches, suitable for OCP mines for a short period. Other proposals are closer of 26 UG mines and some financial support from central and state government and CIL.

1.4 Relevance

The very existence of coal industry in India as a public sector is under challenge at this moment. At the time of nationalization coal was required not for profit but to build up infrastructure and to help other key industries to grow. But the situation has changed in the globalized world. This is an important question to the labor force also, because with the crises of coal industry the position of workers is becoming vulnerable day by day. Gradually, the number of organized workers is decreasing - from 185 lakhs of 1975-76 to 115 lakhs of 2002-03. But a new labour force has been created under private contractor who are completely unorganized.

Outsourcing is a global phenomenon in all spheres. The reserved pool of labors is increasing in the global market. A public sector is till now bound to protect the rights of the workers by existing law. But the natural apprehension of the workers is whether the same will apply to the labors under contractors and private owners.

Most of the mines run by private owners or contractors are OCP where the production costs are far less than UG mines. Will the CIL be able to survive such uneven competition?

After the initial ten coal reserve patches ECL is going to handover another seven patches for outsourcing by private contractors for extraction of coal.

In the above context it becomes all too important to study the impact of outsourcing on the entire coal workers. Though outsourcing of ECL has started only for a year, there are already ample indications of the coming future.

As already mentioned ECL has decided in 2001 to extract coal from ten coal reserved patches (eight out of these ten are in west Bengal) by outsourcing. But a number of trade unions expressed their opposition on the ground that this is nothing but a back door privatization. For last one and a half year the media also highlighted this debate. It is claimed that the steps of outsourcing will really contribute to the revival of ECL and take care of workers' welfare. One section of Asansol - Ranigange coal belt of CITU was able to hold up the work of Belpahari OCP patches for some time. In the All India Coal Workers' Convention, in Asansole on 14th.sept,2003, TU delegates from all coal companies strongly opposed the steps towards "privatization through back-door" and came out with a common statement with the demand to withdraw coal mines nationalization bill,2000, restore customs duty, stop outsourcing of coal mines to private parties and stop handing over of 31 blocks to state government for outsourcing them to contractors, implement NCWA-2 for entire coal industry including those working under contractors etc, with signatures of five recognized central trade unions. But overcoming

resistance the work of Belpahari OCP has started recently. Sankarpur OCP has been already opened by a private contractor.

It should be mentioned that this process is not new. Other than ECL almost all subsidiary have started to extract coal engaging private contractors. Even in the proposed project area M/S Bengal EMTA Company Ltd (and ICML) on Tara (EAST & West) block has started same production process. Another private contractor is extracting coal from a burned seam of Khrabandh OCP of ECL. In this project the impact of first private coal mines of India, Sarsatali coal mining project will also be included.

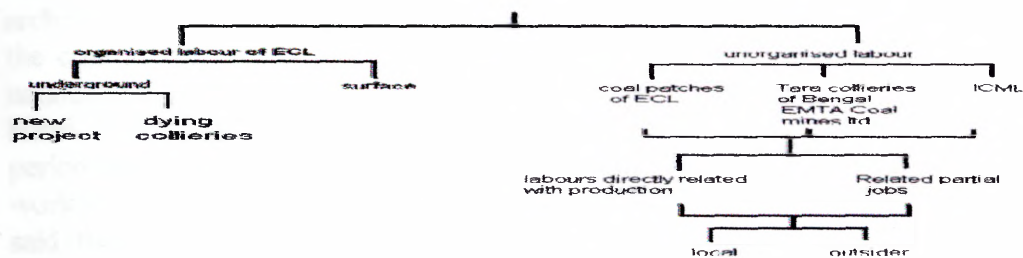
As an NGO activist of this area and a regular contributor to a local Bengali little magazine 'Udoyog', the principal investigator of the project has visited several times in all the above areas and interacted with workers and local people. A rough sketch of the condition of workers under private contractors is given here.

Most of the workers are temporary contract laborers. Average age group is 18 to 40 years. They have no appointment letter, no security of job. Generally there are two types of workers. One type is the operators of Heavy Earth Moving Machine i.e. skilled labors. Others are unskilled labors engaged in some related partial jobs. Some of the workers are from the outside of Asansol - Ranigange belt. Wage structure is not at par with NCWA-2. No proper record or document is maintained of the accidents, even of death after fatal accident. At the beginning there was some unrest related to the demand of job facility for local youth.

By documenting the experience of this new section of unorganized workers, it will be possible to gauge the impact of outsourcing on contractual/unorganized section of mining workers.

1.5 Methodology

The coal worker can be stratified according to the following chart.



Selection of interviewee have been done almost random basis according to the different strata of the workers. Varied type workers both are in the organised sectors and the unorganised sector, which we have shown in the previous sections. So it is convenient that at the time of visiting collieries we have found out the person of specific categories. Then we came in contact of the other persons of other categories through the first contact. Though the selection procedure was random we consider the following criteria of interviewee.

1. Aged workers with the experience from pre-nationalization period to the period of outsourcing.
2. Union representatives.
3. Aboriginal workers (Santhal) who in general are not able to cope up with the technological upgradation.
4. Ethnic and earlist workers of Bauri caste.
5. New workers who have joined in ECL in the ground of medically unfit and land losers.

These categorisations are not exclusive because the number of interviewee become huge. We take care at the time of selection that all considerations can be fulfilled within total interviewee of the above strata. These consideration are very important to get the different perceptions of the workers of the same organised sector. Officially all workers of the ECL have achieved same privileges with the implementation of the National Coal Wage Agreement. They are entitled for the same wages and same rights for same type of work. But there are variations in the lifestyle of the individual workers and also different castes and communities. The attempt to upgrade the living standard of the family by planned way of spending, acquiring education of next generation, future planning etc are very much different between individuals and also between communications, different categories. In most of the cases these factors get overlapped.

1.6 Literature survey

All the documents were prepared on the status of workers on the basis of the records, archives, different reports and some data of field survey by the researchers. A picture of the coal industry and the status of the workers of pre-nationalization period and post-nationalization period and some statistical accounts are available in these documents. Hiten Ghose highlighted that though the wage of the workers w.r.t pre-nationalized period have increased but overall development, especially in cultural development of the workers and socialization of the miners have not taken place proportionately¹. He also said that all measures for workers were taken keeping the difference between white colour jobs and underground miners. He gives the example of exploitation of moneylenders, alcoholism, and illiteracy. This conclusion has been made according to the perception of the researcher and the writer about the development of workers in comparison of other workers and analyzed in terms of their own notion of the

¹ Asansoler Itibritta a collection of Essays edited by Nanda Dulal Acharya

development. These are all valuable works. But they have not captured the perception of the worker or the experience of an ordinary worker about what he means by the betterment of the situation of a workers after nationalization. How workers perceive the history of industry, history of workers movement for the improvement of the work condition in the mines, decreasing the working hour etc. But the novel by Prafulla Kumar Shingha has given a picture about the pre nationalization period- experience and life story from the point of view of an ordinary people. So to fill this gap this project will become helpful to some extent.

Chapter -2 History

2.1 Brief history of Coal Industry

Before the accumulation of capital, coal was produced in small scale. From the history of production of coal there are evidences of free miners in the Forest of Dean of Great Britain who had independent proprietorship of land and mines and the harvesting of forest. In terms of the present definition of the informal sector the old production relation had the nature of informal type. But there were formal recognition of the independent miners by the king. Advent of capitalism broke this system and though the free miners made resistances to protect their rights of "free mining" finally in the middle of nineteenth century they lost their right forever. In India even after nationalization of coal mines there are still evidences of small scale community coal mining in the village 'Horomocho' of Jharkhand with in the scheduled area and obviously without the involvement of big capital. But in most of the coal reserved area of India, big capital has come to build large scale industry destroying the previous self-sufficient lively-hood from the resources of forest.

In India the history of commercial coal production first started in Asansol – Raniganje coal belt from 1774 along the western bank of river Damodar by the British who came to make their fortune in India. But British Government made no attempt to assist or protect the coal industry in India in the early stages in order to protect the English Coal Industry. A small amount of coal, imported from England to India fulfilled the demand of coal of India. But in the early nineteenth century the import of coal was stopped. In 1808 the Indian Directors of East India Company suggested for an enquiry for the coal deposit in West Bengal. This enquiry showed that only low quality coal from the surface is transported by the water ways.

After 1814, the British Government found the average quality of coal in greater depth. Within the period of 1815 to 1847 the growth of coal industry coincided with the particular phases of development of capitalism in UK. The introduction of the steam locomotives in 1853 gave an impetus in the Indian coal industry. English capital came to India in the coal Industry at that time. For P. K. Chakrabarty: "In fact India was integrated into world capitalism neither enjoying any of the benefits of capitalism, nor taking part in the industrial revolution."¹

Few of English Coal Companies like – Messrs Jessop & company, Messrs Alexander & Company, Turn & Morison started the underground collieries. First Indian in the coal industry was Babu Dwarakanath Thakur. In 1835, Messrs Alexander & Company failed and the Raniganj mine, with its land and building passed into the hand of babu Dwarakanath Thakur and in 1837 he purchased also the Cinakuri mines from another British company. There were number of incidences of the handover with in the British

¹ Coal Industry in West Bengal by P. K. Chakrabarty

Companies and the Indian industrialists. In 1843 the concern of messrs Carr, Tegore & Company and of Gilmore Homfray company were amalgamated into the Bengal Coal Company. This became the dominant company of the coal industry in West Bengal having many of the extensive collieries in the Ranigange field.

In 1846, Babu Gobinda Prasad Pandit opened Searsole colliery. The major Indian coal companies at that time were The Equatable Coal Company, The Raniganje Coal Association and the Birbhum Coal Company. There were a number of small and sporadic coal companies by the local Zamindar, and other rich people. Some small companies did not introduce the steam locomotives.

The impetus to the development of this industry in West Bengal came from the demand of coal for steam navigation which commenced here in 1828. The inland steamers depended on the supply of coal received in Calcutta from the Ranigange coal field. This coal was sent by country boats to Amta through the Damodar. The water in the Damodar River was so shallow that it could be used only in the rainy season. The uncertainty of navigation in the Damodar throughout the year created interruptions in the supply of coal at that time.

In fifties of the eighteenth century, the foundations of the two important modern industries- cotton and jute, were laid. These two industries contributed much to the development of coal industry. After 1854, the development of this industry was facilitated by the construction of Railways. The railways themselves were big purchasers of coal. Besides, they helped the distribution of coal from the mines to the industrial centers. Naturally, their extension widened the coal market. In fact, 1858 was the first year of recorded production. From that year several promising mines, which were temporarily closed, were reopened. Some of the new collieries also entered into the arena. The growth of this industry was also helped to a large extent by the demand generated by the establishment of iron and steel industry, tea industry, port trusts, and other factories in and around Calcutta. In 1883, the whole of the Indian trade opened and the East India Company ceased to figure exclusively as a commercial organization. This declaration of freedom of Indian trade and consequent inflow of private enterprise immensely affected the course of the development of this industry.

During the period of Second World War sixty collieries came into existence and only one colliery went out of operation, but the coal output fell, on an average, by 49 thousand metric tons annually. Forty collieries were opened during the immediate post war period, i.e. 1946-48 and these years witnessed an annual average rise in output by 268 thousand metric tons. As such during a period of 10 years beginning from 1939, 100 collieries came into existence. The speed of bringing new mines under operation, however, decelerated significantly after 1948. Between 1949 and 1968, only forty nine new collieries were started, but at the same time fifty one mines went out of operation. This district, however, witnessed an average annual increase in output by 575 thousand metric tons during this period.

Coal Output in West Bengal

Year	Production (in thousand metric ton)
1858	217
1859	328
1860	313
1899	2397
1901	2669
1911	3859
1921	4260
1931	5810
1941	7937
1951	9646
1961	17155
1971	17285
1976	24023

2.2 Nationalization of coal

Till 60s the commercial coal mining was done by the private companies. On account of the growing needs of the steel industry, a thrust had to be given on systematic exploitation of coking coal reserve. Also there was a growing pressure to increase the productivity of the mines in scientific way with better conservation of coal. To meet the above requirements a huge investment is required in the coal mines. Adequate capital investment was not forthcoming from the private coal mine owners. Unscientific mining practices adopted by some of them and poor working conditions of labour in some of the private coal mines became matter of concern for the government. Then Central Government took the decision to nationalization of private coal mine. Government made rearrangement of the coal mines from the angle that "coal at any cost".

