

Report on
**Assessment of child protection
issues at coal mines of Balochistan
through Participatory approaches**



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| | |
|--------|---------------------------------------|
| SEHER | Society for Empowering Human Resource |
| SC – S | Save The Children Sweden |
| BLA | Balochistan Liberation Army |
| FGD | Focus Group Discussion |
| CSO | |
| HIV | |
| AIDS | Acquired Immunity Deficiency Syndrome |
| STI | Sexually Transmitted Infections |

Executive Summary

Child abuse is a world wide phenomena differing only in the degree of existence. Society for Empowering Human Resource SEHER believes in upliftment of the most vulnerable segments of the society where people are living on the edge of existence. In the society of developing countries like Pakistan women and children are the most unprivileged and exposed to violence and exploitation. Child abuse has emerged as a single major factor that engulfs the poor and displaced families and the society as a whole. Poverty manifests itself in various forms and forces the children to take part in putting their share to enable themselves and their families to survive.

Children today in Pakistan are working in very sector and exposed to all forms of violence but we have been unable to address the protection issues at any level from policy/legislation to independent private/public sectors employing children. There are no statistics available on child labor or indicators indicating the magnitude of protection issue. One of such sector is the coal mining in Pakistan that among others has employed millions of children but no one ever has turned their eye to the issues pertaining to coal mine children.

SEHER in Collaboration with Save the Children Sweden initiated a comprehensive research study ***“Assessment of Child Protection Issues at Coal mines of Balochistan through participatory approach”*** to assess the quantum and magnitude of the child right abuse and to identify protection issues. This report gives in depth analysis of the horrifying scenario of the enormity of child abuse being carried out in the coal mines. For this seven mining areas (Mach, Sorange, Degari, Harnai, Shahrig, Duki and Marwarh were sampled out of which only six could be accessed bearing to operation of BLA in the Marwarh area. A total of 437 children were consulted to obtain the true picture regarding the extent of child abuse.

The first part of the report provides an introduction to the definition and perceptions of child protection at an international and national level. This part entails the objectives of the study and an introduction to the coal mining sector of Balochistan. The key actors are identified and simple common dynamics exhibited at each mine are elaborated. It is imperative to understand life at each mine and the power dynamics to have an insight to the compulsions born down on children.

The second part deals with the detail findings of child right violation posing threats to the survival, protection, development and participation of coal mine children. The children working at the coal mines have to face or wait for any fatal injury every day due to the ways of mining being hazardous and dangerous. They are exposed to abuse in the form of sexual exploitation, beating, HIV/AIDs and find resort in mimicking perpetrators through abuse of other children and using harmful addictive drugs. We as a society have been unable to accept their

existence and thus their needs for development in a healthy environment in which they can have access to education, health and recreation opportunities. The children of the coal mines are denied any right to express their view point or take part in any decision making process having implications directly on their lives.

The research not only focused on consultations with children rather with other stakeholders that play their role in deferent degrees to have an impact over the lives of the coal mine children. This included Focus Group Discussions with adult labor, managers/supervisors, contractors, owners, concerned government officials and CSO members and truck drivers that remain in close proximity to the children. Through FGDs the child protection issues were further clarified and nature was brought forward and the findings from consultations of the children were authenticated.

The report also entails the description of the research methodology employed. The last part of the report discusses the major findings that reveal the extent of child protection issues in the coal mines based upon which some recommendations have been prepared through consultation of children and other stakeholders.

It is hoped that this report would unveil the evils of the abuse against children and acquire due attention to the protection issues of these children.

What is child protection?

“We owe our children – the most vulnerable citizens in any society – a life free from violence and fear.”

Nelson Mandela

The concept of child protection simply entails the protection of children from all forms of abuse and violations of their rights. In other words creating an environment best suited for their development, well being and growth thus protecting them from violence, abuse and exploitation.

Child protection is proportional to provision of basic rights that ensure an enabling environment necessary for children to develop, survive and thrive and ensure a prosperous future for the people of the state. Both child protection and child rights are complementary in nature by provision of one other can be achieved.

Child protection covers a wide range of issues and concerns of a range inclusive physical, psychological violence against children, sexual harassment and abuse, corporal punishment, risk of life threatening diseases, armed conflicts, hazardous working conditions, trafficking and etc. being vulnerable and being silent makes it obligatory upon the rest to take measures in culminating or reducing such forms of abuses. Failure in assuring an abuse and violence free environment for children undermines the national development and thus all development aspirations become void.

Across the Globe there exist children protection issues but in various intensities and all seeking root in the ugly reality of poverty. Poverty makes the core reason for increasing abuse and violence against children as they are compelled to enter into environments not fit for children making them even more vulnerable. Following national statistics depict the bigger picture:

There are 23470 children of fewer than 5 ages and population of children less than 18 years is 71952 in Pakistan.¹ According to ILO figures, there are 14 million Pakistani children involved in labor. This makes them about 20% of the total population of children in Pakistan – 70 million. The state of Human Rights in Pakistan: 2001 gives the figure of 40 million children.

The statistics regarding the general condition of children in Pakistan is a disappointing one. 48% of the country's children suffer from malnutrition, 2000 children under 5 die daily.

¹ UNICEF: State of World Children 2000

Contemplating over the issues of children in Pakistan and particularly in Balochistan the assurance of providing the basic child rights is a place far away from now. Let alone the basic child rights survival becomes almost impossible in circumstances like those existing in Balochistan surround these children. People are living in abject poverty where intensive labor earns bread at the end of the day. In many instances children are the ones contributing or sole earners of that bread and for this they are forced to forgo their childhood that ought to be promising a preparation for a healthy and better future.

Balochistan comprises of rugged terrain and blessed with the riches of all mineral resources. The question that whether these resources prove to benefit the province, the people or yet again strengthen and sharpen the edges between exploiters and the impoverished masses remains of political consequence but is providing humongous means of employment to thousands of people in the province of which a considerable number is of the children.

One such area is the coal mining industry of the province fueling the factories and kilns of the country. Balochistan is famous for producing one of the finest coals but at what expense? In these coal mines that are still being exploited with a century old technology a large number of children are made to work in hazardous conditions and brought face to face with all forms of violence possible.

In this perspective Society for Empowering Human Resource SEHER in collaboration with Save the Children Sweden designed a comprehensive and participatory research study under the title **“Assessment of Child Protection Issues at Coal mines of Balochistan through participatory approach”**.²The study is based upon the reality of life at coal mines and reveals aspect of child protection issues and vulnerabilities that are traditionally obscured by political and tradition based prejudices. This study helps in preaching an explicit lesson about contemporary reality of children at the coal mines. This exhaustive study has revealed startling information about child protection issues their magnitude and complexity and attempts to examine the origins of these issues and explodes many myths about the children at coal mines. The statistics revealed are shocking and signify the magnitude of the existing problems that if not taken up holistically could result in a darker and gloomy future for the children employed at these coal mines.

In order to bring uniformity and pivot the study around a central theme a hypothesis was developed and based upon which objectives of the study were marked out around which the process revolved.

² Details of research methodology are explained in Section III of the report.

Hypothesis

The children working as cooks/assistants and miners in the coal mines of Mach, Marwarh, Degari, Sor Range, Shahrig, Harnai and Duki³, are exposed to exploitation and abuses ranging from sexual abuse, to hazardous working environment, mental torture to physical beating to high risk of HIV/AIDS and TB.

Objectives

- To find out the quantum and intensity of child protection issues in focused coal mines of Balochistan
- To categorize the nature and threats of child protection issues in their working environment of focused coal mines of Balochistan
- To find out the susceptible nature to HIV/AIDS, STIs and TB among the working Children in focused coal mines of Balochistan
- To identify possible solutions and potential interventions to respond to child protection issues in focused coal mines in Balochistan

Dimension of the study

The primary stakeholders of the study were children at the coal mines from the all the focused mining fields and secondarily those having close interaction with the children or those indirectly affecting/impacting or having significant role in the lives of the children in question. In this regard all the stakeholders were made to actively participate in the process that was both a learning and truth uncovering experience for the participants inclusive of researchers and the stakeholders are the key to the revealing the core of the issues existing.

The following table gives the statistics regarding the sample size and dimension of the study.

| Area | children | adults | owners | contractors | supervisors | Truck drivers | CSOs | Govt. officials |
|---------|----------|--------|--------|-------------|-------------|---------------|------|-----------------|
| Sorange | 26 | 26 | | | | | | |
| Degari | 105 | 20 | | | 1 | 11 | | |
| Mach | 63 | 25 | | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 12 |
| Duki | 48 | 19 | 1 | | 2 | | | 2 |
| Harnai | 47 | 66 | 1 | | 2 | | 9 | |
| Shahrig | 148 | 21 | 1 | 2 | 1 | | | |
| Total | 437 | 177 | 3 | 5 | 14 | 14 | 12 | 14 |

Here the subject would render incomplete if it lacks the discussion about the age conflict regarding the children at the coal mines. It is estimated that more than

³ Concerned Government Department was able to provide roughly an estimate of 21 mining areas out of these 7 were selected on the basis explained in Section III

3.6 million children in Pakistan work in the formal sector⁴ which gives no account of the children working in the coal mines as both the private mining and government mining institutions have turned their eyes from the issues accompanying children in the mining areas. The minimum age for admission to employment as stated in the Employment of Children Act is 14 years but varies between other laws. During the study process it was revealed that both concerned government and private mining officials and even the miners themselves considered 18 years to be minimum age for admission for employment at the coal mines but retrospect to this children as young as 4 years of age were observed to be working thousands of feet under the ground to dig the coal out. The issue here is not the age inhibition but the working environment itself which becomes more hazardous for the miners of younger ages where possibility of poisonous gases, immense depths, roof collapse, trolley slips and electricity short circuits are a part of daily working routine.

