

Summary of Interview

Name: Sraban Lala

Place of Work: Chinakuri 3 No.

Post: Under Ground Tindai Majdur, Time Rated

Place of Interview: Work place Chinakuri Colliery

Language: Hindi

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

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 footed. 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 fail 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.