In the prenationalisation era, only two public sector companies viz Singarani Collieries Company Ltd. (SCCL) in Andhra Pradesh and National Coal Development Corporation (NCDC) existed contributing to 30.5% of national production. Acting on the recommendations of a number of committees, trade union leaders and others, the central government decided to nationalize the coal mines of the country. In the first step, coking coal mines were taken over on 16th October, 1971. The mines were nationalized on 1st May, 1972 and started operating under Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCCL). This was quickly followed by another action of the government which ultimately led to the formation of ECL. The Coal Mines (take over of Management) Ordinance, 1973 came into force with effect from 30th January, 1973. The non coking coal mines were nationalized on the 1st May, 1973 and brought under the management of the Coal Mines Authority Limited (CMAL). BCCL and CMAL were later merged and a holding company, Coal India Ltd. (CIL) was constituted on 1st November, 1975. The holding company had four coal producing subsidiaries i.e. Eastern Coalfields Limited (ECL), Bharat Coking Coal Ltd (BCCL), Central Coalfield Ltd (CCL) and Western Coalfields

Limited(WCL) and one planning and design subsidiary i.e. Central Mine Planning and Design Institute Ltd. (CMPDIL).²

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2.7 History of the workers

FROM THE BEGINNING OF COAL INDUSTRY IN COLONIAL PERIOD TO 1920S

The Ranigange coal belt was mainly forest area. From district gazetteer of 1910 “A hundred years ago the whole of the tract was a wilderness of the forest and Jungle dotted at long intervals with tiny clearings and settlements.” The inhabitants of this area were mostly tribal and semi tribal engaged in agriculture and partly dependent on the gathering of forest produce. Gradual increase in coal production totally destroyed the forest along with their original livelihood. So people who were dependent on the resources of forest have started there new life in the dark of coal mines. From the earliest days of mining, labours were drawn from the local villages or from the neighboring districts. The colliery workers were mostly local or short distance migrant. Most of the mines workers are Bouri - lower caste Hindu and Santals. Like the early stages of England, almost same proportion of female were engaged in the mines. Children also came to work in the mines with their family. For Ranajit Das Gupta: “Ever since the beginning of the colliery industry, the mine workers - overwhelmingly Santals, Bauris and other so called aboriginal groups – used to work in family groups consisting of husband, wife and children. While the adult males or miners proper cut the coal at the pit face, women and children loaded it into baskets or tubs and carried it to the shaft bottom.”³ In early 1920s women constituted around a third of the total mine workers. The miners were frequently absent from the work. Das Gupta said that reason of absenteeism was not because of the separation from the family but they are eager to cultivate their land in the rainy season. So even in the twentieth century the link with agriculture was not removed. Also there was a demand of the tribal-communal social life.

The owners of the mines could hardly establish any control over the coal miners. They came for there own will (nijer khushite) and also withdrew from work according to their own will. Also there was merciless exploitation of the coal workers. The environment of underground mines was not suitable to work. Most of the mines were accident prone. When some of the workers of a particular shift were trapped by any accident then the remaining lives were taken inside the mines to eliminate proof of accident. So the workers were not willing to do the job in the dark of mines with insufficient wage and diseases from dust. When accident occurred in a mines then they shifted enmass to another mine. To manage this problems the mine owners gave them a piece of land for cultivation to settle down at colliery areas. (Generally the Santals were settled in the colliery areas as part time mine workers and agricultural workers.)

² Reengineering in a public sector Enterprise by R.N. Mishra, A.K. Sen

³ Labour and Working class in Eastern India : Studies in Colonial History by Ranajit Das Gupta, 1994

Thus in this period the workers did not participate fully in the capitalist production process. Parally they had deep link with old production system. The mine owners used the feudal zamindar-praja relationship. There were no documents about the conditions of the miners and no evidence of mines' inspection. But the exploitation of capital continued. The main features of protest against exploitation were expressed in the return to their own villages for agriculture and superstition, grown from frequent accident in the mines. According to Ranajit Das Gupta, before 1920 no organized protest happened in the mines. But from the novel Mahakaler Ghorah, of Pafulla Kumar Shingha we came to know about the sporadic unrest among the miners. The new form of relationship was termed as miners-agriculturalist by Ranajit Das Gupta. Even in the consequence of capitalist development the owners did not regulated the mines for increased production and scientific extraction of coal. They did not feel any urge to make necessary skilled labour by homogenizing individual skill. Workers of specific community were efficient for specific jobs. Different types of work were distributed mostly community wise.[]

2.4 FIRST COAL MINES ACT, 1920 TO PER-NATIONALIZATION PERIOD

Here the colonial period as well as the post – colonial period is discussed together because the nature of capitalism of the two periods did not have much difference. Basically after 1920s indigenous capital was in the perdominat position.[P.K. Chakrabarty] In the next 25 years the role of the state and the owners of mines have not changed. After Indipendence of India with rapid increase of the Indian industry the demand of coal also increased. So mechanization of mines became necessary. But after mechanization it was required to make efficient and more productive labour force. The workers were collected from the distance province. The owners of the mines gave commission to the recruiting contractors, recruiting sardars, etc. They collected workers by rooming village after village. There were two established agency – Raniganje Coalfield Central recruiting Organization and Directorate of Unskilled labour for the recruitment from UP, Bihar, Orrisha, Panjab etc at the time of Second World War. Most of the workers preffered to go in the war because the salary was high and also for a long time the working condition in coal mine remained unbearable and risk prone. Other enmass recruitments were from Gorakhpur. In the depot of Gorakhpur workers were admitted to supply in the Raniganje Coal Mines. The traditional tribal mine workers were replaced by the upcountry labour as they were more efficient to cope up with machine.

From 20s some regulatory and welfare activities regarding miners had started. In 1912 Asansol Mines Board of Health was established. Indian Mines Act came in the picture in 1923. From 1929 female labour had been prohibited in the Under Ground mines. Gradually wage, provident fund scheme and other labour rights were established through the state. However, due to the geo-mining condition, mines of this belt are spread over a wide area. Labours are under threat of the owners and “remained cut off from institutionalized social life and remain unaware of the methods of getting redress for their grivences usually associated with industrial labour(e.g. mass meeting, petitioning, strike, formal organization etc.)[] So the owners did not feel any pressure from the state and also from the organized labour movements to implement the rules and regulations. Despandy

report of the mine workers, 1946 gave ample evidences about the unwillingness of the mines owners to improve the conditions of the miners. Deshpande also documented the different conditions of workers under different owners. So it cannot be said that all workers had equal status in all the coal companies.

The organized movements developed from 1920s against the capitalist exploitation. First organized militant movement occurred in the month of December, 1920. Outsiders came to organize the miners against exploitation. The workers movements reached its peak in 50s and 60s.

CHAPTER -3

Changes within the last 15 years

3.1 Introduction

In the beginning of the 90s one important event was the introduction of the new economic policy. Broadly, new economic policy initiated the gradual withdrawal of state from the control of basic industry and infrastructure. The basic industry and service sectors were open up for free entry of private and foreign capital. By decreasing the import duty, Indian market is opened for the foreign goods. Even the import duty of coal was gradually decreased to facilitate the global market. So the effect of new economic policy in the consequence of globalization also falls on the coal sectors. We now see what sort of changes have taken place in the coal sector.

3.2 Change in policy

3.2.1 Captive Coal Mining

Under the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973, coal mining is exclusively reserved for the public sector. By an amendment to the act in 1976, two exceptions to the policy were introduced viz. (i) captive mining by private companies engaged in production of iron and steel and (ii) sub-lease for coal mining to private parties in isolated small pockets not amenable to economic development and not requiring rail transport, were allowed. Considering the need to augment power generation and to create additional capacity during the VIII plan period, the Government decided to allow private participation in the power sector. The coal mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973 was amended w.e.f. 9.6.1993 to allow private sector participation in coal mining for generation of power, for washing of coal obtained from mine or for other end uses to be notified by government from time to time in addition to the existing provision for production of iron and steel. Mining of coal for production of cement has also been permitted by the government vide notification dated 15.3.96. One hundred and forty-three captive mining blocks have been identified for captive mining. Out of which 50 blocks stand allotted so far and 4 blocks have started production. Tara (East) to WBSEB, Tara (West) to WBPDC and Sarisatoly to M/s RPG Industries/CESC Ltd were allotted on 14/07/1995, 17/04/1996 and 10/08/1993 respectively.

3.2.2 New Coal Mining Policy

Coal mining continues in the public sector except for captive mining purpose and a Bill, namely the Coal Mines (Nationalization) Amendment Bill, 2000, has already been introduced in parliament to open up the coal sector to private investment. The bill was referred to the standing committee on energy for examination and report. The standing committee has since submitted its report which was tabled on both the Houses of Parliament in August, 2001. The committee has recommended for adoption of the bill subject to certain conditions. Meanwhile, a new policy dimension has been added by the policy decision taken by the Government. Under this decision, the state government

companies or undertakings are allowed to do mining of coking and non coking coal or lignite reserves, either by opencast or underground method, anywhere in the country. ¹

3.2.3 Decrease in import duty

In 1993, coal was put on Open General Licence. The import duty of coal gradually decreased from 85 % of 93 to 5% of 2004. As per the present import policy, coal can be freely imported (Under Open General Licence) by the consumers themselves considering their needs and exercising their own commercial judgments. Coking coal is being imported by Steel Authority of India Limited and other steel manufacturing company mainly to bridge the gap between the requirement and indigenous availability and to improve the quality of overall blend for technological reasons. Coal based power plants, cement plants, captive power plants, sponge iron plants, industrial consumers and coal traders are importing noncoking coal on considerations of transport logistic and commercial prudence as well as against export entitlements. Coke is imported mainly by pig-iron manufacturers and iron and steel sector consumers using mini blast furnace. The details of the import of coal and product during the last five years are given below.

Coal	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Total Import	12.25	16.07	15.01	19.31	23.62	23.29	24.89	23.58

Source: report of the CMIE

The total amount of imported Coke from China has increased from 79852 ton in 1993-94 to 2 metric ton in 1997-98. In the mean time the production of the Coke by indigenous company was reduce from the 79% to 2.5%.[]

So to compete with impoted coal, it is not possible to increase the price of coal after withdrawal of the regulation in Coal Price. There is a desperate need to decrease the production cost of coal. To do this ECL has taken two steps. One is to mechanize the production of the Underground Mines and second is giving more importance to Open Cast Mines.

3.2.4 Withdrawal of coal price regulation

After nationalization central government regulates the price of coal to give it to the big industrialists at lower price. With the increase in the production cost there was no effort to redetermine the price of coal. For R.N. Mishra "Ranigange coal has never got its due share arising out of its special properties and also for the difficult conditions under which it is won. Administered coal price is fixed on the basic of average normative coast as well as low cost mines over entire CIL. As a result, companies having low cost mines derive additional benefits at the cost of companies like ECL having predominately high cost mines.

¹ Depart of Coal-Annual Report 2003-04 – see for detail

Although it does not make any difference on CIL as a whole, companies like ECL has been continually at the receiving end. The concept of CPRA has been introduced to overcome this lacuna. However the way CPRA is operated, the adverse impact of the average normative price is not fully taken care of. It is common knowledge that Ranigange coal fetches substantial premium in the open market though the ECL does not reap the benefit.”[] But in the mean time the entry of cheap imported coal and the introduction of natural gas for the Power Plants restrict to increase the price of coal by ECL and the other subsidiaries.

3.2.5 Withdrawal of Subsidy

From the very inception, ECL is losing with its large number of old and Underground mines having complicated geo-mining condition. The amount of yearly losses of ECL is given below.

years	Loss (Crores)	Years	Loss (Crores)	years	Loss (Crores)	years	Loss (Crores)
1976	26	1995	187	99-00	728.23	03-04	322.98
1982	92	1996	233	00-01	917.19	04-05	
1992	326	1997	338	01-02	277.64		
1993	347	1998	533	02-03	338.78		

Source : ECL

Since the main aim of coal nationalization was ‘Coal at any cost’, annual central subsidy was a part of the yearly budgets till 1992-93. The price of coal was regulated by the central government. The price of high quality coal was more in the market than the regulated price of coal by the government. So till 1995-96 ECL got the subsidy from Coal Price Regulation Account (CPRA). With phasing out of budgetary support and stoppage of free flow of fund through CPRA all subsidiaries are instructed to be self-reliant.² From 1984 to 1996 the total amount of subsidy accumulated to Rs. 3,230 crores of which Rs. 467 was in 94-95 and Rs. 546 in 95-96.

3.2.6 Loan from World Bank

For development in the production, CIL borrowed Rs. 4000 Crores from World Bank and Exim bank of Japan. The main agreement between the WB and the Coal India Limited is to make Global Tender for purchasing necessary equipments. Also no sick industry can not fillup tender. So the main two public sector units – MAMC, Durgapur and HEC, Ranchi are not even capable to participate in the competition. The main clause of the tender are (a) whether machines are already for delivery. (b) whether the concern exports machines, (c) how short is the delivery schedule, etc. In the occasional paper series : 1

² A brief on Eastern Coalfield Limited, dec,2004

about Eastern Coal field Limited, Nagarik Manch told that "These go against public sector units and most Indian companies manufacturing such machines. Multinational companies are awarded contracts. World Bank, on whose assistance such machines are purchased, often have investments in such companies too eg. Hardischfieger, completing the vicious cycle. Maintenance contracts of such machines are often as high as a whopping 201%".³

3.2.7 The mechanization of production of coal from Under Ground mines

From the pre-nationalization period there was a process of mechanization in the coal production of UG mines by mechanized Long Wall method. In Cinakuri – I, the deepest mine of Asia, the mechanized long wall mining was running till the middle of 90s. But most of the geo-mining conditions of mines are not suitable for Long Wall mining. Rs. 3600 crores have been invested for the development project. Within this, 2000 crores are for the five big project. Three of them are Under Ground projects – Satgram, Janjhra, and Khottadi and two Open Cast Project – Sonepur Bajari and Rajmahal. The required machines of the long wall projects were purchased from the French, Russian company. The output per man shift has to be increased in long wall mining. But the long wall machines were not suitable for the respective collieries. The particularities of the geo-mining conditions were not considered. So the project of the long wall mining in the Under Ground mines became failure.

But the big Open Cast Project of Sonepur Bagari and Rajmahal are successfully running. They have purchased Heavy Earth Moving Machine popularly known as HEMM by which the rate of coal production is very high. Within this machine are Doser, Dumper, Hall pack, Shovel, Drill machines etc. To operate these machine one skilled operator and one semi skilled helper are essential. Overall these machines are used as a labour replacing technology. In these type of projects the output per man-shift is very high.