Myths broken

- The mining carried in Balochistan is still based upon the century old techniques where miners dig (Tikum) the coal from underneath thousands of feet (going as deep as 8000 ft.) and carry in sacks of almost 100 kgs on their backs way up or in some instances to a station in between from where the haulage trolley carries it to the surface. The seams of the mines also vary from one to another as in Mach it may be as small as less as a foot and as large as 9 feet in Duki.

At the initial and preliminary stages of the study it was observed that there exists a political hierarchy or dynamism within the mining staff at mines that can broadly be divided into two broad categories those of surface staff and those of the underground staff. The surface staff included the official from the miner i.e. manager and Haulage cart driver, electrician etc and the underground staff included that of miners and Jori Sar (leader of a group of miners responsible for their accounts with the company). The surface staff was found most apprehensive regarding participating in the research process and placed hurdles in getting to know the true picture by not letting a direct interaction with the underground staff. Which on the other hand were most anxious to share whatever information possible? Secondly the surface staff was sensitive towards children issues and outright declined any existence of children at the mines under 18 years of age later found to be completely untrue.

The manager would influence the others in the surface staff and thus controlled the underground staff where there were a large number of children working. They would point fingers at abject poverty of the people that forced to allow children to work at the mining areas only as **Mait Cooleys** (cleaning

⁴ Child labor Survey 1996

coal from clay). This was the myth broken during the study because this was only a sham for the sake of government officials and other concerned agencies where actually the 437 children questioned during the study were working underground in the name of mait cooleys only.

One influential mine owner Mr. XYZ clearly elaborated that it was most probable that children may be working in hazardous conditions in the thousands of feet of depth in case no adults could have access due to the limitation of the seam. That is if the seams of the mine is less than a foot than only a child and that only of age between 5 – 10 could work by lying on his back and digging on the roof which causes the coal to fall directly into the eyes. Also at these depths there are poisonous gases that can cause instant death if in sufficient amount, nervous breakdown, breathing disorders etc. This information strengthened the belief that there is a huge number of child labor involved in coal mines to which no one has ever before paid concern and this being not just simple labor but one that requires full time engagement and a most dangerous and hazardous environment.

- It was perceived that the government and the private mining companies are the sole responsible for the management of the mines and risks involved. This was again found to be untrue because of a cunning new intervention in this regard. Each lease comprising of several mines had been leased out to petty contractors one mine or more mines per contractor delegated with whole responsibility of the management and risks involved to the contractor. The contractor with limited finances provided sub standard facilities and in almost all instances paid no heed in cases of accidents or health requirements. This has led to a scenario in which no one is responsible for anything and therefore no one accountable.
- No government or non government institution has a statistical or fact based data on the nature and quantum of involvement of children in coal mines. It is generally perceived that there are no children involved but through course of the study of only in 6 mining areas 437 children under ages of 18 were found working underground in most hazardous conditions and living a life void of even basic requirements of normal human life.
- It has been since long thought that at coal mines miners dwell living a bachelor form of life by leaving their families back home. This was found true in all areas but another striking discovery was that there were settlements of families of the miners and other staff at the mining area since generations (Sor range, Degari). These settlements comprised of non local population that is those from NWFP except in Harnai. These settlements where people required the provision of basic infrastructure and service delivery of basic facilities of health education etc.

At this juncture it was identified that the children living at these settlements had their lives at the stake of coal mining and were under direct influence of the mining industry. Therefore the life of these children also required close scrutiny and therefore was included in the scope of the research study for the reason of comparative analysis with those working and those being indirectly involved with coal mining by the virtue of their dwelling at the settlements and scrutinizing the impact on their lives being dependent on the earnings of care givers from the coal mines and associated risks.

As per verbal estimates thousands children at the coal mines are vulnerable to all forms of abuse and violence. These children have the right to be provided with education, health and recreational facilities, emotional harmony, violence free environment and most of all a hazard free working environment. Considering these paradigms the research study basically revolves and contemplates over the four areas pertinent to the children in focus of the study. These are survival, protection, development and participation to be discussed in detail later in the report. In order to fully comprehend and realize the extent of the child protection issues existing in the coal mines a thorough understanding of the living ways at the coal mines have to be developed.

Life at a Coal mine

During the course of this study two types of mine ownerships were come across one owned by private companies and second those managed by the government (PMDC) both has cutting difference in the way life was run at these places.

Starting from the privately owned mines these included being run by families or companies to be precise in the business even before the independence of the country and thus continued with the legendry operation of the mines the same rules still apply. A company owns complete mining fields (lease) comprising of several mines (Chat). In these mines everything concerning the basic facilities has been left to government e.g. schools, dispensaries, roads etc. the only facilities the mine owners concern themselves are those like providing drinking water, and space for living quarters and on rare occasions some medical provisions for emergencies. The owning company employs a manager that overlooks all the mine operations, employment of labor and caring for their needs, resolution of conflicts and maintenance of equipment required for mining.

The working shifts at mines varied from two to three a day with Friday being off. In places where there were two shifts one would be from 8 am to 3 pm and the other from 4 pm to 12 pm each of almost eight hours. Similarly in places where three shifts existed each was of eight hours through day and night. As the mines go deep down the labor said they had to walk and then crawl for almost two hours to reach the end and same duration for the return journey. There also exists a station at every 1500 – 2000 feet where they would dump the coal into sacks and then load into trolleys where possible otherwise carry on the backs. The process of carrying a sack to a station locally was termed as Bud and the person doing it called Buddy. It was found that many children were also involved in this Bud.

Usually labor went down in groups with each member having a separate responsibility like digging (Tikum), filling sacks, carrying and loading sacks into trolley (bud) etc.



Shahrig at loading of trucks

The surface staff includes the technical personnel i.e. the personnel responsible for operating the haulage. A bell or a telephone (point to point extension) is connected from the surface to the stations inside the coal mines to indicate the haulage driver for pulling the trolley up when it's loaded. Other surface staff include the electrician, cook etc. there is a practice at the coal mines to hire services of young boys as assistants to the surface staff under the pretense that these boys usually come from very poor families and cannot work inside the mines (not allowed) therefore this way are provided with petty wages to support their families. The research study revealed that in large proportions these boys were kept for sexual services particularly it was found that the criteria for cooks was that of young beautiful boys indicating the relevance to their need.

The role of companies in mining has been completely reversed these days as they have assumed a position of that of a sleeping partner. The companies have leased out their mining field to various contractors giving each one or two mines (Chat). They are paid as per verbal figures almost Rs. 1000 per ton coal production and are not involved or responsible for the operation of the mines. The contractors are sole care takers and sell as per verbal figure each ton at the cost of Rs 4000. This leaves out a very little margin for profit for the contractors which results in cutting down on basic facilities provision and protective measures. Well this then leads nowhere else other than endangering the precious human life engaged in coal mining serving as the backbone of the country's economy. The most vulnerable on all accounts are the children in this instance as are being denied all basic rights, exploited sexually, economically, physically and psychologically and forced to work in hazardous conditions with their lives at high risk.

The government owned mining shows a slight difference in that the mines are being managed by responsible government officials with no petty contractors involved. The government is responsible for the provision of all basic facilities such as housing, drinking water, health facilities, schools and etc. at the government owned mines proper residential colonies have been built with dispensaries, schools, roads and drinking water. The issue here that arises is that infrastructure exists but needs to be operationalised e.g. a school building may exist but without teachers or students same with the rest. The lack of proper check and balance existed. Overall the situation comparatively was on better edge than that at privately owned mines. The mining methodology being followed is somewhat similar to the private sector.

The wages are paid at the same rate in both government and private sector. The measure for payment is the no. of feet the mines are exploited on average Rs 300 – 500 per foot divided amongst all labor.

The surface staff is paid in a range of Rs. 7000 – Rs. 10000 per month with the exception of the cook who is paid by the labor itself.

The labor at the mines can be categorized into three categories:

- i. Non local labor without families
- ii. Local labor living with families in the mining areas
- iii. Non local labor dwelling with their families in the mining areas

All three involve children and thus comes their protection issues. The Non local labor usually comes from Afghanistan (Hazarajat) or from NWFP (Swat and Dir districts) stays for about 6 – 7 months and return to their homeland. These usually come back or sometimes in their place send some relative. There are also people that have been on the mines for years never going just sending money. The labor comes in groups with their own leader (Jori Sar) who manages their salaries and other issues with the manager. Among these the percentage of adolescent boys is very large (below 18 years of age) that are forced to come by intense poverty compulsions and being sole bread winners of their households. They accompany some kin and come to far off mountains to earn a living under the most dangerous environments and harsh weathers.

