

ILLITERATE AND UNTRAINED COAL MINE WORKERS IN BALOCHSITAN

A case study of Mach coal fields

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Abstract.

Educated workers are more aware of their rights, the workers in all fields must be educated in order to know their basic rights, it is noticed that in developing countries where literacy rate is low, the workers' rights are violated in all fields, according to the article 26 of 1948 the UDHR (universal Declaration of Human Rights) which states "every citizen has the rights to education"

The workers and their families do not have access to the education even they do not get the basic education, the reason behind this is that there are no educational institutes nearby the coal fields not even educational institutes the other basic departments are also not available near their living areas. The laws regarding the workers wellbeing or the mine act 1923 must be implemented in its all shapes in order to protect the

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workers" rights, the safe and healthy mining in Balochistan requires educated workers because in Balochistan the accidents ratio in the coal mine fields is very much high the only factor which can reduce the hazards or negative impacts from coal mining that is education especially in the areas like Mach coal fields, in the field of mining the workers training plays vital role in the production and also in safe mining, the workers at Mach coal field lack both because both skills are interdependent on each other, in Pakistan the existing laws hold primary rules for open and underground coal mining the rules or laws must be able to explain the other necessary aspects such as health, security, safety , protection and prevention plans for emergency situation , the workers must have education related to explosive detonators, the awareness and training regarding the unused or closed mines, education regarding usage of first aid.

Key Words: Low literacy. Mine Workers, Technical Education, Coal Hazards

- **INTRODUCTION.**

The coal mine workers are the most vulnerable segment of society especially in the underdeveloped and developing countries, coal mine workers life is very much hazardous even sometimes fatal, the workers spend their best span of life while digging the black hole for providing food to their families, coal mining is the most physically hard due to unavailability of advanced sources of mining all the works inside or outside the coal mine are carried out with the help of human source or power, the workers give their full time for production of coal but their own life style or their own life is full of problems, which are related to their health, safety, economic and education they lack all the basic facilities of their life, mostly they live alone near by the coal fields , they are far from their families which causes psycho problems among the workers.

Balochistan is mineral port which share huge number of minerals the land of Balochistan is sharing huge quantity of natural resources such as iron, gold, marble, chromite , coal, natural gas and many others, but people of Balochistan are not enjoying the basic facilities of life , the province lacks all basic facilities such as health and education, the poverty ration is very much high as compare to other provinces and the literacy rate is also low as compare to other provinces, the province has large area but low population that is the reason why the population is scattered, but the natural resources are found in all over the province.

There are six coal fields in Balochistan all six fields are situated nearby the capital the Quetta division, such as Degari, Mach, Sherag, Duki, Chamalang, sore rang coal fields, thousands of workers are working in these coal fields, the coal reserves are 217 million tons in these above coal fields (MPNR) , there are approximately 250 coal fields in Balochsitan and some 80 thousand coal mine workers are mining in these fields, the workers mostly belong to KPK , Balochistan and also

Afghanistan, the workers along their children are working in coal fields.

In Balochistan like other provinces the coal mining is carried out by the private companies or Individuals, mostly owners they directly do not mine, they handover these mines to the other private contractors and that contractor also transfers it to other petty contractor who starts mining, the role of governments departments are not working sufficiently here in such a situation the workers are not directly linked with owners or companies the petty contractor violated the rights of workers in order to save money because the owners have their fixed shares.

The workers in coal mines are always in danger due to unsafe coal mining the accidents are common there, workers are even not provided health facilities such as health insurance and hospitals, the workers regarding their health and hygiene are on high risk because where they live there are no specific place for washrooms also to get the drinking water from unsafe methods, their living areas which are made up of stones and mud like large barracks are not able to be used while the workers live in them.

Regarding the education of workers and their siblings there in not even primary schools, mostly workers are uneducated , their educational status shows the same picture where it is in other areas of province due instability, low budgetary allocation, lack of qualified teachers, the role of politics in the appointment of teachers , the teachers absenteeism in the province, the Tehsil Mach faces the same problems also regarding the education, the common population in tehsil Mach do not have the opportunities to get quality education the population relies on private institutes, but private institutes are also found inside the Mach town the other population even does not public primary schools, so in such situation the literacy rate cannot be upgraded.