3.2.8 Closer of the loss making Under Ground Mines and Outsourcing of 17 Coal Reserved Patches

With a large number of underground mines, loss making ECL has become sick company under SICA 1985. With the withdrawal of cross subsidy between all the subsidiaries of CIL as well as subsidy by the Central Government in the era of new economic policy, ECL has been declared as a sick company under SICA 1985 in 1997. By converting the government loan to equity ECL came out from BIFR. Again ECL was referred to BIFR in 2001. State Bank of India (SBI) as an operating agency of ECL has given eleven proposals in their revival packages for ECL. One of the proposals is outsourcing of some coal patches, suitable for OCP mines for a short period. Other proposals are closer of 26 UG mines and some financial support from central and state government and CIL. Among all the other proposals outsourcing of the small coal reserved patches and the closer of the

³ 'Where cows eat coal on the sly', Eastern Coalfields Limited, A Fact finding Report By Nagarik Mancha 20 November 1998. (Ref-1)

Underground mines are getting consent of the ECL authority. Already the four numbers mines have been closed.

So ECL has initiated contractual extraction of coal from opencast mines by private contractors through outsourcing of ten coal reserve patches of ECL. It has also called tender from private contractors for another seven coal patches. ECL has target to gain some profits by selling coal which is produced in lower cost than ECL by private contractors bypassing the national coal wage agreement. So it is obvious that there is a requirement of some informal mode of production.

3.2.9 Other private initiatives

After mid - nineties the opening of captive coal mines and outsourcing in ECL have given birth to another form of informal activities in the coal sector. Coal Mines Nationalization Act, 1973 was amended w. e. f. 9.6.1993 to allow private sector participation in coal mining for generation of power by private sector^[3]. According to this amendment, Sarsatali, Tara (East) and Tara (West) coal blocks are allotted to M/S RPG Industries/ CESC Ltd, M/S WBSEB and WBPDCCL respectively for captive mining. In 1996, WBSEB and WBPDCCL have jointly opted for operation of coal in joint venture with share of 74% of a private agency - Eastern Minerals & Treading Agency (EMTA) and for extraction and dispatch of coal to the power stations, to EMTA vide an agreement between the company and EMTA^[4]. This is the first colliery from where extraction and despatch of coal is done totally by a private agency. In the next step, the first major private colliery of India, Sarsatali Coal Mines Project, sponsored by Integrated Coal Mines Ltd (ICML), a subsidiary of CESC, has started open cast project on the virgin land of 2615 acres. ICML has also engaged the private contractor, G.S. Atwal for coal production.

CHAPTER -4

PRESENT STATUS OF THE COAL WORKERS

4.1 Introduction

Who are the coal workers? This is the most relevant question at that time. One dialog of a person of the adjacent area of the newly developed Open Cast Mines is that "Most of the workers of the Open Cast Mines are from outsiders and very few local people got the job in the OCP. Number of people collect livelihood from the residue of OCP. (akhan anakai kare kshache) Who are the people in the group of Kare khawor dale? Are they workers? One researcher, who is concern about the working class, is responsible to consider these all people who earn money from the Coal. We discussed in the previous section that till today no one dealt with the workers except the workers of ECL. However the new private initiative outside the public sector has the history of less than ten years. But they are not concern about the large and most probably same number as organized workers of the 'illegal' mines. The history of illegal coal mines has been started after the nationalization of all small private collieries. Now some of the type of mines has achieved some sort of legal protection.¹ In this project we consider the workers legal, illegal, recognized and unrecognized, who earn money from coal of the Asansol-Raniganje coal belt.

The new development in the coal industry of Asansol - Raniganje make a sharp distinction between organized and unorganized workers and the unrecognized workers of the 'illegal' and 'private' mines and the wage earner from the resedue of the Open cast Mines and collected coal at the road of coal transport. Here we not only discuss the objective difference between these three types of workers. Also give the impression of their own perception about their past and present life. One thing is clear in the open eyes that the organized workers are privileged section among them. And unorganized sectors workers are more exploited. This is said not from the angle that the workers have feelings of 'privileged' and 'exploited'. Mark Holmstrom raised the question that "are organized

¹ From the minutes of the meeting by the district magistrate, Burdhaman on 02.07.97 at 11.00 a.m. in the chamber of A.D.M, Asansol regarding legal aspects of illegal mining and illegal transportation of coal "Chief Mining Officer (CMO) W.B. explained the house that under Coal Mines Nationalization Act. only 312 collieries were nationalized. The rest of the collieries were left free for carrying on their activities. Later on (in the year 1976) by an amendment under sec 33 of the above act. The Government of India and Ministry of coal announced that the collieries which were left over would also come with in the preview of this act and empowered only the Government companies for such coal mining activities. But in the virgin land some collieries were opened by the private owners who whenever intercepted by police etc. took shelter of Hon'ble High Court. In its turn the Hon'ble high court passed orders in favour of the above private owners and even some cases even appointed Receivers. There remained around 76 such cases. The process was going on until 1980. When the Hon'ble Supreme Court passed an order restraining operation of such coal mines even where Receivers were operating. But only recently in 1996. Due to central government liberation policy, they again started moving the high court and able to run their illegal business with the help of Receivers appointed by the Hon'ble High Court. In this situation Hon'ble Supreme Court, when moved, opined that until and unless the appointment of receivers was canceled, no police or administrative action could be administered."

and unorganized sector industrial workers two classes with different and conflicting interests?²

4.2 Organized workers of ECL

There are formal data sets and official documents about the workers of the organized sector. Broadly the workers of coal India Limited and also Eastern Coal Field limited are categorized by Standardization Committee, constituted under National Coal Wage Agreements. The category-wise total number of workers of the organized public sector of ECL are given bellow.

92-93	CATAGORY	UNDER GROUND	SURFACE		TOTAL
			MALE	FEMALE	
A	Executive				
B	Monthly Rated				
C	Daily Rated				
D	Piece Rated				
E	Casual				
F	Badly				
G	Trainee				
	Total				

03-04	CATAGORY	UNDER GROUND	SURFACE		TOTAL
			MALE	FEMALE	
A	Executive	790	1729	65	2584
B	Monthly Rated	5280	15000	1239	21519
C	Daily Rated	35525	19896	3565	58986
D	Piece Rated	19985	2913	3550	26448
E	Casual		2	1	3
F	Badly	17	2	1	20
G	Trainee	309	154	109	572
	Total	61906	39696	8530	110132

Source: official document of Head quarter of ECL, Sankhthoria

² Industry and Inequality by Mark Holmstrom

For understanding the background of stratification of the ECL workers, there we give a brief description about the nature of work of the above category³. The full reference of these categories is in the document No 15.

Monthly rated: Broadly two type of staff, technical and supervisory staff, clerical staff are the monthly rated workers. Within ten departments of ECL we have selected for interview only the workers of mining and engineering department because the supervisory staff of these two departments with their technical expertise are directly related to the production process of a mine.

Daily rated: From highly skilled to unskilled workers under the supervisor (Monthly rated), who give manual labour for production of coal are in this category. Depending upon the following factors daily rated workers are divided in unskilled, semi-skilled lower, semi-skilled higher, skilled junior, skilled senior, higher skilled.

(a) Degree of skill (b) strain of work (c) experience involved (d) training required (e) responsibility undertaken (f) mental and physical strain (g) disagreeableness[] of task. fatigue involved.

Piece rated: In general, the workers of this category are related with the loading and unloading operation. They get wage for a definite volume of loading and unloading work.

Within 30 years of nationalization, the number of the workers of the ECL decreased from 1.85 lakhs in 1975-76 to 1.10 lakhs in 2003-04. After 1985 there is no new recruitment in ECL. But a large number of workers has got the job in the land looser cases. These lands were acquired for the new mines and the expansion of old mines. According to the clause of NCWA (9.4.0) there is a scope of one employment to one dependent of a worker who is permanently disabled in his place. Also through a circular for the replacement of female workers with a dependent male worker some young people got job in ECL. In the clause-9.3.1 of NCWA there is a position of new recruitments for the death cases. Now-a-days the restriction in the recruitment, in the above three cases became a sensitive issue in the Asansol- Ranigange colliery belt. Due to this type of new recruitment a sizeable number of educated (minimum secondary pass-out) workers are the new characteristic of the last 10 -12 years. For last 6 to 7 years new recruitments in the above clauses are totally stoped. Without detailed survey or authentic documents we received an impression that new workers are not interested to give physical labour in the Underground mines. The workers of working face of the UG mines give highest laborious job of the coal cutting, blasting, and load inject. Other laborious jobs are to transport the heavy mechinary from the surface to the underground. But the new recruiters are very much interested to work in the surface. So they make change in the post influencing the union leaders. On the other hand the aged persons do not get the opportunity to leave from the age old same hard manual labour. There is an impact in the production because absenteeism rate of the loader who is the main force of the coal production is still very high - about 40%. The main allegation of most of the persons with whom we have

³ Bedside Coal by Cittaranjan Sengupta

interacted, is that there are surplus labour in the surface and shortage in the direct production area.

Now the workers of ECL are organized in several tread unions. They have secured job, fixed scale of salary and medical facility and other social securities according to the norms of NCWA-VI. The workers of ECL are categorized according to the type of job and necessary skill. Some of the workers are assigned for the job of the surface. The most laborious job is done by the under ground loaders in the UG mines. But in open cast mines there is not required any manual loading. Heavy Earth Moving Machine (HEMM) does most of the works, such as - removal of the surface above the coal seams, loading and transportation of coal. The requirement of manpower in OCP is lower than the UG mines. In some cases ECL hires HEMM with its manpower. After piled up of coal from working face of OCP to the earth surface there is required the transportation up to the railway siding. The coal transportation of the Mega project of Rajmahal OCP has been outsourced to contractors. Like other five organized sectors the situation of workers are very well known to everybody.

According to National Coal Wage Agreement of JBCCI pay scale, job security and social security have been established by law. But what happened really?

An important feature is that the management of the mines after nationalization remained in the hand of contractors and supervisors of the pre-nationalization period. However the earning of this section of the people reduced drastically. So they became desperate to syphon out money from this industry by engaging in corruption, theft etc. To get quick promotion they extracted coal in a very unplanned way just like the period of company. So they did not show any willingness for reconstruction and reorganisation of the mines for increased production with scientific conservation. This condition had been reflected on the behavior with the workers. Dealings with the workers on different issues were not just regulated according to the law. A dominant feature was the will of managers. If the manager is good then the solutions regarding industrial dispute, like sanction of leave, transfer, job allotments, shift from under ground to the surface were done regularly. If manager is not good then the situation becomes worse. The Tread Union leaders are the mediator between the workers and the managers. The workers were totally dependent on the Union Leaders. Despite the increase in wages, jobs security, medical facility, decrease in rate of accidents, the state of the workers can be summed up as follows --

1. Absenteeism rate remains at 42-45% for the loaders.
2. Almost no spread of education among the miners.
3. Now the Tread Union Leaders became Ma-baap to the workers instead of old sardars and owners of the mines.
4. There still exists other forms of exploitation except economic exploitation. Women workers are asked to do the domestic works in the Bungalow of the higher authorities of the ECL.
5. Corruption in the recruitment of the workers under medical unfit ground by the middleman, Tread Union etc.

4.3 Unorganized labours

Table: Number of Unorganized workers

	Outsourced patches of ECL	Bengal EMTA	ICML	Others
From official documents	nil	800	512	-
From the rough estimate (variable, sec -)	1000	NA	NA	100000
Workers under subcontractors, involved in partial works like coal transport, coal sampling	500	2000	600	NA

Source : Environmental Management Plane of M/S Bengal EMTA Limited, collected data from the office of G.S. Atwal and survey report.

There is no document or official record available about the unorganized workers of the outsourced coal patches of ECL and the new private initiatives.

Unorganized Workers of Private initiatives and contractors

The dominant mode of production of M/S Bengal EMTA Coal Mines Ltd and ICML and outsourced patches of ECL are of informal nature. All the above-mentioned coal companies and the contractors, who are related directly with the production of coal, are registered in the official document. So they are formal according to the government records. They also have a small formal structure of management. The officers, supervisory staffs, clerks are in this formal structure. They are directly appointed in M/S Bengal EMTA Coal Mines Ltd., ICML etc., who have officially permanent job with fixed salary, pension and gratuity. But the total production procedure is run by the contractual methods. There is a main contractor for coal production and transport. This contractor has a number of sub-contractors for different jobs. Heavy Earth Moving Machines (HEMM) mainly does the coal production from these open cast collieries. So in some cases, the main contractor hires the HEMM with its operator and helpers. However, most of the workers have no identity card or any formal record. Also the number and existence of particular subcontractors in a colliery have both regular and irregular characteristic. Even there are a number of contractors who are not license holders. So the dominant nature of production relations – production process and dealing with manpower, is informal and also unorganized.