In many instances it was found that most of these boys were being exposed to all forms of sexual exploitation at the hands of the inmates or managers and sometimes even led to prostitution. They were forced bearing to compulsions of earning a prevailing rates of salary but those not indulging in such activities were paid as low as Rs. 500/ month or never paid. Beating and verbal abuse was as common as being a natural part of life. Some stories were related to the research team during group work regarding boys being raped inside the coal mines at stations. There were particular cases where even young boys were just brought for the sole purpose to providing sexual services to inmates and were paid for it

and these boys never did any usual work just a helping hand here and there mostly cooks or assistants to the surface staff.

The labor living with families at the mines are subject to different circumstances and have completely different issues. The local labor involved in mining of Balochistan accounts to a very small proportion but not so small that can be ignored. Again the children are involved in mining pertaining to poverty as being root cause but are still in a slight better condition as they work through the day or night and then return to their homes. Here children being referred not only include just the male child but also the female child. It was found that only the male child worked at the mines and the girls remained at home which provided higher level of protection than that to the boys.

Still there were exploitative attitudes and practices towards children. Children would roam around the mines doing nothing inhaling the coal dust causing serious breathing complications. These children had no access to schooling or other development opportunities in cases where schools did exist they were just to engage the children during the course of the day without promising any opportunity in future. Even where families dwelled there were accommodation provided from the bachelor miners posing real threat to the children *“a small girl relating that she hated passing near their quarters as they used very bad language and harassed her while coming to school”*. The boys that worked underground also faced same problems and a few cases of attempted rapes or forced sexual intercourse were related. The settlements at the mines were in a deplorable condition and with homosexuality among miners (bachelors) on a rise there were no safe sex practices that posed a great threat to the health of these children.

The children whether working or not were subject to harsh living conditions and health problems. Being far away from civilization the families were not provided with any of the basic facilities so far a subject of discussion.

Case study

Power Dynamics at the mines

There exists an immense structure of the coal mining industry that involves interest and gains of many and also involves the large number of labor employed. The mining stands on the hard work and killing labor of thousands of human resource but the profit goes to a few by virtue of their ownership of the mines or having resources for the costs involved in the exploitation of coal.

The labor is still paid based upon same metrics followed decades ago but the owners (private or public) continue to thrive on increasing profits because increased demand for coal. The labor is still entangled in the struggle for mere existence with negligible improvement in lifestyle meaning if wages improve then inflation is alarmingly increasing in parallel. The situation worsens where the labor is non local and has relatively no say in any of the matters even those directly impacting their lives. It requires well crafted mechanism of exerting control over resources and thus a control over human resource that pumps the power of the owners resulting in sharpening the difference between that of profit receivers and profit providers.

The subject in itself is vast and asks for an extensive research to uncover the real factors playing their role in the scenario, but the introduction to the power dynamics in coal mining would help in comprehending the life and impacts of the power dynamics on the life of labor and in particular the children involved. The labor in this instance are the most vulnerable and at receiving end further which renders the children to be more susceptible. The subject of power dynamics at coalmines can be easily categorized at two major levels i.e. one at the owners level and secondly the one existing at each coal.

The mining in Balochistan has changed from old times in the prospect that earlier owners themselves were directly involved in the management and operation of the mines but now they take their royalty at fixed rate of Rs. 1000/ton each ton costing Rs.4000 subject to the quality of coal of course. The mines have been leased out at one or two mines (chat) to petty contractors who are responsible for the management, operation, and maintenance and responding to any emergency. This leaves out a very little margin to the contractors but terms cannot be reversed as the real ownership rests in ownership and large amount of profit ought to go in that direction.

In this preview the contractor cuts down on many costs that includes wages of children working under the pretense of mait cooleys as they are legally not allowed so the contractors take advantage of the situation. The children unable to voice or do anything have to accept the terms dictated by the contractors wiping out any other option as the very question of survival exists.

The contractors are again pressurized on another front but to very little extent by the labor in the off season i.e. the summers as the labor mostly go back home

which leaves room for the labor to dictate their terms in regard to facilities that they demand e.g. water, accommodation etc. This is seen in case of only those organized in small groups. Whenever conflicts arise with the contractors they move to other mines which holds the contractors pressurized by them always. The result would be that whatever they did with children no one could raise a concern or voice because the whole group would leave putting the mine operation in jeopardy. Another striking factor is that every mine has its own way and methods and once the labor get acquainted with it becomes very difficult to understand the Tikum way giving yet again another leverage to the labor over the situation but this exist in very few cases only in the off season.

When scrutinizing the power dynamics at the life on a single mine different actors are observed to play their role. In this regard information was gathered during group work sessions with children that identified the dominating elements. When viewed from children's perspective they found that the most powerful in their viewpoint was the contractor who controlled everything concerning the coal mine and thus exerting an excessive control over their lives. Second was the manager followed by the group leader (if they were part of a group) and then by the elder kin or any other adult. Each one of these at various times and in various forms would exploit the children and violate even the most basics of rights. The most vulnerable would be those not having some adult kin who could in case of conflict or accident take care of them. They were at high risk of sexual abuse from everyone who could get the leverage to do so and other forms of exploitation discussed in quite depth later in the report.

Childhood lost

Childhood not only refers to the duration between birth and adulthood it rather defines the state and condition of the life between more precisely regarding the quality of child's life. CRC adopted across the globe defines the terms of this childhood which provides a substantial common ground on what standards of childhood should be. There is a need for the fulfillment of child rights to survival, protection, development and participation. When analyzing the picture of coal mines at a close angle it is found that factors to undermine childhood exist in various manifestations with profoundly damaging effects of coal mine child's chances of survival, protection, development and participation. Moreover, as damaging as the major threats are by themselves, when more than one coincide, the impact on the children lives is devastating.



Poverty is the key actor in yielding these children to an environment that provides least protection of their rights and indulges a large proportion of children in activities or means of livelihood both putting them at dangerous levels of risk for mere survival and culminating any chances of envisioned development and participation.

The coal mining industry of Pakistan is being fuelled as a whole by the lost hopes and chances of children for a future of better and healthy life. It undermines all opportunities of a society that would emerge in future for the state as being equipped with constructive and developmental notions. Since the inception of the

industry in the sub – continent the blind eye turned towards the issues of children involved in coal mining has resulted in satanic way of life and initiated the cultivation for a demoralized and exploitive society.

The following section of the report would encompass the issues identified during the course of the study pertaining to each of survival, protection, development and participation of the children directly involved in coal mining or indirectly involved by the virtue of their residence at the mines and livelihood of families being solely dependent upon coal mining. It is imperative to state that issues identified exhibit a high degree of co – relevance and cannot be subjected to categorization solely as each supplements other.

Survival

Survival or continued existence of the children is the primary issue identified in the research which leads to other protection and development issues of these children. As a whole in Pakistan children are forced due to poverty compulsions to enter into environments that pose great challenges to their survival but when the situation is viewed with particular focus on children in coal mines the situation is amplified to threatening extent.

In the life of child either working in mines or simply living in the surroundings there is struggle of survival from sunrise to sunset and onwards in a cycle which they themselves are unable to break through without any positive intervention. The question here is not only the survival of children but that of their dependent families. On an average 6 – 7 members inclusive of the child himself are dependent on the child labor at the mines and even a day off results in starvation for that day. There is a difference in wages of that of adults and those of children for the same nature of job in several instances as children below 14 years of age are not legally allowed to work in mines so when such children are compelled to work they are paid comparatively less bearing to that stated fact. Another stark reality for the difference of wage is that of forcing children to adapt to exploitive environment as being natural and involve themselves in the sexual activities for which they can receive financial benefits.

The coal mining being carried out in the most unscientific manner without any safety or health measures yields children with facing the most dangerous repercussions. Children work in threatening working environment that at every step pose a threat to their lives, amputation or any other irrecoverable loss but for the mere reason of survival and no other option they take upon these risks by considering each as being the last one.

“When and where one may die who knows its just compulsion what else can be done”

A child miner

Lack of any proper health facility in surroundings of the coal fields and unhygienic living ways cause the prevalence of ailments that may be easily cured but put the health of children at mines in jeopardy. Another pertinent issue in regard to health is that of extensive unsafe sexual practices that may result in fatal results such as hepatitis, STIs and HIV/AIDS. as coal mining has never been viewed from the perspective of extensive human resource involved therefore no attention has ever been paid to the issues particularly health.

These children along with their families live at a margin of existence therefore the adequate nourishment is an idea one cannot coin at the instance. Yet again malnourishment results in prevalence of common diseases that are prolonged or not cured at all bearing to the lack of access to health facilities.

A deep insight into the true situation in regard to survival issues of children at coal mines can be gained through elaboration of the following subjects revealed during the course of the research. **Poverty** being the core of all forms of catastrophes in the life of children at the coal mines acts as the major catalyst in aggravating and worsening the situation. Therefore it is realized that all instances of denial, unawareness and violation of the rights of the children at coal mines is the direct manifestation of the poverty which yield these children and their families living at brink of existence.

Hazardous working environment

The techniques employed at the mines of Balochistan and those at sampled fields of the study are a legacy left down to us from the times of the British. Where one hand the world has mechanized all its mining industry it has also taken leaps of success towards ensuring safe means of excavation. Retrospect to this the mining techniques are ages old where to support the roof wood pillars are used and in case of even minor change in mines structure i.e. water or sliding could result in collapse of the mines swallowing with it lives of many labor inclusive of the children.