The coal mine workers mostly live near by the coal fields where they lack all the basic facilities , there are no schools for their children

neither in the morning nor in the evening because their children also work with them there must be a school for the workers in evening shift, education would be the only source to decrease the accidents inside the coal mines, through education the workers would be able to use advanced technologies of mining , there can be good skillful workers by means of education, most significant that workers can come to know regarding their rights which are given by the national laws or by the international labor organization(ILO)

The mines at Mach coal field are located far from the city mostly at barren areas where easy access not possible the workers should not be compelled to live nearby the coal fields due to their non-availability of residential colonies or societies the workers are compel to live near where the fields are located and this is one key reason behind this that the workers live without their families , in such a situation the workers and their children do not get access to elementary education even, mostly their children work with their parents to support their family financially, while earning food they do not get education due to which the literacy rate among the workers is very much low which is causing huge number of problems for the workers such as health and safety.

There is no school provided to the workers children even the need is to provide education institutes for their parents, the child labor must not be allowed at coal fields the basic education must be compulsory for the workers, the workers must have at least matriculation that they can read and write, according to Balochistan Mining and Regional Integration Policy Dialogue Paper (Revised April 2013) in its article (c) it is clearly mention that while providing education and skills training to the workers in order to boost up employment and encourage basic development opportunities, further it describes that the local population should be technical education in order to provide qualified staff for mining and other sectors.

According to the Paper (World Bank; January 2013) that in Balochistan two-third of population above ten years of age are illiterate and 54% elementary school age children are even not enrolled in schools the situation regarding the education in province is worse in rural areas, further it describes that 63% population aged fifteen years above has never attended any school, the school buildings are in very much poor condition according to the census 2010/11 that 78% schools in province even did not have electricity 79% were without washrooms 66% schools were without boundary wall and some 28% schools were not having the facility of drinking water , according to world bank report 67% workers are illiterate in province.

The situation of education or literacy in tehsil Mach shows dark picture such as for the whole tehsil there are three high schools for boys and three also for girls but these three schools are located at towns, the scattered and workers cannot access to these schools easily, for female education there is only one middle school in all tehsil and three middle schools for boys the tehsil has 6 primary schools for boys and 3 primary schools for girls, in such a situation getting education is not easy for the common population and also for coal mine workers, for labors or workers there is no any separate school located in whole tehsil neither for boys nor for girls.

- **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.**

While in social research the methods or tools which are being used for collecting data or for other information regarding the topic is very much necessary for a researcher to define.

The method which can give best result to the researcher or the method which can full fill the requirements of its research objectives or the approach which is being adopted by the scholar in the study (Gerson

& Horowitz, 2002). The experts have recommended several methods to investigate or to study the safety methods or tools at coal mines but for the said study where mixed methods are being used that must be proper method but it is necessary to say and listen in their own words (Berkowitz, 1996, p. 54).

Different type of methods were used to collect data such as questionnaire, interviews, focus group discussions, report building, key informants, and researcher observations.

- **Low Literacy Rate and Untrained Coal Mine Workers.**

The low literacy or untrained workers are the big issues in the field of coal mining, the workers are not aware of such a techniques or technologies by the help of which they can work in mines.

In this century the world is growing new techniques in all fields, majority of the works are being done by the different types of machines such as electronic and automatic heavy machines, for these all the workers must be literate in order to keep the environment healthy safe and peaceful

Ahmad Salim in its Working Paper Series # 62 2001 compares the mining sector of Pakistan with other countries such as Iran is well mechanized in mining, further he describes that Turkey is enough advanced in this field and also provides training courses for the other countries at end of his papers he even praises the mining sector of Bhutan that they are organizing their mining sector while providing education and well training to their workers because dust and poisonous gases are also found in their coal fields.