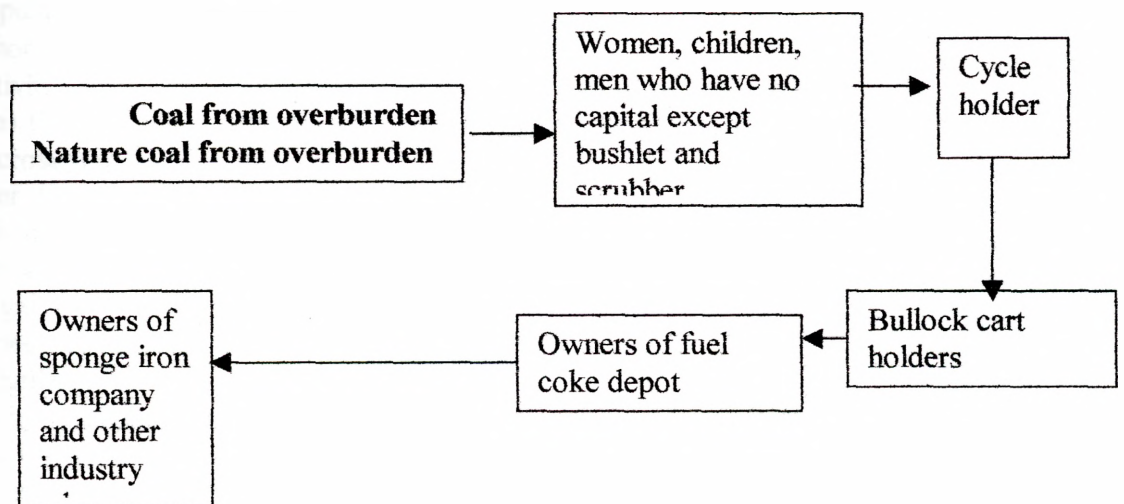
1. **Workers of contractors and subcontractors directly related with production.**
Next type workers are under contractors and subcontractors directly related with production. Heavy Earth Moving Machines (HEMM) mainly does the coal production from these open cast collieries. In some cases, the main contractor hires the HEMM with its operator and helpers. This contractor has a number of sub-contractors for different jobs. Most of them are outsiders or migrant workers from Bihar, UP and other districts of West-Bengal. Generally one senior worker informs the next worker of his own village and one of his relatives. This is the dominant way of recruitment of the outside workers. In most of the cases initially there is no written recognition as a workers of the mines. Even the employer does not make any verbal commitment about the wages, different facilities, leave etc. simply there is no job contract. So these workers have no formal status based upon the written contract. From interview of the workers we get the impression that in the era of large reserve pool of labour force the employer is powerful to take action against labour. After 10 years of the first initiative till today there are no rules or regulations, nor the promotion scheme, pension scheme, increment, pay scale etc. All are running according to the employers' own will. He got some of the documents of the factory inspector. But when I went to the Regional Labour Commissioner office then they said they have no authentic documentation about the workers of the above three cases. There is huge variations in the number of workers in every inspection. It is true that the requirement of workers varies from time to time in the Open Cast Coal Mines. For ex. production is low in the rainy season. But I asked to get the record the way they have it. Yet they denied me the data. They also said that the wage data cannot be given as there was no fixation of wage for the coal workers. I cannot understand why the wage data are not available which is given to the miners. As there are no rules the owner increases wages or gives promotion according to his own will to his own selected workers. According to the workers – the loyal workers are benefited. Only 68 land looser of Sarsatali Open Cast Coal Mines project got job under the main contractor G.S. Atwal and Co. of ICML. The job of these land-looser is permanent through out the age of Sarsatali OCP according to an agreement with the ICML and local administration. The main initiators to organize the workers of Sarsatali OCP under the tread unions are these 68 land-losers. This is the only union in this belt outside Nationalized coal. But this is not affiliated with any existing Tread Union of coal. Except 68 workers some outsiders are the members of this union. But no one under subcontractors is connected with the union.

2. **Workers of Railway Siding :**Local people of the affected village due to Open Cast Mines of Bengal EMTA and Sarisatali coal mines project were used to collect coal from the abandoned Tara colliery and illegal rat hole type private mines within the lease-hold area of two OCP. Also the peasants and agricultural labours of the acquired land for OCP have been replaced gradually with the expansion of OCP. They demanded for job in the mines. But the mechanized OCP is not able to generate sufficient employment for the local people. So with in the control of the local party around 1500 to 2000 people got the job to separate stone from coal and to make proper size of coal before loading at wagon. The owner of

one mine purchased a machine for this job. But it could not be installed due to resistance of local people. One official of the Bengal EMTA said that they have not introduced machine for giving job to the local people. They are working in group of seven to ten of a village. They do not have job for the whole year. These groups work in piece rate under the supervision of a munshi or sardar. A particular job is assigned for every group and total earning is received by munshi from the Coal Company. And then he distributes the total earning in same proportion. All groups of the Bengal EMTA siding are divided in two divisions. One division is allowed to work 20 days in a month and other group is allowed to work for another ten days in a month. This process has been taken in the course of unofficial agreement with the local political party to stop the unrest among local jobless people. So now political party becomes the sardar.

One important characteristic should be mentioned in the era of so called free market, though it is a very small feature. All groups of the Bengal EMTA siding are divided in two divisions. One division is allowed to work for 20 days in a month and other group is allowed to work for another ten days in a month. This process has been taken in the course of unofficial agreement with the local political party to stop the unrest among local jobless people.

3. Self employed people: They are not socially recognized workers. The process of the wage earning is a chain of the different mode production.



These workers are engaged to earn money from rejected coal product, which is not used in power plant, extracted from OCP. With the help of their one means like scrubber, shovel and basket, women, men, children, in fact all members of a family go to collect coal in one or two pieces from the overburden (piled up mud and stone of the surface above the coal seams as a small hill) of the Open Cast Mines of ECL and captive mines through out the day. They also wait by side of the road to collect

coal, which fall from the moving dumper.) This people are popularly known as *Kawla Kurani*. After a whole day of collection they sell one bag of coal to a carrier popularly known as *cycle-wala*. This man then carry nearly 3-4 quintal bag of coal by cycle to the nearest coal depot or the Asansol town for sell. Thus *Kawla Kurani* sells collected coal to *cycle-wala*, then *cycle-wala* to the owner of Bulluc Cart from whom the owner of coal depot and lastly the owner of depot sells it in the market or the owner of the truck. In this way this type of intermediary process is continuing. The owners of private initiatives, local party, local administration or state allow this way of earning year after year. At the time of collection of coal, accidents occur quite frequently due to the landslide at the surface of the hill of piled over-burden. But these peoples till make jokes at the time of telling about the accidents. This type of production or distribution process is not commensurate with the mass scale capitalist production system. But to run the low labour intensive mechanized collieries smoothly it is necessary to control the local unrest. So the natural question is does this necessity gives birth to last two types of workers?

4. Workers of private / illegal mines: These types of activity or mines are popularly known as illegal coalmines and the people who are involved in such activities are the illegal coal miners. Extraction of the coal from shallow depth coal seam is done by primitive manual process with scrubber, shovel and basket. This coal is then transported by cycle, buffalo car to the nearest coking coal depot. The coking coal depots are licensed coking coal preparation sites. With small amount of licensed coal from ECL to sell in the open market, the coal of illegal mines is dispatched from depose. Many boys and girls, men and women are engaged in this activity, which is popularly known as *Koyla kara* or *koyla chhalano*. This is the main reason of dropout from school in this area. There are no primary data sets available about these informal activities. From a document prepared by ECL, Santoria, On Illegal Mining (restricted use) they identified only 54 sites where persons involved are 2952. But this is a very microscopic view of this activity. A huge no of coal mines like rat holes are spread all over the coalfield. According to the news of Hindu by Pratim Ranjan Bose, the informal sector offers employment opportunities to a greater number of people than one lakhs and eight thousand manpower of ECL. It is true that a parallel economy of illegal coal mines is running in Asansol-Ranigange coal-belt. Generally there are varied types of production relations and also the activities are regular as well as irregular.

With legalization of the 'illegal' mines the primitive labour intensive production relation is also recognized. In many cases, owners of the mines are also labour of the mines. Small capital is gathered by a group of seven or eight persons and one 'illegal' mine is opened up. This group becomes the workers of the mine. Those people who are coming to give only labour from the nearest Birbhum, Jharkhand area, they have no trace of their name and address. Even the relatives deny to make any claims for the death because of the possibility of police harassment. Accidents are regular news of the paper. Out of necessity or due to small capital the employer-employee relationship is interdependent and co-existed. Even local party or power gives protection to both owners and labour. Naturally they together resist the police.

But the people came to know that coal will be exhausted with in 20 to 25 years. So by whatever means, even children leaving school, local people get involved in the festival of earning money. In the same frame of picture there are the co-existence of scrubber, shovel, and high capacity dozer, shovel, excavators and for the transporting purpose basket, cycle, bullock carts, dumper and high capacity Hall pack.

For the collection of oral history this stratification has been one. Only for first two groups primary data has been collected. In the new private initiatives and in the outsourced patches of ECL there are no categorization and as well as no pay scale according to the category of jobs and required skill. So from survey report we categories the non category of workers according to their work description comparing with the standard job description of the different category of the ECL workers. Ref (15, 16). A detail comparison between those category was made by us in Bengali of ref - 6) on December 2004 based on the survey conducted on August to September of 2004. Here we only give a summary of the comparison between the different types of workers.

Table-1 **List of Coal Companies**

Name of coal company	Nature of coal company	Official status of coal company	Mode of production
ECL	Public sector	Organized / Formal	Organized / Formal (except outsourced coal deposit patches)
		Unorganized / Informal	Unorganized / Informal (coal deposit patches of ECL)
M/s Bengal EMTA Coal Mines Ltd	Joint venture	Formal	Unorganized / Informal
Integrated Coal Mines Ltd.	Private company	Formal	Unorganized / Informal

Source: Survey

**Table-2 Group of Organized and Unorganized Coal Workers of Asansol
– Ranigange Coal-belt**

Naming of group	Group of workers (Formal/informal)	Naming of Sub-group	Sub-group of workers	Nature of job contract	Local/ outsider/ migrant	Skilled/ unskilled	Social recognition
A	Organized workers	1	Workers of ECL	Permanent	Local / Outsider / Migrant	Skilled/ unskilled	Service man and miner
		2	Workers of the main contractor of ICML	Temporary	Outsider / migrant	Skilled/ unskilled	Worker
B	Unorganized workers	1	Workers of contractor and subcontractors directly related with production	Temporary	Outsider / Migrant	Skilled/ unskilled	Worker
		2	Workers of railway siding	Job contract	Local	Unskilled	Day labour
		3	Self employed	Depend upon the availability of resource	Local	Unskilled	No specific terms
		4	Workers of private mines	Not known	Local / Outsider / migrant	Unskilled	Illegal miner

Source: Survey

Table-3 Comparisons between the organized and unorganized workers

Sl. No	Different parameter to judge the status of worker	Workers of ECL A1	ICML (Sarsatali Open Cast Project) A2, B1,	Outsourced patches of ECL B1	Bengal EMTA Co. Ltd. B1	Transport workers under sub-contractors B1	
1	Appointment letter	Yes	Employment card	No	No	No	
2	Permanent job / contractual job	Permanent	Temporary (Except 68 land looser)	Temporary	Temporary	Temporary	
3	Working hours	8	8	12	8	12	
	Wages	Maximum	7564.60	3850	3500	4400	3000
		Minimum	5635.59	1800	1650	1900	1500
	Holiday in a week	Sunday	One day	One day	One day	Nil	
	Medical facility	For all family members	Irregular for the worker of mines	No	Irregular for the worker of mines	No	
	Leave	As per government rule	35	No	30	No	
	Social security	Live cover scheme, Workmen's compensation scheme	compensation up to recovery	Not very clear picture	Not very clear picture	Not known	
	Accommodation	Quarter as per norms	Quarter or rented house as per availability	Temporary arrangement (kamp)	Temporary arrangement (kamp)	No	

Source: Survey

CHAPTER – 5 CONCLUSION

“In the end, everyone has her or his view of the world, which we may hope to understand but cannot reduce to a mere expression of self interest, or to ‘culture’, values and perceptions which each person learns without question. People motives and thought are more complex. But members of a group share ideas and assumptions, which reflect their common experience without being determined by it.” – Mark Holmstrom¹

He was trying to shade some light on the complex relationship and the interaction between organized and unorganized sector workers. His main aim to find out whether there is any concrete demarcation line which separates the two worlds of the two types of workers.

To give a more viable and clear picture one needs to separate different types of workers giving name of the particular types. But from our stratification of the ‘coal workers’ we see that there are varied types of wage earners. Some of the strata may not be accepted as workers in the classical sense. The ‘kayala kurani’ (coal pickers) cannot be termed as a wage labour traditionally. Also we see in the previous chapter that women are gradually replaced from the organized mode of production on one hand and on the other enter the informal way of production only for their survival. Huge number of workers of illegal mines are not able to speak openly that they are also workers. Here we are not interested to find out the separate wall or any group of common interest. We are trying to capture from the oral history the variations, isolations and side by side the commonness and solidarity between different sections of workers in the present changed situation. How they see the most important policy changes in the coal sector. Do the workers and Tread Unions have any concern? How they face the challenge.

Most of the workers, basically who are engaged directly to the coal production are very much ignorant about the present changes. One female worker said that “ [I do not know. In our mines our workers only extract coal] . The union representatives and the educated land losers and the new workers who got the job in the medical unfit ground are aware about the present situation.

Only one respondent of organized sector who is a union representative of Cinakuri colliery knows well about the present situation and the policy change. But the workers said much better about the present problems of his own colliery. We are able to collect only one sided view of the workers. So it may be biased opinions about the present situation of the colliery.