Mine engineering/construction

The depth of mines varies from a few hundred to almost eight thousand feet. Most of the mines under the scope of the study went for a distance went horizontal into the mountains and then vertically down in the ground. The seams too vary from less than a foot to almost 9-14



feet. This has a relevance to children in the way that where the seam is very small only a child could reach it and that also a very young one. The mines are so narrow and haphazard that the miners crawl on their backs to reach the excavation points. The roofs are supported by mere wood pillars that seem as they may give way any time. In case whenever water problem arose or land sliding occurred the roofs would collapse resulting in either blocking the miners inside or killing them instantly. Many deaths and severe injuries have been the result of this.



Mine at Sorange

By rule mining engineers ought to inspect the mines in accordance with Government Mining Act – Health and safety guidelines that were non-existent. The mines are not excavated employing any mining engineering that may provide some safety rather done purely on the local knowledge. On average almost somewhere in mines an accident of collapse occurs putting the life of both adults and children at continuous risk.



United Coal Mine Degari

Mumtaz Ali S/O Malik Naz 16 years of age had his fingers blown by dynamite last year. The first time he started work at the mines the manager gave him dynamites to blow the rock inside the mine so that the coal could be accessed. But the dynamites went off in his hands. The mine manager or contractor didn't help in any treatment and all expenses were born by his father. He says he cannot do any thing with his hands and it hurts when he does Mait Cooley.

Basic Oxygen Demand (BOD)

In the depths of mines all forms of gases exist due to the chemical activity within the mines. Some of these are highly dangerous to human life the details of some given as under:

| Gas | Harmful effect | Detection means |
|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| Oxygen | Non poisonous | Oil & safety lamp |
| Nitrogen | claustrophobic | Breath |
| Carbon dioxide | Claustrophobic | Oil & safety lamp |
| Methane | Highly inflammable | Methane meter or digital meter |
| Carbon monoxide | Poisonous | Canary (bird) |
| Nitrogen Dioxide | Poisonous | Smell |
| Hydrogen Sulphide | poisonous | Smell |

Proper equipment is not available at each mine which shows lack of proper inspection at the government level. In a few mines particularly Duki and Sorange it was observed the safety equipment was given to the labor in case if someone comes to inspect they would put on masks (pic) otherwise it was laying sealed in boxes. In Duki particularly, gases had severe harmful effects such that in their presence nervous breakdown could occur no testing means were employed even in rest of mining fields. This is subject to the observations made and dialogue held with labor of the mines under the scope of the study.

In these mines special testing equipment is utilized such that as mentioned in the table above but with its unavailability the miners use sprit lamps called locally as *Dewas* that have open flame and use up oxygen content of the mines and render the oxygen below BOD posing threat to the life of miners. Similarly if there is a highly inflammable gas present this could also be fatal.



Excessive carbon dioxide produced by these *Dewas* in narrow mines could lead to claustrophobia.

Another pertaining issue is the coal dust that leads to breathing disorders; lower oxygen content and presence of dangerous gases can both harm life forever or

take it away altogether. Therefore as compared to the resistance offered by the adults children are affected at early stages that can lead to severe complications later in the life.

Exhaust & fans

In order to provide the BOD and exhaust the gases huge fans and compressors are utilized such that these fixed in the mines that require diesel engines of the generators to run them further leading to excessive utilization of oxygen and production of carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide. Another way to ensuring exhaust is by providing parallel channels for air circulation that is a very sensitive issue if disturbed even minutely could lead to formation of moisture further causing the roofs to weaken and then collapse. Also lack of proper air circulation could lead to explosion in case of the presence of highly inflammable gases.

The fans themselves pose great threat such that these are huge and can suck light weight things even as heavy as a light weighted child.

Electricity

In order to run the engines, fans and other electrical devices electricity from genitors is supplied through cables inside the mines. It was observed in various mines that the insulation of the cables had worn out that could act as means of electric shocks to the ones working nearby. Stories were related to the research team that such incidents had happened in the past.

Sparks also occurred occasionally that could result in explosion in the presence of ignitable gases or elements even the coal itself catches fire. The generators on the surface were operated by electricians almost universally assisted by some child putting him in charge of the heavy voltages involved.



These children also handled heavy duty batteries containing acids again jeopardizing very health, safety and life.



Haulage trolley

The means of carrying the coal sacks to the top and miners down was tie with metallic ropes and ran deep down at high speeds. Inside the mine the miner would jump off the haulage trolley run ahead of it put a foot down in order to stop it. This was personally observed by the team member that visited the mine one time that this could be very dangerous.



Secondly almost every day one or two miners would be injured when the trolley rope would break and hit them. In one particular case it had hit a miner in the head and killed him instantly.

Sardar Jomezai Mines Sorange

Khan Gul (17yrs) S/O of Zia Gul hit by the Haulage Trolley while working inside the mine.



Mait Cooley (air and fire in coal)

Another sector where children were employed in huge numbers was as Mait Cooleys meaning to clean the coal from clay called mait. This was a laborious job continued under sun from sunrise to sunset and some even continued it through the night because it paid very less and yet there was no other option. They would carry out the cleaning through simple tools such as hammers and most of children had hurt their hands in the process. With long duration of sitting posture the children also complained of back aches that could lead to significant and permanent problems later in the lives.



Mait Cooley at Washoo coal mine Mach

The coal was dumped in open grounds around the mines and most of the mining fields experience high temperatures during summers. In many instances the coal would undergo chemical activity combust thus the dumps would catch fire. In the mining areas where there was no proper drinking water provision there absolutely none for handling such incidents.

Another aspect is the coal dust in the air that causes significant breathing complication among both adults and children in the vicinity of the mines. It was observed while one of the team's members used white sheet of paper to document the dialogue with the teacher a layer of coal particles covered the sheet with the breeze of air at which the teacher said that her own two sons were suffering form asthma and large sum of money was spent on the treatment at Quetta.

Land sliding

The climatic conditions of the province, particularly the mountainous region where coal mining is being carried, are extremely cold and experience heavy rain and snowfalls. The continuous process of coal mining yield these mountains weak and thus result heavy land sliding during rainy seasons. In the Sorange and Degari region the mountains on which the communities were settle were cut in halves bearing to land sliding.

All were cutoff for almost a and food supplies foot with no supply. One evacuate in the when they felt the them and took these areas there number of working or simply living there with families working in the mines.



from civilization month last year were brought on drinking water settlement had to middle of the night land moving under shelter nearby. In were a large children either

This land sliding also causes the roofs to collapse inside the mines and thus endangering the lives of laborers inside or otherwise disrupting their livelihood. The land sliding in several cases had caused the houses to collapse too thus further burdening the poor communities and particularly the children that had to suffer cold winters in open air.

PMDC Sorange

Mohamamd Ilyas (16 years) has started to work inside the mines since last three years. His father worked and one day he felt some breathing difficulty and on his return from the mine in open he was attacked with paralysis. On his treatment no one came for help and no compensation was provided. Only Rs. 20000 was provided as loan. In order to repay this loan Mohammad Ilyas started quite early and faces same kind or more dangerous fate everyday by working inside the mines simply to keep his family surviving.



Nutrition & health

The notion of deprivation focuses attention on the conditions that surround children at coal mines, casting poverty as an attribute of the environment they live and grow in. As explained in the "The state of world's children 2005" there are some operational definitions of deprivations:

Nutrition: children whose height and weight for their age were more than three standard deviations below the median of the international reference population.

The children at coal mines at many places were malnourished, the most common diet being bread and black tea or sometimes pulses. This kept them undernourished and thus more prone to diseases otherwise easily curable. They had never been immunized except where government polio eradication campaigns had reached which was as rare as none. The adolescents were basically from Afghanistan where decades of war had left no room for social services such as health. Even the children belonging to Swat came from poor families and had to start very early at mines therefore had never had the chance of immunization against some basic ailments.

The settlements surrounding the mining areas were never accessed by the government-sponsored immunization program or any other medical camps bearing in mind the fact that the laborers were considered transitional in nature and most even are not aware of the existence of such settlements.

Water: children who only had access to surface water for drinking or lived in households where the nearest source of water was more than 15 minutes away.

There was no water supply to the mines except that the owners/contractors had provided for tanks of water that were filled each day from tankers from various tube wells in the surroundings. Also some had to bring water themselves from springs if any in the nearby regions. There was always a limited supply and the storage techniques were the least hygienic.



In a particular area it was observed that these tankers came in every week instead of daily.

Almost all the children and adults that were consulted during the research were voicing this as a major problem that they were infected with diseases merely because of unsafe drinking water.

Sanitation: children who had no access to a toilet of any kind in the vicinity of their dwelling.