The coal mine workers at Cherat coal miners District Nowshera KPK had the Musculo-skeleton problems among them 76.64% were because of lack of training (J Dow Uni Health Sci 2014; 8(3): 117-120.)

Many safety, health and environmental plans have confirmed that the focus must be on skilled trainings rather than the traditional methods of monitoring because investigation, demonstration, training and education are the key elements for the safety and health of coal workers (Global Report on Artisanal & Small-Scale Mining January 2002 No. 70)

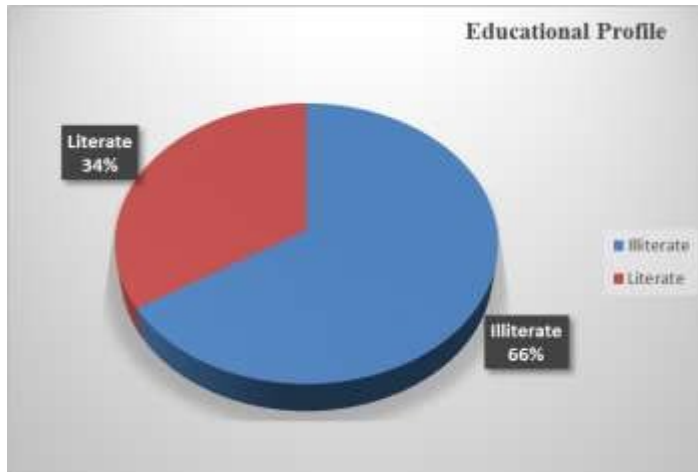
According to International labor organization(ILO) the most five causes of accidents at small scale mining are due Rock falls inside the mine, primitive methods of ventilation, the misuse of explosives, uneducated workers, lack of trainings, poorly maintained mining tools.

The workers in Balochistan display ugly picture regarding their education and training because the workers have no opportunities for education, while they learn the techniques by their elders or seniors but there is no any specific department for their training or providing education to them, the workers at Mach coal field do not have specific residential areas where they can live with their families because of this the workers do not have any plans for their wellbeing and this causes many other issues such as , no labor unions , no health and safety facilities , even no training centers for the workers , no welfare for their family and others.

The role of government departments, non-governmental organization furthermore the role of mines owners and contractors cannot be excluded from this responsibilities.

The concern departments and non-governmental organizations must not allowed child labor in coal mines, till secondary levels the education must be compulsory, the owners or contractors must not allowed children working at coal field below 18 years of age because while in data collection the child labor was found inside the field or target area, the all were dropped out at primary level due to poverty

they could not continue their education career and mostly they were helping their fathers.



The above charts shows the percentage of literate and illiterate workers, the ratio of illiterate worker is very much high means 66% of workers do not have education the reaming 34% of workers also do not have good educational background they are mostly those who have even not completed their middle level schooling the following table shows the level of their schooling while many of them have been educated by religious Madrisas.

Level OF Education

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Primary	37	12.1	42.5	42.5
Middle	27	8.8	31.0	73.6
Matriculation	18	5.9	20.7	94.3
Fsc	4	1.3	4.6	98.9
Bsc	1	.3	1.1	100.0

Table.1

The above table clearly shows that 42.5% workers had education just at primary level the 31.0% workers had middle level just 5.9% had the qualified the matriculation. It means the level of education among the coal mine workers is very much low the workers and concern departments do not concentrate on the workers education.

As mentioned above the majority have workers had religious education, in this regard the workers were also asked about the religious education or the type of institution from where they had education, the following table shows the type of institute from where they had got education.