For understanding the reaction of the workers of Nationalized coal industry the words of the Arbind N Das is worth mentioning. “At earlier historical periods ‘labour’ was

¹ Industry and Inequality, A Social Anthropology of Indian Labour by Mark Holmstrom

understood as simultaneously labour force and labour movement. At such times, the labour movement was also understood as a combination of industrial, political and social demands with a vision of a world re-made in the image of labour. This vision has now commonly been reduced to the trade union with its economic or industrial, consumptionist or productionist, 'role' seen as functional to some existing economic structure, as subordinated as the political or social transformation project of non-working class forces."² It is important to note that the steps of privatization of colliery in the post nationalization period are not just the reversal of nationalization. The nationalized mines are not transferred directly to the private. Without any significant changes in the existing public sector, it is slowly opening up for private capital. Scarcity of investment is highlighted to rationalize the privatization. The CMD of the ECL give this reason behind outsourcing at the time of interview about outsourcing.

Second type of rationalization is that Coal India can not bear huge amount of wage cost. So the production of coal is done by the contract workers of private contractors with only one third of the wages of the nationalized coal workers and without any social security. In the opposite side, the salary of the organized workers are increasing gradually.

No Tread Unions have made any resistance when ECL leased out Tara block, abandoned colliery of ECL. Also there is no evidence of protest to stop the first private colliery. But a number of trade unions expressed their opposition on the ground that this is nothing but a back door privatization. For last one and a half year the media also highlighted this debate. It is claimed that the steps of outsourcing will really contribute to the revival of ECL and at the same time take care of workers' welfare . One section of Asansol – Ranigange coal belt of CITU was able to hold up the work of Belpahari OCP patches for some time. In the All India Coal Workers' Convention, in Asansole on 14th.sep,2003, TU delegates from all coal companies strongly opposed the steps towards "privatization through back-door" (and came out with a common statement with the demand to withdraw coal mines nationalization bill,2000, restore customs duty, stop outsourcing of coal mines to private parties and stop handing over of 31 blocks to state government for outsourcings them to contractors, implement NCWA-2 for entire coal industry including those working under contractors etc, with signatures of five recognized central trade unions). Also in the personal interview with the TU leaders they committed to make movement for implementation of NCWA. But we do not see any effective initiative to pressurize the private owners. In 2003 Bengal EMTA and the ICML were called to join in the Joint Bipartite Committee for Coal Industry. But till today they have avoided to sign in NCWA.

But these contract workers are not only the product of the recent changes. I have no exact data. Around last several years different type of Underground works are done by the private contractors by somehow maintaining the Contract Labour Regulation clause of NCWA with daily wage Rs 50 to 60/. But till today according to the

² Introduction of Working Class and The Labouring Poor in Developing Countries, edited by Arbind N Das, Fernando Rojas, Peter Waterman,

traditional thinking no movement has been build up to protect the rights of the contract labours in the leadership of the privileged and organized workers. Most of the workers, basically who are engaged directly to the coal production are very much ignorant about the present changes. One female worker said that “ “ [I do not know. In our mines our workers only extract coal] . The union representatives and the educated land losers and the new workers who got the job in the medical unfit ground are aware about the present situation.

We conducted a survey work to know about the reaction of the workers about outsourcing and the present changes about the coal industry on octover and November of 2002 which was published in a local magazine. The aim of the survey was collection of oral comments of different types of the workers about his own perception. From this survey the following voices came out.

1. No! No union told us about outsourcing. We came to know from the papers. What we can do? They are going to ban strikes too. What makes different by going to strike? Otherwise there is no lack in production or income. It is not possible to do any development if the theft in ECL not stopped. Main thing is theft.
2. No, we don't know, it may happen at the other places – not in our mines anything does not happen. Here workers do their work. Here we will not allow privatization.
3. The private owners do not look of their facilities of the workers. Now after completion of eight hours of the work we come out of the mine. They will increase the work hour.
4. [If mines are transferred to the hand of company then we have to come on time and return one hour after schedule. So what! We have to work and will work.]
5. No, we don't know. But surely (toby) the Tread Unions have agreed. Otherwise they can not start it directly. I heard from Raniganje and outside my area. But in our colliery there are not much meeting or sitting. Tread Union should inform us about outsourcing. We do not want the privatization of ECL.
6. My opinion is that the outsourcing of the coal reserved patches is very much necessary to give life to ECL from the loss. It is necessary to come out from the BIFR. The main reason behind the non implementation of wage board is the loss of ECL. So this system is required to survive ECL only, not for all Coal India. And they do not have right to sell coal outside. So only ECL can do profit.

7. There is no harm to the workers. New employment will be created. Some will get job. No worker of ECL will lose job due to this development. Has any Trade Union said that your job will be terminated?
8. We are not connected with any organization. But from the outside we realize that it is a positive side. But we have to see that what happens in future.
9. Let see what happens? (if outsourcing occurs)

From these views of the workers no one particular or homogeneous attitude comes into surface. Not only the views are varying according to different categories of workers. Within the same category also the opinions are becoming different. There is further scope of work to analyze the difference of opinion according to different types of workers. But one common feature is that the public sector workers who are protected under the National Coal Wage Agreement are least bothered and ignorant about the workers outside the NCWA. Interestingly we got number of workers' family, where one works in the public sector while other under private contractor. In that case both of them see this difference of conditions just a matter of fact. But they have no significance of this difference to them. They perceive the parallel existence of the two distinct production relations as an inevitable process.

In general when they talk about their perception about the past life then the old respondents could not give clear picture of the pre-nationalization period and the post nationalization period except a union activist of Chinakuri Colliery. Even that respondent also does not know clearly about the nationalization process. Another important feature is that even the union representative is not much aware about the condition and the mentality of the workers outside ECL. Till today there is not a single initiative to form union among the workers of the outsourced patches. We had some limitation in collecting detailed interview of the two workers of organized and unorganized sectors from the same family. We make the above comments just from the informal discussion with them.

The unorganized sectors workers have completely different type of opinion and situations within the same sector. To assess the overall impact of new changes on the work force it may be necessary to capture the different types of earning processes. One common feature from the collection of oral history is that most of the respondents expressed the opinion that government can make their life better. They do not exactly know about the condition of the workers of ECL. But they are aware about the good salary and the job security of the organized workers. Another interesting opinion is -

“The sons, wife of the ECL workers generally get the job in ECL”.

This is true that at this moment they do not have any expectation to reach the level of the workers of ECL. This is not a homogeneous feature of the unorganized workers. One of the workers of Bengal EMAT said that

“if the company grows then we will also develop and we hope that one day we shall reach at the level of ECL....Company with good reputation have much demand in the market. If ECL become loss making and we are profit making then we will exist. It is inevitable that Government salary is much better than private.One day we were in the jhupri (small hut), now we stay in pacca bari (concrete house).”

In the Asansol-Ranigange coal belt we see the existence of different types of production process and as a consequence different types of capital – labour relationship. From our discussion the following features of the capital - labour relationship can be identified.

1. The multiple forms or patterns of the working class and working class consciousness exist with in the one sectors instead of a single homogeneous category of workers.
2. No cohesion has build up within the above discussed different categories of production relations. Though within the same category there exists some sort of solidarity, but no universal principle has come out to bind multiple forms of relationships.
3. Protected workers, who are the product of one particular phase of capitalist development are becoming unprotected. Tread Unions are to some extent vocal about this category of workers but Tread Unions of the organized sectors have not come out in the leadership to retain the rights of the labours of all categories.

At this moment there is no effective initiative to organize or build up any social or working class movement to make a cohesion between all forms of labour. Another interesting feature is that the local parliamentary parties are not able to penetrate within all forms of relationship. For example one can come across people who do not even know the name of the ruling party of West Bengal. This is no civil society. But is it a political society as defined by Partha Chatterjee? In fact there is little scope to build up direct militant movements to raise the wages in the era of huge amount of reserve pool of unused labour. One recent initiative, started from the September,2004 under the leadership of ex-secretary of All India Coal Workers Federation(CITU) placed in its program integration of all issues of this coal belt. The name of this initiative is ‘sara bharat kawla khani and kawla bancho samity. But they can not penetrate except within a small section of workers. In April – May 2005, 10 workers of the sole union outside ECL, sat on indefinite hunger strike for reinstatement of five sacked workers of the Sarisatali Coal Mines Project with some other demands. On the fifth day they withdrew their hunger strike on request and after getting assurance from the administration. Till today, however, the respective authority did not attend the issue further. One of the administrative person said that “now this is the concern of administration!” These five are

land losers. Though the other workers except the land losers have not participated in this movement, they had indirect support to this movement.

But the workers under the subcontractors expressed their unawareness and were not concerned about this movement. During the hunger strike within a distance of 2-2.5 km the transporting workers of the subcontractors said - "They do not believe in any leader. We some people came to form a union with us. After few days they returned. In the same breath they also said that they must require one guide to organize with in a union to achieve the proper wages or at lest one day leave in week."

Not only in the India, the increase in informal, unprotected, unorganized workers is the global trend. So question is that is there any remote control behind the present changes in the global capitalism. Though here we do not touch upon the question of present decrease in import duty of coal or the global pressure to liberalize the public sectors, it can be said that to understand the particular features of the local requires also the study of the global trend.

We are not able to conceptualize the concept of the literature regarding the unorganized capitalism written by Claus Offe based on the Europe. But we can perhaps term this form of capitalism as unorganized / strange / chaotic/ unregulated which can not match any other previous form. It is required to evaluate the new forms of organization or movements of working class in their fight against this new form of capitalism. It can be said de-industrialization. Another important feature is that there is an organized effort to control the unorganized labour force or informal way of survival. Pitifully, women are being forced to shift from the organized mode of production to informal sector in search of livelihood.

With these observations we hope further studies can be continued in the following areas:

1. How do the non-cohesive categories of labour force organize in the movements for establishment of their rights and fight out the exploitation of capital.
2. Is it possible to establish any link between different production relationships.
3. What is the relationship between the cross country and cross national movements in the era of Global Outsourcing.
4. What are the common interests of the workers of foreign country which are affected for outsourcing in the country.

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Selection of interviewees was done on almost random basis according to the different strata of the workers. There are varied type of workers both in the organised sector and the unorganised sector. It is convenient that at the time of visiting a colliery we find out a person of a specific category. Then we came in contact with other persons of other categories through the first contact. Though the selection procedure was random we considered the following criteria of interviewees.

1. Aged workers with the experience from pre-nationalization period to the period of outsourcing.
2. Union representatives.
3. Aboriginal workers (Santhal) who in general are not able to cope up with the technological upgradation.
4. Ethnic and earliest workers of Bauri caste.
5. New workers who have joined ECL in the ground of medically unfit and land losers.

These categorisations are not exclusive because the numbers of interviewees become huge. We take care at the time of selection that all considerations can be fulfilled within total interviewees. These considerations are very important to get the different perceptions of the workers of the same organised sector. Officially all workers of ECL have achieved same privileges with the implementation of the National Coal Wage Agreement. They are entitled for same wages and same rights for same type of work. But there are variations in the lifestyle of the individual workers and also different castes and communities. The attempt to upgrade the living standard of the family by planned way of spending, acquiring education of next generation, future planning etc are very much different between individuals and also between communities, and categories. In most of the cases these factors get overlapped.

Unorganised workers

1. Name : Gouri Sankar Kashape
Place of work : Sarsatally Coal Mines Project, ICML
Post : Dumper Operator
Immediate employer : GS Atwal, responsible for the total production process
Place of interview : interviewee's home
Language : Bengali
Date : 05/11/2004

In September, 2004 we visited the quarter of the workers of Sarsatali Coal Mines Project. The quarters are in the campus of the store and training hall of M/s. G.S. Atwal, the main contractor of the production of coal from Sarsatali Open Cast Mines. That day we had taken a pilot interview of Gouri Sankar Kashap in his quarter's room. Rooms are connected with a wall and all rooms have four beds. He was very much normal to give

interview. He showed his identity card (B-form) and the calculation sheet of provident fund. From pilot interview we made the final questionnaire for him and we went to his quarter on 04/11/2004. But then he was not there. Everyday he comes from his home. From last month he is staying at his home Gobinda Nagar where he has got rehabilitation after eviction from the village affected for the Open Cast Project, Sonepur Bagari, ECL. Some of his colleague told that if we come tomorrow then they will tell him to stay at his quarter. Then we decided to take the final interview in his house. So we told his colleagues to request Gouri Sankar to stay at his house and we will go there. He agreed. Finally on 05/11/2004 we took the interview of Gouri Sankar Kashap at his house. His wife also joined at the time of interview. She gave some insights about their day-to-day life and culture.

Summary of his Interview

His father died when he was a small child. The family was rooming here and there. Now as an employee of Atwal he gets around 3000 Rs. Per month. Now there is not much problem. In 1947-48 they came here at Ranigange Coal-belt from Panjab at the time of Pakistan Riot. The owners of the collieries were the people of their same village. After that they never went back to their village because they did not know the route of their village through which they made their journey holding their father's hand. One of the major owners is the family of Chopra. Around five to seven family within the same relative group worked in the colliery of Chopra. After nationalisation all were dispersed. When his father was working then he was ten years old. The financial position of the 4 members family was not good at that time because his father did not get the wage regularly at the end of a week. Till today same conditions are going on. His father was a supervisor of the loading work. His father was a patient of throat cancer. At the time of his father's death he was engaged in the work of peon at Rs. 1.50 at colliery. After a few years he learned driving. Then he started to drive truck of bricks and sand from 1962 and the wage was 125 to 150 Rs. In the work of driving he was roaming from Delhi to Rajasthan, Goa. After that he was engaged in the work of Ramnagar colliery(captive mines of TISCO) under the contractor Atwal. Then he went to Chashnala to transport coal. After three to four months the employer made payments. Once he entered in the office for placing his problems then the employer insulted him for not taking permission. He left that job and joined in a work of Agra with 4000 salary and free food and accommodation. After completion of contract within 2 to 3 years he came back to Asansol. Then he became a worker of M/S G.S. Atwal & Co, owned by the brother of previous Atwal. First he was posted in Ramnagar Colliery and then in present place from the starting of this colliery. Now earning per month is Rs. 3800 with increment RS. 200 per year according to the agreement.