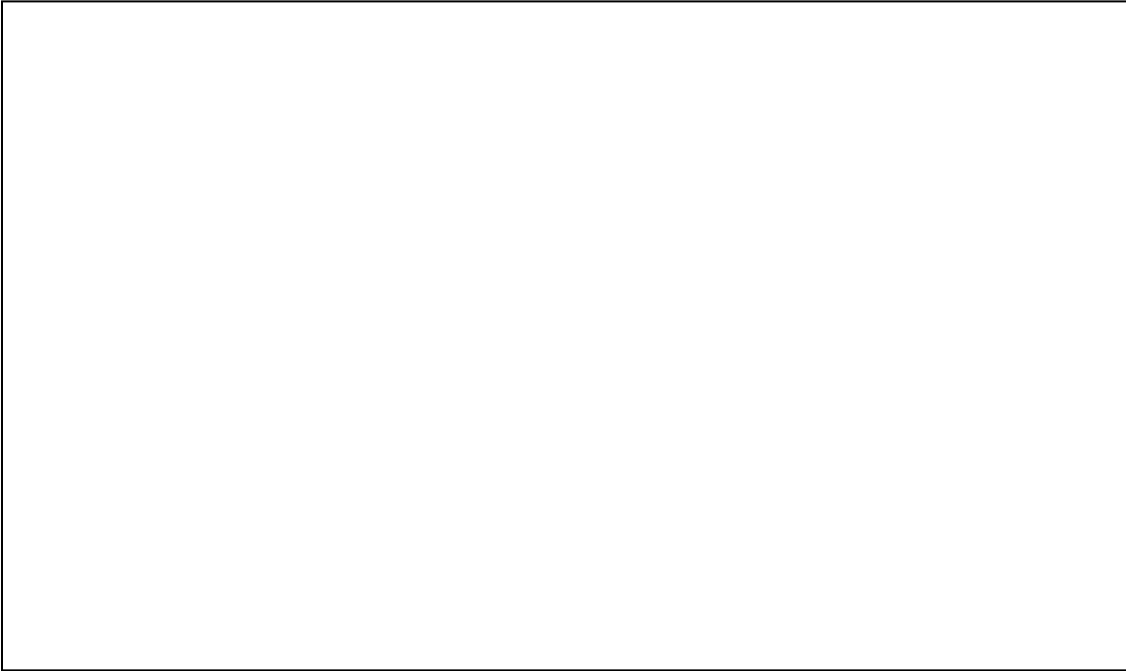
There was no concept of sanitation in the coal mines and children had no access to toilets of any kind. Only a boundary had been made in open air to serve as toilets. Lack of enough water could be a factor behind it. Exception was observed in areas where complete communities dwelled as family units that had better sanitation facilities.

Health: children, who had not been immunized against any diseases, or young children who had recently suffered from diarrhea but had not received any medical advice or treatment.

This is a detailed issue covered later in the report, but briefly stating there were buildings of dispensaries in many mining areas but were good for nothing as there were no staff on duty, no medicine not even first aid facility. The children or anyone else for the matter if suffering from any disease or injury had to travel to the nearest hospital usually at a distance of hours.

During consultations of the research a girl of stated that she been bitten by scorpion and had to reach some medical facility but had to bear the pain for complete day before a vehicle bring supplies for mines could be arranged for her to go to the nearest health center. In case there is an immediate requirement of

medical help in mining a child particularly has to wait for as long as 24 hours or be carried on back to the center if existing nearby.



Case study eye infected)

Shelter: children in dwellings with more than five people per room or with no flooring material.



Well the shelter or accommodation in the mines was questionable throughout the areas no proper houses were found except for those built by the labor with more

than 6 – 7 on average per room. They had to pass all harsh weather in these shelters built on top of one another.



The government constructed labor colonies are now obsolete in some area where they existed

Education: children aged between 7 and 18 years old who had never been to school.

Same was the case with schools if there were schools then they had no teachers if teachers did come they would take long leaves, and the children had no books. In many areas there were no schools at all. So access to education was almost negligible.

Information: children aged between 3 and 18 years old with no access to radio, television, telephone or newspapers at home.

In the context of coal mines to be precise where even basic livelihood was at risk access to information seems an ideas far fetched. Though there were digital receivers (Dish antennas) almost at every mine but these were not considered as means of information but entertainment and for that matter an easy access to pornographic programs and movies.

There were mini cinemas even for the purpose where children were taken to be lured into sexual activities and develop a psyche of acceptance towards homosexuality basically.

Of these, only deprivation of education and information can be answered in simply binary terms; the others are matters of degree. Indeed it is reasonable to conclude that even less severe deprivations than those referred to above could undermine children's survival and harm their human rights.

“Deprivation in one aspect often accentuates other deprivations”

Protection

“With the childhood of so many under threat, our collective future is compromised. Only as we move closer to realizing the rights of all children will countries move closer to their goals of development and peace.”

Kofi A. Annan

The assessment and analysis of child protection is complex and, at times, sensitive. In addition to threatening children’s lives, poverty and absence of primary care givers increases their vulnerability to exploitation and violation of its basic human rights. Perhaps there is nothing more tragic than the sight of a child giving away its childhood for the sake of surviving. Poverty of course is major factor but it does not have a single face it manifests itself in a number of ways. There can be economic poverty; social, emotional, moral and cultural poverty and children everyday are faced with various dimensions of poverty.

The children are placed in difficult circumstances and have to find a way to swim through without having any primary care giver or protector. The society as a whole is responsible for the protection of children from all forms of harm but what to be done where a proper society doesn’t exist.

The protection of the children in the context of coal mining was a major issue discovered during the research study the protection concerns that were identified can be categorized in the following areas:

- ❖ Sexual abuse of children
- ❖ Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC)
- ❖ Corporal punishment
- ❖ Hazardous labor
- ❖ Use of harmful substances
- ❖ HIV/AIDS & STIs

In order to understand the nature and intensity of the children who are vulnerable to becoming victims to these crimes, one has to know why they are forced to lead a life that puts them at the mercy of those who are simply not friendly and what is the impact of child abuse on mental and physical growth of a child.

Everyone believes that once a child will grow up and be an abuser. They also therefore believe that all perpetrators have at some point in their lives been victims (PPA report 2000).

Defining child protection is a complex problem particularly when talking of children at the coal mines. In the coal mines where any talk of child rights or abuse is considered a notion of ridicule because at puberty a male child is considered as a man capable of bearing children and sustaining a family. Child

abuse can be defined as acts which directly cause or which result in pain or harm to a child, and which thereby adversely affects his or her health and health. Depriving a child of his or her basic needs may also amount to child abuse.

Although the phrase “protection” might diffuse one’s thoughts to vague notions, it has indeed a clear and concrete definition. In its simplest form, child protection addresses every child’s right not to be subjected to harm. It compliments other rights that, inter alia, ensure that children receive what they need in order to survive, develop and thrive.⁵

Child protection though complex shows an inter linked complex structure of interrelated exposure and abuse. For example, sexual abuse may be accompanied by corporal punishment, HIV/AIDS and STIs. Therefore it is imperative to keep in view that the alternative to “protected” children is not merely “unprotected children” but rather serious social illnesses such as children with fatal infections, poor physical and mental health, and poor parental skills later in life and lack of enough self esteem to participate in the “public good”

Well while assessing the issue of protection in the context of those at coal mines, the analysis allows for two opposite directions. The first, having been explored above, refers to children that are abused by their alleged “protector” that is by the kin accompanying the children at the mines, or by other members of the family of children living with their families.

The second group of particularly vulnerable children is that who actually lack a “protector”. In the absence of kin the child is doomed to constant exposure to all forms of violence and abuse, not the least which has been significantly come across the study – Child Sexual Abuse.

Some children are able to overcome and thus show tremendous recovering abilities but this is related to external support structures as well as internal coping mechanisms. Unfortunately this external or internal ability id not there for the children at the coal mines.

Abuse of children from which they are in need of protection can be said of as “multiplier effect”. An abuser usually abuse more than one child and in many instance the same child abuses other children in same age group or later in life as an adult.

⁵ A regional Analysis of CSEC, CSA, and trafficking in South Asia and National Interventions through NPAs

Sexual Abuse of Children

Sexual abuse among coal mine children is very sensitive issue therefore through applying the various tools of information gathering such as body maps and getting into deep discussions enabled to uncover the real gravity, quantum and degree of the sexual abuse carried out. Sexual abuse being the worst form of abuses and for that the most common was identified and analyzed during the course of the study.

The children at the coal mines are at complete mercy of the adults around them and are also in the most unprotected environment even if their families are residing nearby but what happens through the day no one voices against it. Sexual child abuse was an open secret and was common in every mining area that the research team visited. Hundreds of stories of such abuse were discussed. The situation had gone to an extent that it was considered a natural part of the daily life.

Alarming incident needs to be quoted here while returning from the mining field to the residence the research team passed by the living quarters of the labor that at the time were having dinner or tea after that. It was observed that each hut there were almost 8 -9 people sitting under the light of a bulb or lamp. Among them 3 -4 were children under 18 years of age. These were the children that had come alone or with some kin and most at risk from the inmates. The labors are adults with sexual desires having wives back home who find relieve their sexual needs through these children mainly boys.

Qandahar city of Afghanistan is notorious for its common homosexual practices and many places that the team visited were nick named as “small Qandahar” revealing the extent of such activities in these areas where mostly children were the ultimate actors. Lack of money or any means of recreation, young boys are cheap and easy victims of lust. It was famous that boys in the mines could easily be found that provide sexual services. Poverty was identified as the key factor in sexual abuse of children. Other factors include lack of primary care givers, cheap pornography available to everyone and no other option to earn a livelihood.

The children that came from homes i.e. the settlement of labor families were somewhat protected along with the girls living in the vicinity. They apparently seemed protected from sexual abuse as they communities follow strict tribal norm where girls do not leave their homes without male companion but those coming to schools in an instant complained of being harassed by the bachelor males living nearby on the way to school. They said that the labors would play music or songs with sexual wordings that made the girls feel very bad.