Type of Institution					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Madrasa	15	5.0	14.7	14.7
	Schooling	87	29.0	85.3	100.0
	Total	102	34.0	100.0	
Missing	System	198	66.0		
Total		300	100.0		

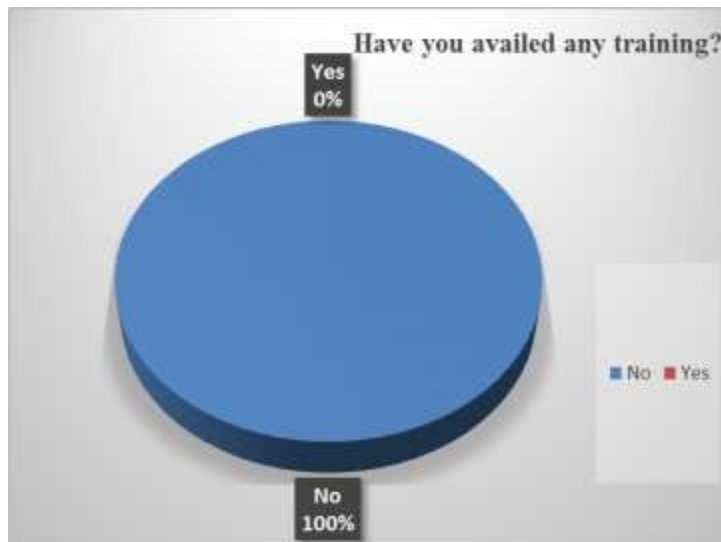
Table2.

Out of 300 respondents 102 are literate including the above 14% who have got their education form religious institutes like Madrasas.

But for the usage of modern techniques the workers need new and advanced education in order to learn the usage of new technologies, this can be the major reason why the primitive methods are being used in coal fields for the production of coal , which causes several issues regarding their safety and health,

Regarding the training of workers the situation is worse than their educational level or literacy rate because the workers at coal Mach coal fields are unaware of the word training or the education related to their work, according to them they came here with their friends, relative or father and started work at coal fields.

The following chart shows their status regarding the training at coal fields



The above chart very much clears it that the situation is not good at Mach coal fields, the reason behind the miner or major accidents are clear that why such accidents happen where workers they lose their lives, according to chart none of the workers has ever attended any type of training regarding the coal fields or mining, for safety or mining methods they were not having any knowledge, the basic training regarding first aid had never been conducted for the coal mine workers by any organization.

The uneducated workers even do not about their rights which are given them by the national law or by the International Labor

Organization through its conventions. The workers were asked about the labor laws and conventions that they know the following table shows the percentage

ARE YOU AWARE OF LABOR LAWS?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Yes	1	.3%	.3	.3
	To some extent	1	.3%	.3	.7
	No	298	99.3%	99.3	100.0
	Total	300	100.0	100.0	
<u>ARE YOU AWARE OF ILO CONVENTION?</u>					
	To some extent	1	.3%	.3	.3
	Yes	0	0%	0	0
	No	299	99.7%	100.0	
	Total	300	100.0		

Table 3.

The above table shows that 99.3% workers do not the laws which are related to labors rights in national laws the workers were unaware of such a laws which protects their rights or which tells their rights regarding safety and health, regarding the International Labor Organization conventions 99.7% workers are unaware of these conventions.

- **CONCLUSION.**

The workers at Mach coal mine field are deprived from all the basic rights such as education and health, due to low literacy and untrained workers the Coal mining has become one the hazardous

work in Balochistan especially at Mach coal fields they do not have safe drinking water, the living standard is very much low there at coal fields, the workers are even not provided basic health facilities even they have not paid any incentives regarding their health , the workers are unsafe there because of poor methods of coal mining , the workers are untrained, they need to be educated in order to know the usage of modern techniques of mining, the workers are prone to many diseases because of low literacy , in the case of any emergency the workers even cannot provide first aid to one another, regarding rescue they do not have the modern tools and techniques even they do not know the methods of rescue, the above all issues which are related to the coal mine workers at Mach coal fields are due to low educational profile and untrained workers, the skills of mining are transferred from one generation to other.

The workers should be provided educational institutes, the workers should also be provided residential colonies where they could live with their families, the all basic facilities should be provided to them, they are the most vulnerable segment of society they need special concentration of governmental and non-governmental organization, the technical education should be provided to the workers , the education regarding their safety and health should be provided , the workers are not aware of their rights which are assigned by the national laws , such awareness sessions should be conducted for the workers where they can have knowledge regarding the labor laws and ILO conventions.

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