Salary of the government employee is around 6000 Rs. Government takeover would be marginally better, but this is also running more or less same way. He does not know about the privatisation process of nationalized collieries. But the land of his colliery is leased out to Goenka from Government. Then Goenka also gave it to contractors. He knows that nearby Bengal EMTA company is run by Upadhya and other partners, the son of Jyoti Babu. Also he does not know that ECL is starting coal production engaging

private contractors from some of the coal bearing patches. But he informed about the one of the contractors, Balaram Dey is working in an OCP of Bankola area, as he was a resident of that area. Previously they lived in Punjabi Danga of Bankola area where the big Sonapur Bajari Project has been started. So they were replaced from there and rehabilitated in the Gobindanagar Colony, where his interview has been recorded. He married a tribal woman of the nearest village. To run his family he is compelled to borrow money from shop instead of taking money from money lenders. Both he and his wife participate in the festivals of tribal society and also both go to Gurudwara.

He is not connected with any union because all leaders have some sort of interest like theft of coal from siding, extraction of coal from illegal mining etc. but the main reason is the fear of losing the jobs. His opinion about the future is that there is no possibility of better condition. So he wants to do his work in peace in whatever way work is available.

2. Name : Nilay Bhandary

Place of work : Bilpahari OCP Patch,

Post : Dumper Operator

Immediate employer : a transporting agency, BLA

Place of interview : interviewee's home

Language : Bengali

Date : 03/04/2005

History of interview : In the month of September, 2004 we visited Bilpahari OCP patch, an outsourced coal patch of ECL for collecting the basic data about the unorganised sector workers. First we entered into the campus of the Bilpahari OCP patch. Then we have been asked to meet with the manager of the private contractor. The contractor of the coal production is an organisation of Kolkata. After influencing the manager and producing necessary documents they called two workers for interview. Formally we have recorded the interviews. But we understood that they are not fluent to give actual truth in front of the manager. After that we came out from the campus and in the way we back entered into small hut of issuing chalan of coal transporting from mines to the railway siding. There we made interaction with a number of workers. After that they made arrangement for a dumper by which we can reach the bus root. Because bus is available only once a day. The dumper operator is Niloy Bhandary. He asked us to go to his house and gave the detail address of his house. We reached his house on 03/04/2005. His house is in the Chora village of Haripur. Then the interviewee was in his house. But at that moment he left out his house for an emergency work and he made request to wait for half an hour. At that time we interacted with the other persons of his house. They told about stories of everyday life. After come back to home Nilay Bhandary gave his interview.

Summary of his interview

He is a dumper driver in the Pundabashar Area of Asansol – Ranigange Coal Belt. His employer is a local transporting agent, BLA and name of the owner is Narayan Agarwala. Previously he used to drive truck in Madras. After coming back to Asansol he was searching for a job. He went to the office of the present employer seeing an advertisement

in the newspaper. They selected him and send him to Assam. But Niloy could not stay long. Because of cold and fear of terrorism. After that he had started to work in Bilpahari OCP from Nov, 2003 and again he was transferred to the Sonepur Bazari OCP for coal transporting from mines to siding. In new workplace owners' prefers senior workers because of the more hurdle in the new place. Also newcomers have a tendency to leave the job. But he made some loan from his employer. So he is bound to stay to his work. They have no union. But it is necessary to form a union to place demand of proper wages, leave and decrease in working hours. If any worker has taken leave for medical ground then the wage of that day is deducted from monthly salary. It is not possible to do work throughout the whole month. He is a member of CITU. Union achieved the demand of double payment for the work on Sunday. Without any reason company transferred him in Durgapur. He escape from there. But employer did not agree to his re-joining. Then CITU union made arrangement for his rejoining to this company.

The environment of the present work place (Sonepur Bajari) is good. Company regularly sprays water. The management of Sonepur Bajari is better than the company of Bilpahari OCP. Also in Sonepur Bazari company is not able to give pressure. But the other private contractors are not ready to initiate talk with their union and they do not give any safety equipment to the workers like dust mask, helmet etc.

In their village the business of money lending is an important problem. Numbers of ECL workers are engaged in this business after retirement. The common people are used to borrow money, alcohol, prostitution etc. He knows about outsourcing. It creates some employment for unemployed youth. In ECL the relatives are getting most of the jobs. Now this tradition can be stopped. In the previous case one did not have the job through the year. Now at least people get the job for 100 days in a year. Also if company takes the responsibility of a mine then the theft of coal can be prohibited, as it is his own wealth. Lastly he said that he has no plan or thinking about future. He does hard work and earn money.

3. Name : **Sawpan Sou Mondal**

Place of work : Over Burden of Bengal EMTA

Category : Coal transporter by cycle (cycle wala)

Immediate employer : Self-employed

Place of interview : A hotel in front of the Tara OCP of Bengal EMTA

Language : Bengali

Date : 19/04/2005

Sawpan Sou Mondal :

The total identity of the interviewee is not clear from the above. He is cycle wala as described in section. From the entrance of the Bengal EMTA Coal Mines small hills of overburden restrict the eye to see beyond that. But from these hills a number of cycle wala are coming down towards the plain land. We are in the way of the camp of Bengal EMTA. At the middle of the way we saw a hotel. Most of the cycle wala take food from this hotel and take rest after transporting coal to the Depot. Here we came in contact with Sawpan Sou Mondal, waiting for food. After requesting him he agreed to

give interview. Sitting in the bench of hotel he has given his interview. At the time of his interview the owner of the hotel made some comments to orient interviewees thought.

NOTE: The summary of his interview will be send later.

4. Name : Birendar Singh
- Place of work : Bengal EMTA,
- Post : Dumper Operator
- Immediate employer : EMTA
- Place of interview : Colliery quarter near OCP
- Language : Hindi
- Date : 19/04/2005

History of his interview

In the forth chapter we discuss about the workers who came from outside and are staying at the camp very near to the mines. We made three visits to the camp. But we were not successful to take comdid interviews. They were very much terrorised to speak with outsiders about their work in fear of loosing the job. Some of the workers said that if we come in the morning then more workers would be available for interview. Everybody refers to others to give interview. This was a way of refuse. Then we visited the workers quarter of Bengal EMTA on 26th January because we thought that on holiday all are available at the camp. Workers of a private agency Eastern Mineral and Treading Agency are crowded in front of their Camp. The worker's camp is the local accommodation of the workers near their working area Tara Open Cast Mines of M/s Bengal EMTA Coal Mines Ltd. Mines were closed that day. All workers got a holiday simultaneously after long time. They have a holiday on alternative one day in a week. So they are in a mood of celebration with meat and alcohol. One alcohol shop is in front of the camp. Shop owner gave a seat to us. Then some curious workers came to ask us about our purpose of visit. Most of them were drunken. After understanding partially about our purpose nobody wanted to talk about their own condition. One said that 'All are terrorized to say anything to outsiders. If authority knows that anyone has opened his mouth, the very next day he will dismissed from job.' Another person uttered in anger that 'We are in the bonded labour condition'. Then the owner of the alcohol shop gave assurances that he will arrange for interview on an other day calling one or two persons in his house. We came back on that day. Finally we went there on 19/04/2005. Again we requested the owner of the alcohol shop to arrange for interview. But he denied giving different arguments. Then we entered straight into the camp and said one worker standing in front of his room that we want to know about his life story and not necessarily to speak against the authority of mines. Just tell us your feelings. Then he agreed to give the interview.

Summary of his interview

Birendra Sing came to Bengal as a worker of EMTA company from Palas village of Hajaribag six years before. At first he joined as a helper of Doser at Ramnagar Colliery with a salary of Rs. 600. Now he got promotion as a driver of Doser with a salary of Rs.

3300. He was informed about this work from an acquaintance (a common feature). He is school final pass. He was trying to get a job in Jharkhand police, Bihar Police, Rail etc. Now also he is trying to shift to a job with better salary. He has three brothers and seven sisters. His elder brother is a teacher. They have agricultural land. The land is cultivated by labour and also by lease holders. He said that they celebrate May day in a very ordinary way because the workers don't have much feelings about May day. In the holiday they play football or cricket with their colleagues. They have good relation with management. He dose not know whether his job is permanent or temporary because there is no such dialogue with the employer. He is doing his job seriously. His aspiration is "if company is growing then we too will develop and we hope that one day we reach at the level of ECL." In response to the question about the transformation from private to Nationalization and again introduction of private ownership companies in this industry, he said that company with good reputation have much demand in the market. "If ECL is loss making and we are profit making then we will exist". It is inevitable that Government salary is much better than private. "At least" he express his great hope that "one day we were in the jhupri (small hut), now we stay in pacca bari (concrete house)."

5. Name : Md Syame
Place of work : Overburden of Sarisatali OCP
Post : Coal collector
Immediate employer : Self Employed
Place of interview : interviewee's home
Language : Bengali
Date : 02/05/2005

History: We know the area where the workers of this category are available. Madanpur is one such village of Barabani Block. Entering the village we asked for the workers of this category. When we were clarifying our purpose of interview one young boy was coming with full of coal dust throughout his body and basket and scrubber. Seeing him we directly asked him what type of work he has done. Then he said that from the overburden he collects coal and sells it to the cycle wala. He agreed to give interview shortly. In his house he gave the interview and all the family members also gathered and were involved in the interview.

Summary of his interview

He collects rejected coal from the overburden of Sarisatali coal mine project. Goenkas have no use of this coal. He is not able to collect 'Nature' coal because he has no equipments like hammer to collect heavy 'Nature' coal. This coal is used in the nearby village as domestic fuel, as gule (one type of processed fuel for domestic use) factory. After collection of around 2 to 3 quintal (I think this should be 2-3 tons) of coal he sales it to the 'Cycie Wala' in Rs. 15 to 22 per cycle. One day he collects 5-6 tons. Cycle wala sales it to the owners of depots at a distance of 10 miles in Rs. 50. The owner of depot gives it to the track. He is working for 5-6 hours and the earning per day around 40 Rs. But the rejected coal is not available all the time. In ent 15 days

work stopped for the lack of availability of rejected coal at the overburden. The owner, Goenka said before opening the mines that they would give all the facilities like jobs, electricity, water line etc. But they did not fulfil their assurances. Only those people are given jobs who have much better financial condition. The local party said that Goenka gives this coal for the local poor people.

He read upto class IV. After that he wanted to learn some work for a job. But his poor parents could not help. From an age of 7-8 years he has started his working life. He was working in a bread company. He got transferred to Durgapur. But it was not possible for him to stay at Durgapur without secured shelter and food. After leaving this job he became a day labour of the construction work with an earning of Rs. 15 per day. Now earning from these jobs is Rs. 60 per day. He gathered some skill of construction. Then he shifted to the present work. When the opportunity of this work will stop then he will shift to his old profession of the construction labour. There are lots of accidents. Numbers of people come from Bihar and return back with loaded cycle crossing the Ajoy river. This is an extremely hard job.

They are five sisters and three brothers. He does not know how long his family is staying in the village or why they came there. His family is a supporter of the CPI(M) party. After opening of Sarisatali Coal Mines Project, CPI(M) party made call for Gherao of the office of the Goenka, owner of the mines. He participated in this program because he casts his vote to the party. Those, who caste their vote to congress are going with that party.

6 Name : Sunil Todo

Place of work : Coal transported from Sarisatali OCP to the Barabani Siding

Post : Dumper helper

Immediate employer : A transporting agency working under G.S. Atwal

Place of interview : Check post for measuring the weight of the Dumper

Language : Bengali

Date : 07/05/2005

7 Name : Surindar

Place of work : Coal transported from Sarisatali OCP to the Barabani Siding

Post : Dumper driver

Immediate employer : A transporting agency working under G.S. Atwal

Place of interview : Check post for measuring the weight of the Dumper

Language : Bengali

Date : 07/05/2005

History of the interview of Sunil Todo and Surindar : It is very difficult to get the workers of this category in their house or any fixed place because they are always moving with the coal truck. Incidentally we moved from the Sarsatali Open Cast Mines to the Brabani siding by a dumper of coal transport. In the dumper we came in contact with the helper of this dumper and he told us to go at early morning in the despatch and load measurement site of the Sarsatali OCP. So we went at this site on 07/02/2005 at 8.30. a.m. But we could not find out Matiu. Then there were other dumper drivers and helpers of different subcontractors. There are five transporting agency who have contract

for coal transporting. One contractor is running 50 to 60 dumpers of different owners. These workers – dumper drivers and helpers work under the respective owners of the dumpers. They are not directly related with the transporting agency. They have totally informal appointment without any written documents of evidence as a worker. At first anybody was interested to give interview and they were pushing each other to give interview. They also said that they are not educated enough to speak well. Then we persuaded them to just speak spontaneously. Ultimately they themselves select one dumper driver, named Surindar as an interviewee. Around 25-30 workers listened attentively his interview. After that they were able to overcome their hesitation to give interview. Then one dumper helper himself came forward to tell his life story. At the time of interview a number of workers made their comments regarding the discussion with Sunil Todo. So in his interview the words of an other worker has been included.