Well the Sexual abuse of children is basically the second step in the process, the children consulted during the study shared with the team that they were continuously harassed by adults in the vicinity of the mines. They were offered

gifts, money, and relaxation in work or visit to nearby towns where they were taken to mini cinema where they lured through exposing those to pornographic movies. In many cases children wages were not paid or decreased to almost Rs. 500 per month so that in one way or the other they could be lured into providing sexual services.

Once by force or through other ways the children enter the situation they became a common property and each and every adult on premises tried their best to have some sort of sexual relationship with the children.

School also played a major role in the sexual abuse of children, as the teacher himself other adults concerned with the school would try to attract the young boys into sexual activity with themselves. One such incident was where the teacher himself would bring his friends and the young good looking boys would be presented as gifts to provide sexual services. The children out of fear and respect for the institution of teacher could not break through the chains.

At every mining field the stories of sexual intercourse inside the mines at stations was common. the children and some adults during the focus group discussion related that sometimes a child would be isolated from rest of the group inside the mine and then raped. Such cases of rape were found to be very common.

It was found that there was a very high prevalence of homosexuality among the labor both among the adults and the children. During the course of the study all those that were consulted were at one time or another been harassed by adults.

“100% sexual harassment of children at coal mines”

Although the breadwinners are socially accepted, but parallel to it these become victim to both poverty and sexual abuse and thus considered inferior in society. No space is provided to these abused children to share their feelings about the exploitation by the perpetrators this in a way isolates them and in end a socio truth is established for their young minds as this being the only way of life possible. Some might find relief in turning to drugs or taking vengeance through exploitation of other children. The quantum of the psychological and physical damage to the children is inestimable.

Another dimension to the sexual abuse of children is the way to escape through truck drivers. The truck drivers provide an easy way to escape but it doesn't turn out to be as pleasant. Many of the boys working at the mines make friends with the drivers who ask them to accompany them and it turns out that the truck drivers take them to other provinces where they are further exposed to more dangerous forms of sexploitation and there is no other way except prostitution to earn a livelihood. Usually these drivers are sexually active throughout the country and therefore have high probability of being infected with HIV/AIDs or hepatitis or other STIs. Thus when they have sexual relations with the children at the coal

mines that easy prey and cheap to have there are very high chances that the children are affected too. But the exact numbers could be found because of the lack of medical testing so far.

Interesting finding that the study came across was that in one particular coal mine discussion during the group work the children shared that in order to fetch water they hired donkeys from Frontier Corps (FC) at 10 rupees each which they later used for sexual intercourse.

Toti Coal Mine Mach

A young boy of age 7 – 8 years working in the mines had sexual relations with adult women and usually took his friends too. The Jori SAR (60 – 70 years of age) Naib Ali Hazara made young boys massage intimate parts of his body and if someone disobeyed he would make sure to make him jobless or make life at mines impossible. The Haulage driver too harassed and abused young boys sexually. No one could raise a voice against them because the surface staff and Jori SAR are usually very close to the contractor and no one wants to loose work. The wages for the boys that indulge in sexual activity with the staff amount to Rs. 1500 – 2000 per month while those that refrain from such acts are only paid Rs. 500 per month.

National Coal mines Mach

There is a primary school for the children working and living in the vicinity of the mines. The teacher sexually abuses the children himself and pressurizes them for doing so on the account of inflicting beatings and having friendships with the Manager and the Contractor. The children are compelled to agree to his demands because they fear his wrath. He occasionally brings his friends from town and asks the children to please his friends sexually. In return sometimes he gives the children Rs. 10 or 20 to keep them from telling anyone.

Toti Coal mine Mach

This is a story of three boys Rahim Baksh (12 yrs), Zahir Khan (13 yrs) and Mohammad Farooq working as Mait Cooley on the mines. As per the normal environment around they were indulged in sexual relationship with each other, with boys and girls. They said that all the adults in the mines also carried out the same practices behind the mines. Zahir Khan had sexual relation with a boy and a girl much older than him. The other two are also indulged in some kind of active sex life with multiple partners without any concept of safe sex. That has exposed the boys to risk of STIs and other sexually communicable diseases.

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children CSEC

This was a taboo to be completely out of bounds for discussions but when in isolation with the group of children they would uncover every truth pertinent to the issue. Among most serious violations and exploitation was the commercial Sexual abuse of children that also included to some level prostitution. It was very difficult to obtain information about CSEC from the respondents. However everyone knew of its prevalence but no one wanted to share information therefore the magnitude of the crime could not be assessed in truth. The extent of seriousness of the issue was uncovered only in isolated discussions with either children groups or adults. In the presence of the manager of the mines no one even spoke but only talked of things that they were only supposed to be told.

Once a child gets involved in it is impossible to keep away as it is widespread and thus becomes impossible for the victim to leave it. Children shared that if they did not indulge in such activities they were forced through organized efforts. The wages are kept very low for boys and in order to sustain their livelihood they become sex workers. It is quite common among people living nearby the mining fields to get young boys from the mines for sexual pleasure. The main reason being that they are cheap and provide no repercussions.

The children at the beginning are confused and dreadful but gradually they overcome their fear and become comfortable with their work. The people for sex trade have usually used boys in difficult circumstances existing in the coal mines to make profits out of it. CSEC is not done always for money but for avoiding the wrath of adults or heavy tasks. With sexual abuse as a common base, the number of children in the category of commercial sexual exploitation may be smaller, but their conditions are often perilous.

Children are attracted to prostitution when they watch other children at the coal mines earning easy money or relieved of various difficult jobs.

National Coal mines Mach

Abdul Samad student of class 4 works in the mines with his family inclusive of his younger brother (5 -6 years of age), sister in law (18 – 20 yrs) and his mother. He has been faced with the most ill fate circumstances from all quarters. First stroked by abject poverty, second by inter communal feud and third by being placed in an extremely abusive environment. His father, brother and uncle have been lost to the feud during which his mother was kept captive for three months a very punishing psychological harm in a traditional society. At the resolution of the feud as per traditional norms a girl was given to his family in marriage which he refused and thus was married to his younger brother. At the time of the group work his younger brother married to a girl of more than twice his age was playing with a toy cart. When for making bread at lunch time his mother returns to the house several other children including Abdul Samad has heard her screaming when the manager attempts to force her into sexual intercourse. The teacher at the school himself takes leverage of being friends with the Manger and contractor sexually abuse children. Amongst all this Abdul Samad awaits the time when he can get his hands on a gun and take vengeance and thus fuel the old feudal rivalry.

It was also observed that some adults bring with themselves young beautiful boys from their respective home solely for the purpose of sexual relationship. These boys dwell with them in the same quarters and have to do nothing except this. They are provided with nice clothes and money for it.



The degree of sexual harassment and abuse is to such a level of acceptance that in almost every group discussion it was revealed that the children wished for having relationships with boys or in some cases with girls more than for school or health facility.

Corporal punishment

Corporal punishment, which may include very severe forms, is widely used as a disciplinary measure for children in coal mines. Being allowed and supported in both legal code and tribal norms it puts children in a very vulnerable position.

It was observed during the study that all the children involved in group discussions in one form or another faced corporal punishment each day. Child beating and use of abusive language is considered less sensitive by everyone among the respondents. The children also thought that the issue was ridiculous and no time ought to be spared for a minor issue as this. Therefore violating their physical integrity, undermining their self-esteem and demonstrating disrespect for their human dignity.

It was observed that corporal punishment was carried out at two levels: one that included physical punishment or psychological punishment, verbal abuse or ridicule. Basically the reason for corporal punishment was used as a tool for developing subservient attitudes among children so that they could be forced into anything such as sexual abuse.

It was common, and most accepted; none considered it as being some violation. It was widespread, being inflicted on all the children consulted, i.e.

100% children consulted were faced with corporal punishment everyday.

Among the laborers being from very rigid traditional backgrounds, anyone can inflict beating upon a child and is considered good for the child's upbringing. They must obey their elders unconditionally and if they ask any questions, they are asking for physical response. In beating a child, no consideration of place or situation or who is watching or not taken into account by the perpetrator.



Another aspect is that there is no moral or social stigma attached with child beating and it is considered a natural way of reacting to a situation without any feelings of guilt or regret on the part of the perpetrator. Hence, the approach

towards this form of child abuse remains perhaps most challenging as here the question about inculcating a sense of responsibility among people who exert a certain degree of role to influence and enjoy authority. Some children even showed marks of bruises on their backs of a recent beating inflicted upon them. But the adults did let the team inquire further into the matter.

The child inflicted with corporal punishment show a high degree of self loathe, impulsively – hyperactivity, depression, conduct disorders, substance abuse and anxiety. The main concern is the inter – generational transmission of abuse, it is more likely for victims to grow up to be abusers themselves.

HIV/AIDs and STIs

The research was focused on finding out the extent of and the magnitude of awareness regarding HIV/AIDs and STIs among the children and others in close proximity with the children. Across the coal mines none of the children had ever heard of the name even among others only a few numerable on fingertips were familiar with the name at least. The real significance of the ailments was not known to anyone. In Duki and Mach some Community Based Organizations had launched awareness campaigns among the labors but when the research teams consulted with them none had any know how. Maybe the groups did not coincide and the information had not far reached as yet.



The adolescents can become infected with HIV/AIDs or STIs primarily because of unprotected sexual activity and blood transfusions without any prior testing. The number of infected could not be found as they had no awareness regarding the issue thus had never been part of any medical tests to properly clarify the situation. Therefore all remain in dark regarding the quantum of the prevalence of such infections. As there is concentrated epidemic among adults having sex with boys and many boys also indulge in commercial sex that makes them more at risk particularly those involved with truck drivers. The truck drivers move around in the country especially in Punjab where there is huge sex industry and prevalence of these infections is great which can be transmitted to boys in the coal mines.

The use of common razors and common blood transfusions for even minor diseases can result in fatal infections among the labor communities. The lack of access to correct information about HIV transmission and prevention leaves young people to developing risky behavioral patterns. If not controlled on immediate basis and correct behaviors prompted the results could be catastrophic.

“No awareness regarding HIV/AIDs and STIs among all children among the children consulted at coal mines”

Atta Mohammad Coal mine Duki

An interesting revelation of the possibility of the prevalence of AIDs or any other fatal disease was made in a discussion with Mr. Khanzada age 23. He shared the incident of a boy much younger than that had happened some four years back in reply to an inquiry regarding sexual abuse of children. The children are being abused by will or by force inside the mines. One such boy was harassed to being abused by force in the end. Later the boy had himself indulged in homosexual activities and also providing sexual area in return of financial benefits. He soon became very famous for his devilish ways and almost everyone started to have sexual relations with the boy. As safe sex was out of question something was bound to happen. He owed Rs. 80000 to someone but couldn't repay. A friend of his asked him to leave the area and not infect any more people but he couldn't because he couldn't repay his loan. The very same person paid his loan back and gave him Rs. 20000 to leave the area.

The question here is what the boy was infected with and what could he have done to the others in the area? Maybe he was himself infected through the boy? Was there any possibility of any sexually communicable infection?

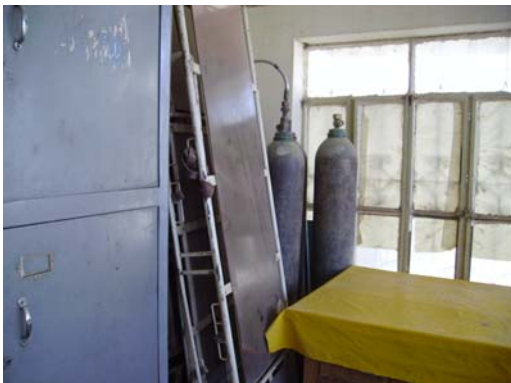
Hazardous labor

The extent of hazards involved in the labor of coal mines have been discussed in quite details earlier in the report. The working children both inside and outside the mines are in constant danger of losing their lives or getting irrevocable injuries. The children need to be protected from collapse of roofs, suffocation, effects of harmful gases, electric shocks and amputations.



Many of the injuries can be cured and can be stopped from prolonged complication if first aid is provided but the case is that not even a single first aid box was located in any of the mines may be at times of inspection they are able to produce them but otherwise not a single trained professional or a first aid box. Even in cases of emergencies there is no on spot medical facility available to any child.

There were three rescue centers visited in the sampled area but none had the equipment or capability to respond to emergencies. In one rescue center which was rather an exhibition of various instruments did not even have a record of the number of labor in the area.



The wireless system was switched off and in response to an inquiry regarding the communication with the mines if ever an accident occurred an official said that one of the labors would come and inform them after which they would take appropriate action. The lamps used in cases of emergencies were found to be in not working condition. In another rescue center the building and furniture was drowned under dust and there was no equipment at all present. The staff was absent or on leave.

This shows the risk under which children work with no access to any medical help or rescue in case they are faced with any accident. For injuries and other ailments the labors have to bear the expense themselves on very rare occasion the contractor/mine owner comes to help. Also in cases of causality the government is bound to pay a compensation of Rs. 200000 but the teams were told that most of the cases are either pending or given an amount much less than the one by rule.

Use of harmful substances

As the children sampled in the study comprised mostly of adolescents therefore it was not considered as an accepted fact. Lack of any other recreational activity and easy access to harmful substances of various forms were the basic reasons behind children addicting to these at tender ages. It was considered as a manly act. Use of harmful substances by children was not regarded as a serious offence by the children consulted. The casual attitude of the labor communities towards children smoking or using other substances itself explained that how immune they have become to such a serious issue.

Children had access to all forms of drugs and additive items. Cigarettes, naswar, alcoholic drinks, chars and even heroine were found to be among the additive items used by the children. The easy access to these was the result of the large proportion of labor belonging to Afghanistan where such were common. Also two mining areas were separated by Afghan refugee camps which were the breeding centers of all forms of evils.

It was observed that even during group sessions some of the children were smoking or had naswar in their mouth showing the level of acceptance of the notion. On reply to question regarding why children were increasingly indulging in drug addiction they shared that it was basically due to the absence of primary care givers, no guidance, neglect and poverty. The adults themselves smoke or use other addictive items in front of children thus inculcating an interest among children to try themselves.

Development

Children in any circumstances have a right to opportunities of development whether working or not working.

“I believe the future of future of our world, which is the children, depends on every one of us. Each of us should take the responsibility to make things better for each other. “

Gokce, 16, from Turkey

The time from birth to reaching adulthood is the most critical as requiring utmost investment in regard to education, health, recreation and etc. the children due any form of compulsion may need to work but the consideration have to be to provide them with opportunities to develop into adults to make a future better than the expected doomed picture. The development of children pertains to psychological, moral, cultural and human development.

Poverty, armed conflict and HIV/AIDs are not the only factors that undermine childhood but they are certainly among the most significant, with profoundly damaging effects on a child's chances of survival the harm caused by each of the threats lingers well beyond the years of childhood and increases the likelihood that the next generation of children will be affected by the same threat. And as damaging as these three major threats are by themselves, when two or even all three coincide the impact on children's lives is devastating. Into this gap between the ideal and reality, more young plunge with every passing day. And with each that fall into this chasm, a little of more of the world's shared future is compromised.⁶

Some key terms of childhood should be ensured to children faced with such assaults. Children along with the right to survival and protection have the right to be encouraged and education, to loving and understanding family environment, where primary concern should be their best interests that provide guidance appropriate to their evolving capacities and prepare them to live an individual life in society in a spirit of peace, tolerance, dignity. Children further have the right, and must be afforded the opportunity to recreation and play, and to engage in sport and cultural activities rather than subjected to violence and exploitation.

So when these children in mines it should be a positive contribution to the family and community which contributes to their learning rather than detracts from it. During the course of the study four areas of development deprivations were identified that included the following:

⁶ The state of the world's children 2005

Education

as laid down in the CRC and Millennium Development Goals access to at least primary education is the basic right of the children. The children working in the mines also have the same right as others in the world meaning the one of access to education. Basically most of children employed at mines if provided with education can play a crucial role in diverting the course of their life from continuous labor to some other employment opportunities and thus a better future. If not the change of course at least awareness can be generated among them to lead a better life.

The provision of quality education for all children.....is of crucial importance for the abolition of child labor.

- A future without Child Labor, para. 281.

The huge numbers of children employed at the coal mines or living in the vicinity of the coal mines have almost negligible access to education. Even though in many areas of mining fields sampled for the study there were few primary schools, and high schools. Except for Shahrig and Sorange the situation at the schools raised severe concerns.



In more than half of the labor communities the schools were a sham. The teachers were on a leave. In Degari the boy's high schools was closed down bearing to the stated fact. Interest with the efforts of a female teacher a girl's middle school was sustained and was moving towards bringing a positive developmental change within the society. The girls when completing middle education studied at a religious institution and return had initiated private tuition for the young boys deprived of any education.



They had even initiated a program of religious education to the females of the community through which they aimed at improving household health and hygiene and initial caring of children.

This was exhibited in only one case, while at Shahrig the boys had access to high schooling and thus large number of children attended school in the morning while worked in the coal mines part time. Otherwise in all the other mining areas visited during the study only buildings were there with almost none education processes. In some instances even the teachers themselves were perpetrators by inflicting sexual and other forms of abuse.

In Duki particularly government had built a labor colony which had been taken over by the FC where a private school was operating and the labor lived in deteriorating mud huts. The consultations with children, adults and the mothers consulted voiced again and again for the need of proper school so that the children could have a better future then working in the coal all day long. What could be done closed down buildings?



Health

An important area of concern for the development of children was the lack of access to any health facility in the vicinity or nearby the coal mines. Working at the coal mines completely in vulnerable circumstances exposed children to diseases easily curable or preventable through inexpensive medicines and vaccines. Health deprivation the mining areas basically bear to the non existence of the health care centers nearby.



Sand Fly stings even hampers in walking no treatment has been sought due to lack of financial resources

The health care centers or dispensaries or hospitals for the coal mine labors only existed in the form of building with medical instruments, medicines or for that matter any dispensary or doctor available. Of course salaries were drawn but the officials never made the effort to be present at the centers. They came once in a month to mark attendance and check if the building was still there. The medicine provided was sold in the market and again profit was made out of it.

The children even suffering from minor flu or fever had to consult doctors in a nearest town if existing or depend on self medication. Here the case of Duki is very relevant to be stated as being void of any form of health facility. There was no labor hospital where according to verbal estimates almost 25000 labors worked. In Duki almost all the labor consulted practitioners that adopted most objectionable means of treatment.