Summary of the interview of Surindar

Originally Surindar's family stayed in UP. 50 years before they came here in search of livelihood when he was 10 years old. His father is now dead. After that he did not go to their house. From my childhood he worked in a shop. Then he was standing in the queue of the car (garir line). During last 25 years he is engaged in the driving of truck. First he joined as a truck helper with wage Rs. 600/-. After one year he got promotion as truck driver. After driving the truck at Siliguri, Bhagalpur, Kolkata, Patna now he is driving the dumper of the subcontractor, a transporting agency for coal transporting from Sarisatali Coal Mines to Barabani siding. But he is the direct employee of the transporting company. Transporting company is taking on rent from the owners of truck and the driver and the helper are appointed by the owner of the truck. This owner gives wage to his drivers and helpers. Surindar is working here for last one year and three months. His present wage is RS. 3000 per month. Often they have changed owner of the truck because when one asked to increase the wage then owner said that dumper driver is available in Rs. 2000. "if it is not suitable to you than you can leave." He feels hurdle to maintain expenditure of his family.

He does not know much about the Bengal EMTA company. But he listened that it is run by the power of local *dada*. His father worked in the ECL. If he got the job in ECL then he could earn more money, get more facility and leave. They made demand for leave in Sunday to their employer. About 150 drivers and 150 helpers stopped transporting work. But owners did not agree and made threat to sack them. Then they again started their work. If anyone from outside take the whole responsibility of the union then only it is possible. But till today no one could sustain as a leader.

Summary of the interview of Sunil Todo

He is 28 years old. In his childhood he studied in the school and did some agricultural works. His guardian did not give support to continue schooling so he left school after class ten. Then he started to work as a day labour. His father is working in a small scale factory and his brothers are also day labours. He lives in Kalla. A tailoring shop of his family is near home. He learned some work in this shop. Then one truck driver of his locality asked to teach him driving. From 1998 first he was a helper of a local truck. Then

he shifted to Dumper. "My owner is good". One day he said that "you are a educated boy, so please join the crusher as munshi (supervisor). But he is a young man. So the workers did not recognise him as a supervisor. Hence he left this job and joined again in the line of truck. He changed two or three owners for irregular payment. He stays in the dumper at night to guard it. Dumper is their house. All helpers have same story. After two or three months he goes to his home. They became habituated in their work. But when they need to go anywhere they arrange somebody in place of him. The total responsibility of the dumper is on the helper.

He also holds the driving licence and is waiting for becoming driver. In the absence of driver he drives the car. He earns Rs. 1500 per month. His own expenditure with meal is Rs. 1200. He has own family with one son. Total responsibility of his family is on his father. He has employment exchange card. But he does not have any time to enquiry for other better jobs. He said that there is no advantage in the confrontation with owners because who makes more voice, he will suffer. If there is any guidance or leader then it becomes possible to place a demand. He is a member of local body of DYFI. The members of DYFI are always ready to fight for them. But due to lack of time he can not contribute to the organisation. Also they are not able to unite. For this reason owner is benefited. Due to opening of these collieries they got the job. ECL do not employ general persons. So the job of ECL becomes family tradition. ECL workers earn much more money, get different facilities etc. In their private firm those facilities are not available. Also ECL gives some job to the private contractors. He also worked in ECL under private contractors. There he got Rs. 50 per day. He does not know about the present introduction of private contractors in the coal reserved patches of ECL. He watches TV serial 'Kyamat' and 'Meher' when he stays in his home. He does not get to read newspapers.

8 Name : Raju Alams

Place of work : Pandabeswar Siding where extracted coal of Bilpahari OCP is unloaded

Post : Unloader

Immediate employer : A private agency CISC

Place of interview : Pandabeswar Siding

Language : Bengali

Date :

History of the interview

At the Pandabeshar siding we took the interview of Raju Alam in between his duty.

Summary of his interview: Raju Alam is working for last six month at CISC, a private contractor of Bilpahari OCP, an outsourced patch of ECL. He unloaded coal from truck/dumper at Pundabaswar siding, a wagon loading site of ECL. From one neighbour of his village who also work in the same place he was informed about this job. His schooling is upto class VIII. He is a family man with one daughter and one son. The situation of his village is not good. His father is unfit to do any work. His brother is also an unorganised

labour. His salary is Rs. 1500 and food charge of 500 Rs. is deducted from the salary. It is a 12 hour working day without any rest day in a week. They have no medical facility. From his salary he is able to send to his family only Rs. 500-400. That too he goes to his village taking without pay leave. There is always a pressure from management and they are able to make any demand to the authority for increasing wage, leave and other facilities. The demand of making the meals free was not granted. In his workplace till today no union has been formed. If any one tries to form union there is a possibility to retrench his job immediately. According to him privatisation is good because new people are getting jobs. They do not have much interaction with local people.

9 Name : Sukumar Ruidas

Place of work : Pandabeswar Siding where the truck of Delivery Order holders are loaded

Post : Loader of Delivery order truck

Immediate employer : Gang Leader (sarder)

Place of interview : Pandabeswar Siding

Language : Bengali

Date :

History of his interview

At the Pandabeshar siding we took the interview of the interviewee in between his duty. In the midway of the interview his truck and sarder came in the field. So the interview process was stopped.

Summary of his interview

For last ten years he is working in this job. After opening of the Khottadi OCP he was engaged to load coal on the truck of the Delivery Order (DO) holder of ECL. He is working in a group of 8-10 people. There is one sarder or gang leader of every group. Sardar directly takes the wages from the employer for the total work done by the group. Then the total wage is distributed among every member of this group by the sarder. Wage is decided upon the number of truck loaded. In average he earns Rs. 70-80 per day. They have no medical facility from the employe. In their village they celebrate festival with all religious groups. There is no tension between different religious groups or different caste. They are resident of the nearest village. There are number a of collieries in the adjacent area. Now the agriculture work has stopped because the land has been affected by the OCP and as well as the UG mines. Also for short distance blasting the houses shake at the time of blasting and developed cracks.

10 Name : Bidyut Deyashi

Place of work : Pandabeswar Siding where extracted coal of Bilpahari OCP unloaded

Post : Security guard of Bilpahari OCP

Immediate employer : Purbanchal Guard under contract of ECL

Place of interview : Camp of Purbanchal Guard

Language : Bengali

Date :

History of Interview

At the time of the previous interview we came in contact with the Security Guard of the Purbanchal Guard Agency who basically work for ECL. They asked us to go to the nearby camp of Purbanchal Guard for interview.

Summary of His Interview

He lives in the village Bilpahari. Agricultural land of them has been taken for Bilpahari OCP. But they did not get job as land looser. His elder brother is a service man of ECL, posted at Dalurbandh. Before this job he had a business of Cable Channel. After getting this job of fixed salary he has given the business in the hand of his unemployed younger brother. One other important thing is that the place of job is very near to his house". Parents are dead. Employer is not very serious to his business. Also he does not give regular salary and his behaviour is very rough. In the camp of Purbanchal Guard there is acute crisis of water. But the picture of management quarter is totally opposite. Any complain to the manager brings no relief or solution to the plight of workers. In the nearest Bilpahari OCP the authority does not maintain the rules of blasting. By rule the time of blasting is 13 o'clock. But the management have done it according to its own will. There are lots of damages in a number of houses of his village. They were given assurances to solve the problem of vibration at the time of blasting. He told that 'if you can stay at their club of his village. The local party arranged for meeting to prevent and ask to the authority for project report. Leader gave assurances to solve the problem. Coal dust is the another problem. "There are lots of risk to our life. If we make protest in a group of ten to twelve boys then the company makes threat of arrest by police."

His village is under the threat of eviction because of extension of OCP. But the villagers are not willing to leave their home. His village is very nice. In their village there are lots of festivals like 'kirtan' organised by all of the village. All people of different cast participate in these festivals. All come back to home. He said that "we did not leave the village." We informed MP, MLAs and will make court cases against eviction.

11 Name : Majera Bibi

Place of work : Overburden of the Tara Colliery

Categorisation : Coal Collector from Overburden

Immediate employer : Self Employed

Place of interview : interviewee's home, Churulia

Language : Bengali

Date : 09/04/2005

Summary

She collects coal from the overburdens of Tara Open Cast Mines. From an age of 22 years she is a resident of Churulia. His husband has two wives. After six children of Majera Bibi his husband left her. Then onwards she lives with six children in his mother's home. His father was dead before her marry. She has done the work of preparation of muri (puffed rice). Then she has sold churi of the girl. This was not sufficient. So she started to cut grass for sale. Then she was engaged as a domestic servant. Now she earns money by collecting coal. She is doing this for five to six days in a week. If she can give labour then she collects coal for one cycle. By selling it to the cycle wala she gets Rs. 40. Simultaneously she is doing the work of agricultural labour and sales churi. There are lots of problems to collect coal. If one stone falls from the hill of overburden then legs can break. But they are coupelled to go for this work. Party gives job in its own way like 10 of one village and other 10 of other village. She does not like this work. If the government would do something then it would be better. None of her children go to school. Her one son is a driver of Dumper and other one of a Taxi. Lastly she said that if the agricultural land is also taken by OCP then the agricultural work will be lost.

Organised Sector

- 12 Name : Anuij Kumar Shou
Place of work : Satgram Incline
Post : Piece Rated Loader
Place of interview : Interviewee's home
Language : Hindi
Date : 05/02/2005

Environment and a brief history of his interview

From Asansol bus-stand we have taken a bus to Sripur Bazar. After reaching the Sripur Bazar we have entered in a small road side tea shop because there are a few number of people sitting and chatting themselves. This area is surrounded by the colliery quarters. So we came in contact with a number of miners of ECL. They said that nearby Sripur colliery, which has been started by Turner and Morison company in 1912 has been closed in the safety ground around 10 years ago. So the workers of this colliery are transferred to different collieries of nearby areas like Satgram, Kunastoria, other collieries of Sripur area etc. So we decided to give importance for selection of interviewee from this area to get the feelings of the past and also the variety of different collieries. From the documents of the Eastern Coalfield Ltd we got i.e. the following informations. One of the difficult mining condition areas are Satgram, Sripur and one of the profit making potential area is Kunustoria. So in one area we get all variety of workers of profit making collieries and dying collieries. In the tea shop we come in contact with a loader , a piece rated worker of Satgram collieries. He got the job in place of his mother. We told him that again we will come back to record his interview. Finally we have recorded his detailed interview sitting in front of his house. His mother and his wife were also present at the time of interview. From his interview we came to know about other co-workers of different

castes like Bauri, Oria, Muslim etc. He has introduced us with the next interviewee of different caste and community.

Summary of his interview

Anuj Sahu got the job after his mother took V.R.S. on 25/07/1995. In ECL there is a scheme for female workers that if she becomes unfit or want to give job to his male dependent then he gets the job. His grand father came to West Bengal in search of work in colliery at pre-nationalization period. His father also was a miner. They have build a house in their village at Patna district of Bihar. Once or twice they go to their village home. After his father's death his mother got the job. He has to load two tub of coal which is equal to two tons of coal for getting full hazira (wage) of one day. If they are able to load extra tub after two tons than they get 60 to 70 Rs. Per tub. But the full wage of day for loading two tons of coal is Rs. 250. For extra tub they do not get the wage for carrying coal from the working face to the rail road in the mine. If all the necessary conditions are fulfilled loaders can give extra production. One of his colleagues got prize for highest production of around 112 ton in a month at the time of depillaring. Then all loaders can give production average of 5 tubs per day. But most of the time there is a lack of necessary conditions for quick production. Such as the extension of rail road for movement of tub upto the working face has not been completed and necessary materials and equipment for blasting are not available. Then they cannot even fulfil the target of two tons production. If higher authority can recognise the above problems then the loader gets 'fall back' wage, which is 10-20 rs. less than actual amount of hazira. Though loader earns more than other workers, but they do the hardest job. Tindal workers, who are engaged in carrying materials between surface and underground also do the hard work. But they do not work in single, but in group.

He remains absent from his work five to six days in a month because like school going children loaders are not willing to do their work. But some of the loaders are very regular for their compulsion to earn money. Specially old edged family men always try to produce more than two tons to maintain their family. But new comers have no such obligation. So they are unwilling to work hard. His opinion is that aged loader should be shifted after certain age limit from piece rated to time rated.

He is in congress party. He does not know the name of the union. They are used to place their demand to the higher authority via unions, not directly. According to him unions must be careful to the workers and the work condition of the mine. The union leaders who have posting in the underground must go to the underground for work. But most of the union leaders are not willing to go underground.

He does not know about the coming steps of privatisation and outsourcing.

- 13 Name : Md. Ishak
Place of work : Satgram Incline
Post : Piece Rated Under Ground Loader
Place of interview : Interviewee's home
Language : Hindi
Date : 06/02/2005

The previous interviewee, Anuj Saho told about this colleague of different community who is engaged with the most laborious job, loading of coal in the coal tub. In that day he was in duty. We came to know that the next day he may be in his house. So we reached at 10 o'clock in the next day. Sitting in his house we explained our purpose of work and then he agreed to do the interview.

Summary of his interview

From the very childhood he is in the colliery quarter of Sripur area. His father worked in the colliery. After his father's death he joined in ECL around 20 years ago. Now his age is 45 years. In the early stage the work environment was good. Now the work environment is gradually becoming worse. The required machines and materials for production are not available. The whole area is full of dust and mud. Harassment of the workers is a regular feature. Though it's an eight hours working day but they have to work overtime. They carry the basket of coal for a long distance. They complained several of times to the management. But there was no improvement. Basically the management itself is corrupted. In the hospital of ECL most of the time there is no medicine available. He has regular contact with his village and goes there twice in a year. There is no tension between different religious groups. But as the condition of work is bad they have no peace. He thinks that if colliery is closed then they will get relief from the hard laborious job. Even unions have failed to solve these problems. All leaders are the agent of Management. In their work place the union of CPI(M) has strong hold.

He did not hear anything about outsourcing or engaging private partners because he never goes to Khotadi, Bilpahari (i.e., Pandabaswar-Banlola area). Also they are very much busy in their own work in the mine. So it is not possible to keep information about outside.

He does not know the name of Pneumoconiosis. He said that most of them have Bronchitis. The arrangement of treatment is done by the ECL hospital.

14. Name : Sraban Lala

Place of work : Chinakuri 3 No.

Post : Under Ground Tindal Majdur, Time Rated

Place of interview : Work place Chinakuri Colliery

Language : Hindi

Date : 29/12/2004 and 17/02/2005

From 28/12/04 to 30/12/2004 we visited the Chinakuri colliery. First day, in front of the entrance of the Chinakuri Colliery we met some of the colliery workers. When we entered in a tea stall then they asked from where we are coming. Are we journalists? Then after giving our identity they have started to speak about them and their colliery. One of them worked from the time of Bengal Coal Company and came from Gorakhpur. He also spoke very well. So we selected him for interview of a Gorakhpuri worker. His name is Bashir Mniya. He told us to come in the lamp room of the colliery. After taking half interview of Bashir Mniya we saw a group of people were sitting in front of the incline of the closed mine Chinakuri 2 No. pit. They asked

us about our purpose of visit. After some conversation we selected a Union Representative for interview. That day we could take only one part of his interview because they were in a hurry to go to Under Ground. After one month we were able to complete his total interview in the same place and we also came in contact with his family.

Summary of his interview

He started his life as a miner from 1974. From 1974 to 81 he worked under the private contractor. He became permanent in the year of 1984. His father also worked in the colliery. After that he came. He maintains a regular contact with his village and in the festival of Chate, Holi they go to their village and in Durgapuja they stay here. He has four daughters and one son. Three daughters have married after schooling upto class X. His son is in class IX. He himself read upto class X. As he is elder brother, he had responsibility to earn money. For scarcity of the money they were not able to do agriculture.

In the early days of his work in the mine they had to do dangerous and risk prone job like removal of hard stone, preparation of air crossing which have been done in contract. Then their wages were less than ECL and after six months they got their payment in hand. They had no other facilities. After 1975 all the contractors of that area left. Then they made different groups of 18-19 people and signed in the work order among five of them. They distributed total earning among themselves.

From 1977 the present secretary of HMS, Jayanta Poddar started movement for establishment of the labour laws for the contract labour. In this year they made hunger strike for 46 days. Total participants at the hunger strike were 150-200 workers. At that time the contractors escaped from this area.

First he was recruited as a casual labour which was then called piece rated labour. They were bound to do any type of work that management instructed for underground work. So they had to know all type of jobs of the mines.

He is posted as General Majdur at the Chinakuri 3 No. pit. But as he was a worker of closed mine – Chinakuri 2 No. pit now he is engaged in the shifting operation of the equipments and materials from the closed mine. This mine was closed in 2003. he said good production was available from this mine. His own union, HMS tried its' best to run this mine. But management said that they do not have sufficient manpower and coal reserve. "But we, HMS know that there is sufficient coal reserve. One loader produced four to five tub coal per day. The work culture was also good." The workers of this mine got wages without work for three to four months. After that gradually management shifted the workers to other mines one by one. The Director General of Mines Safety gave order to extract the cutting coal. But till today the management has not done this work. For this all loose coal from coal seam are going under the water. According to him coal was extracted in this mine 15 hundred to 16 hundred meter [actually it should be foot instead of meter] below the surface. The production cost was not much. Only the cost of electricity was high. He thinks that the management did it consciously for its own benefit. They made movement against the closer of the mine. 24 workers did hunger strike for five days. The other workers who were in the surface, resisted police to entry in the mine at the time of strike. After that in the instruction of additional district magistrate the

hunger strike was withdrawn. Then they were given the assurances of opening of the mine. After that manager was transferred. So the production from this mine stopped and huge materials from this mine were looted. They are not able to take further move for opening up the colliery because the workers became scattered and a large number of workers took V.R.S. ECL newly opened up Open Cast Mine by contractor which is called outsourcing of the OCP patches. They are against the outsourcing. If these OCPs are opened by ECL then the workers of ECL can do the job. The contractors give less wages to the workers. Then ECL will ask to take VRS. The main reason of outsourcing is in the change in policy of central government. They do their work properly. but they have not understood why government has taken this type of policies to open up coal sector for contractual production. He agreed that the production cost reduces very much by giving small wages, no facilities, no job security. "so we are against outsourcing. Janta Poddar (secretary of HMS said that, we will resist outsourcing at any cost." They made hunger strike for one day at all collieries. If five unions resist together then they will be successful. No worker wants contractual production because they have experiences about the traditional system of contract. The effect of re-privatisation will fall upon the next generation. Exploitation of workers will increase with contractual production. Now except production all types of works are done by private contractors like carrying detonators, work of trammer, etc. But the HMS union has not accommodated the contract workers.

15 Name : Kabutari Devi
Place of work : Chinakuri 1 No. Pit
Post : Peon, Time Rated
Place of interview : Work place, Chinakuri Colliery
Language : Hindi
Date : 29/12/2005

Summary

Coming from Patna District earlier worked under a contractor. From contract worker she became a permanent worker of ECL. His husband also works in the mine. They came in search of food. Now the whole family survives with the earning from the mine. In the time of contractor they were compelled to work hard. Only three to four days job was available. Now for the whole month there is an opportunity to do the work. She has own home and agricultural land in her village of Patna. Regularly they come to their village. They celebrate their festivals in their village and in the area of colliery also. At the time of company she also worked in this colliery. She does not know the name of any leader of the movement of pre-nationalisation period. She is ignorant about the present situations of the colliery. Repeatedly she said that 'we earn and eat'(ham kamate hayi khate hayi).

16 Name : Asalata Bauri
Place of work : Chinakuri 1 No. pit
Post : Lamp Fiter, Time Rated

Place of interview : Work place Cinakuri Colliery

Language : Bengali

Date : 29/12/2005

Summary

In the second day of our Chinakuri visit on 29/12/2004 we came in contact with Asalata Bauri. We met with the manager of Chinakuri colliery. We told him about our purpose of visit and requirement of interview. Then they asked Asalata to give the interview. In 1995 she got the job after her father's death. His father was working in ECL in the post of Haulage Operator. They have some agricultural land in their village. Their relatives supervise the agricultural work. At the time of festival they go to village. Now her sister is in class ten. After her sister marriage she will marry. She does not know about the past history of company. She is very happy to do this work. All are looking like daughter or sister. Total 15 nos women are in this colliery. She does not know about the coal production process. She has no problem as a women worker. She went to the underground of the mines. She is agreed to do the job of underground of the mines. She preferred the surface work. She does her work very sincerely. There is a scarcity of workers. However they complete their assigned job. She also said about the scarcity of necessary material and also in the number of lamp. They informed management about the problem independently without union. She did not want to make any comments about the lending process of her locality. She has cycle, TV., all community workers go to festivals and occupation of other community. Muslim workers offered their sweets to the Hindu workers at Id. She said about the scarcity of the necessary material and also in the number of lamp.

She doesn't know about outsourcing. But said that in their colliery loader himself produce coal. There is no contractor in this job. But some jobs are allotted in contract. She does not know specifically. Lastly she said that the existing amount of coal fulfil the requirement of five generation.

17 Name : Ruplal Bauri

Place of work : Cinakuri 1 No. pit

Post : Pump Khalashi, Time Rated.

Place of interview : Interviewee's home, Valadi gram

Language : Bengali

Date : 17/02/2005

We are in search of some one of the aboriginal workers of Bauri Cast of this area. Then the previous interviewee helped to find out the name and address of one bauri worker. Then we went to his village home with in walking distance about 2 km from Cinakuri Colliery. There we recorded his interview.

He is working from 1971. At the time of company he joined as a casual labour. His father was already dead in disease. His father was also a worker of the colliery. His grand father was working also in the line of sand which is used for sand packing in the colliery. He

was a safai kuli and transferred as a Pump Khalashi. He became permanent at the time of nationalization. He has no memory of the pre-nationalization period. He told that then he was child. There were some meetings and the leaders gave their speech. One day he became permanent. Madhu babu was a leader. Gradually the wages increased.

Now a days there is no necessary material for production. He is a member of a union. But unions do not give any call for movement. There is one leader named Mihir Babu. When he feels any problem then he goes to this union leader for help. He is unable to tackle his problems with management because the management does not bother him. If they make any fault then also management makes adverse comments.

His work is to run the pump in the underground. There are always possibilities of accident. Ten years before there were many workers. Now a huge number of workers took V.R.S. Most of the workers left job on their own will. Many loaders took V.R.S. as they cannot do their job. Number of working faces has been reduced. He also told that the management and union both tell them to complete their service. But they do not listen.

He has no opinion about the present loss making of the colliery and he has not heard anything about the privatisation or outsourcing because he has to do work in the underground. He has no time to go to meetings. He told that if ECL is transferred to private owners then they will do their business and would not look after the workers.

He had to borrow money from local money lenders at high interest rate at the time of his daughter's marriage, during illness etc. They have good interaction with their outsider colleagues. They participate in their festivals.

APENDIX: 2

Metadata of References.

Sl. No	title	Description	Subject & key words	Contribute	date	Resource type	Format	Source	Language	Coverage	Quantity
1	'Where cows eat coal on the sly' ECL	A fact finding report by Nagarik Mancha about the present situation and the reason behind the announcement of closer of 64 mines and retrenchment of 71560 workers		Nagarik Mancha	1998		physical	Fact finding report	English		12
2	Kayla shilpa o sramik – ajker abastha	Present situations of the coal industry and coal worker, prepared on 1994		Nagarik Mancha	1998		physical	Survey report in 1994	Bengali		15
3	Kayala khani bandher parikalpana samarajjab adi pavuder nirdeshe bharatiya janaganer upar ak birat akraman	Planning of closer on coal mines In the onslaught of imperialism makes attack on the people of India		ECL Colliery Sramik Union	2002		physical	Bulletin	Bengali		16
4	Reports of local Mgazine	Present situation of the organized and newly developed unorganized labour, Report about the present scope of earnings after opening of Open Cast Mines		Udyog patrika	2004		physical	Patrika	Bengali		
5	Kayala shilpe besarkarika	A findings about the privatization and the contract work in the coal		Udyog Patrika	2004		Physical	Patrika	Bengali		32

	ran o thekedari pratha	industry – a compilation of interviews of the four Tread Union leaders and authority of ECL and the workers of the ECL about outsourcing									
6	Asansol – Raniganje anchaler Kayla Sramik	A survey report -- a comparison between workers of public sector, private sector and contractor.		Adhikar, Organization for Labour Research and Social Welfare	2004		Physical	Bulletin	Bengali		22
7	Document of Colliery Majdur Congress, HMS	A deputation copy with comments on The Coal Mines Amendment Bill, 2000		HMS	2003		Physical	Union	English		4
8	Illegal Mining of Coal	Scheme and strategy for Dealing with Illegal Mining of Coal in Eastern Region, January 1994 by Central Mine Planning & Design Institute		Contributer is not willing to give name	2005		Physical	Report of ECL	English		15
9	Health Status	Health status of coal workers with special reference to Pneumoconiosis in Indian context		Employee of ECL	2004		Physical	Seminar paper	English		9
10	Documents of the ICML Sramik Union	Copy of the worker's demand at the time of the movement of March to May, 2005		ICML Sramik Union	2005		Physical	Union	English, Bengali		
11	The Ratholes of Ranigange	Illegal mining thrives in the Raniganj-Asansol coal belt in WEST Bengal, with		Frontline, Dec2001	2003		Physical	Magazine	English		3

	by Suhrid Sankar Chattopadhyay	the local mafia using the Santhal tribal people from Jharkhand as cheap Labour									
12	Sramik Sarthabahinoy ECL – yer Punuriggiban Pralalpa by Kalipada Sarkar	Different proposals for the revival of the ECL have main aim to close the loss making collieries and retrenchment of labour. On the other hand profit making collieries will be given in the hand of private.		Kalipada Sarkar	2004		Physical	Natun Cithi Patrika	English		10
13	A short profile of Sonepur Bajari Open Cast Mines	Detail of the Sonepur Bajari Open Cast Project		ECL	2003		Physical	Project report of ECL	English		
14	Mining: blood on coal by Stirling Smith	A case study of one industry, mining, points to the situation with regard to conditions of work in other industries in India		Sipra Chakrabarti	2003		Physical	Magazine	English		3
15	Nomenclature, Job Description, and Categorization of Coal Employees	Nomenclature, Job Description, and Categorization of Coal Employees by Standardization Committee constituted under NCWA-III		Sudipta Paul	2003		Physical	Book shop	English		
16	National Coal Wage Agreement -VI	Detailed pay structure and other job agreements		HMS	2002		Physical	Agreement	English		
17	The coal mines	The coal mines (Nationalisation)		HMS	2004		Physical	Bill	english		

	(Nationalisation) Amendment bill, 2000	Amendment bill, 2000								
18	Performance of year 2003-04	Detail data about production, output per man-shift in the every collieries		ECL	2005		Physical	Data sheet	English	5
19	Notification	Amendment of contract labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970		HMS	2005		Physical	Notification	English	2
20	A brief on Eastern Coalfields Ltd.	A overview of History, Present status and revival proposals of ECL.		ECL	2005		Physical	Document	English	33