There was no laboratory for testing the blood still on an extensive level blood transfusion was carried out. hepatitis was spread at an alarming level and people had no awareness about it. This is the area where Congo virus has attached several times. Even during the consultation with a mine manager it was shared that one day prior a man had died in nearby mine of bleeding from nose, eyes and nails.



In March during the visit a dispensary was visited which according to a contractor whose real situation was broadcasted on KTN a local Sindhi channel showing sheep tied down in the it. Even during the visit there was no equipment or medicine or an attendant present. Just a drip was hanging disillusioning any visitors of its recent service that may have been hanging there for a long time.

In all the group work carried out with sampled children and focus group discussions with adults all shared that there was basically no health care center for them only closed down buildings good for nothing.

The health condition of the entire sampled child was unsatisfactory bearing to unavailability of health care centers. The group work revealed that the most common diseases among the children included the following:

- ❖ Cough
- ❖ Malaria
- ❖ Fever
- ❖ Typhoid
- ❖ Jhondas
- ❖ Head and body aches
- ❖ Eye infections
- ❖ Tuberculosis
- ❖ Breathing disorders

The labor look for the cure of these diseases on their own expenses to be accommodated within their limited sources of income which lead them incepted and thus giving rise to a flavor bonded labor to flourish.

Recreation

The recreational rights of the children at coal mines were completely violated. Most of the children that dwelled at leveled grounds played football or some outdoor game but those dwelling at mountains even didn't have this opportunity. In order to ensure positive development of children adequate recreational opportunities should be provided to compliment the learning abilities of children.

But as it was observed that children did have access to adequate recreation develop interest in other activities such as cheap pornographic entertainment or drugs. In many instances children tend to spend their free time with adults and thus are at risk of being exposed to exploitation and part of environment not fit for children.

Environment

The environment of the coal mines can simply be categorized as being unhygienic and least conducive to any form of development to the children. The children in such environment lack the basic awareness of the role of health and hygiene in avoiding some common diseases. The children at one mine strongly suggested for a cleaner environment with better sanitation and sewage. But in others they didn't consider as being important.



Participation

Children who lack access to health care, education and protection also lack the capacity to contribute to family and community decisions. The cultural and traditional norms existing in the labor communities fail to integrate children's voices into situations that directly impact them.

Consultations sponsored by Save the Children have enabled children and young people to make valuable contributions to policies, including poverty reduction strategy papers, formulated by adults.⁷

The children at the coal mines are not involved in any kind of decision making. When the children were asked about it, most of them had no concept of any communication other than that of being supervised and corrected by the adults. The children seemed to have little or no role in decision making of any level; their opinion is simply not sought. Opinions of children are usually not considered important to adults.

Particularly in the issues concerning the basic right to survive / live children's opinion was not asked for. Therefore no dialogues were initiated from children's side in regard to their well being. The excessive level of child abuse has rendered them into inferiority complex and low esteemed therefore they are considered to be the most useless and not concerned parties in the processes of decision making.

The children are deprived of any sort of participation to the level that they cannot even voice their objection to be treated badly, exposed to exploitation or HIV/AIDs and STIs.

⁷ O' Malley, Kate, 'children and young people participating in PRSP processes : lessons from Save the Children's experience', Save the Children Fund, London, 2004



Children, including adolescents, must be enabled to exercise their right to express their views freely, according to their evolving capacity, and build self esteem, acquire knowledge and skills, such as those for conflict resolution, decision making and communication, to meet the challenges of life. The right of children, including adolescents, to express themselves freely must be respected and promoted and their views taken into account in allayers affecting them, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child. The energy and creativity of children and young people must be nurtured so that they can actively take part in shaping their environment, their societies and the world they will inherit. Disadvantaged and marginalized children, including adolescents in particular, need special attention and support to access basic services, build self esteem and to prepare them to take responsibility for their own lives. We will strive to develop and implement programs to promote meaningful participation by children, including adolescents, in decision – making processes, including in families and schools and at the local and national levels.

A world fit for children

Methodology

This study is meant to give an insight into the magnitude of child rights violation and exploitation thus raising the notion of significance and urgent need of protection measures. The study was carried out in the sampled mining areas of Balochistan.

Objectives of the research

To:

- find out the quantum and intensity of child protection issues in focused coal mines of Balochistan
- Categorize the nature and threats of child protection issues in their working environment in the focused coal mines of Balochistan
- Find out the susceptible nature to HIV/AIDs, STIs and Tuberculosis among the children of focused coal mines of Balochistan
- Identify possible solutions and possible interventions to respond to child protection issues in focused coal mines of Balochistan

Sampled Population/size

The children were the primary informant for this research. The children both working at the coal mines and living in the vicinity of the coal mines were included in the sample for this research. Other key informants were the rest of the stakeholders in the child protection assessment. These included the:

- Adults working at the mines or living in the vicinity of the mines
- Mine owners
- Supervisors/mangers
- Contractors
- Truck drivers
- Concerned Government officials (labor, mining and health department)
- Members of CSOs

Whereas 437 children were consulted during the research.

Sampled areas

There are numerous mining fields in Balochistan out of which seven were sampled out for the research namely:

- Mach
- Sorange
- Degari
- Marwarh
- Duki
- Harnai
- Shahrig

Marwarh was at a later stage during the research dropped bearing to the operation of BLA. The area had been taken over by the rebels and was not safe to be accessed.

The number of respondents from each area are depicted in the following table:

| Area | children | adults | owners | contractors | supervisors | Truck drivers | CSOs | Govt. officials |
|---------|----------|--------|--------|-------------|-------------|---------------|------|-----------------|
| Sorange | 26 | 26 | | | | | | |
| Degari | 105 | 20 | | | 1 | 11 | | |
| Mach | 63 | 25 | | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 12 |
| Duki | 48 | 19 | 1 | | 2 | | | 2 |
| Harnai | 47 | 66 | 1 | | 2 | | 9 | |
| Shahrig | 148 | 21 | 1 | 2 | 1 | | | |
| Total | 437 | 177 | 3 | 5 | 14 | 14 | 12 | 14 |

Toolkit

A comprehensive toolkit was developed by Save The Children Sweden that included details of all method of information collection and the respective guidelines. The toolkit proved to be a positive element during the course of the research. It included details of activities to be carried out with children in order to extract information in a participatory manner.

Training of research team

A research team of qualified professionals was engaged for the research that had been in past involved in processes involving vulnerable children and had a clear understanding of the ways of involving children into such activities the team included the following:

- Ms. Palwasha Jalalzai (Team Leader)
- Mr. Zahid Tulan (supervisor)
- Mr. Rafiullah (research fellow)
- Mr. Zohair Ali(research fellow)
- Mr Mazhar (study assistant)

It was made sure that the team were familiar with customs and language of the labor communities. The team was provided a comprehensive three days training on the use of the toolkit with support from Save The Children Sweden so that a common understanding of the processes involved. As the issues under research were sensitive therefore were discussed in detail. The trainer from SCS through demonstration explained to the team hoe to generate discussions, involve children and prioritize the issues using participatory approaches. Documentation processes were also discussed.

Methodology of information collection

In order to develop the most useful and systematic research typologies and methods, the literature review is considered in the first instance the widest possible range of child protection issues. Literature from various sources within the country as well as outside the country was consulted using both electronic and manual database.

The major constraint in this regard was the unavailability or least interest of the concerned government to provide such as basic statistics of the number of labor segregated in accordance with their ages.

The information collection varies from children to other stakeholders. As with children the information collection process included the active participation of children in activities that lead to uncovering realities and facts. The activities of body mapping, map making, health calendar, Venn diagram, daily activity chart and tree image provided valuable source of information. With other stakeholders intensive focus group discussions and dialogues were carried out as means of obtaining information.



Reflective sessions

In order to obtain maximum and authentic information, the research team followed a strategy of having reflective and planning session at the end of each day's activity. At the end of each day that comprised of 12 – 14 hours per day two more hours were spent in having reflective sessions that allowed for discussion over areas of more improvement and exploring avenues of approach and solving problems. It was also beneficial for a combined planning for the next day's activity.

Documentation

Documentation was carried out at two levels. first during consultations either group work with children or FGD with other stakeholder's careful documentation was carried out so as to ensure the truth to be explored. Also the participants of the consultation signed over the minutes so as to ensure transparency. Second level of documentation was the taking of personal notes and preparing observational reports. Also minutes of the reflective sessions were carefully recorded so as to ensure that no fact remains lost.

Focus Group Discussions/dialogues

The research was orientated towards qualitative information gathering regarding the most sensitive issue of child protection. The primary informants i.e. the children were involved in activities on group level that proved to be interesting means of obtaining the required information. The strategy employed for the information collection from the rest of stakeholders was thorough FGDs.

Detailed FGDs/dialogues were carried out with adults, mine owners, contractors/managers, contractors, members of CSOs, truck drivers and concerned government officials. This facilitated the research process at two levels one in the collection of information and second in the creating awareness among through initiating dialogues on the subject so far never been viewed as one.

Adults

Organizing the FGDs with the adults was a difficult task as one had to wait when they had time between two shifts and in that even they rested or cleaned so asking for time from the on children issue become very difficult? They labor was sensitized to every inquiry regarding children and would immediately reply in saying “no child goes inside the mine just work as helping hand or mait Cooley.... Can't be altogether removed from mines as they come from very poor familiar and this the only source of income”

Another issue of getting a concentrated group was the presence and interference of the surface labor, manger/supervisor or the contractor in the discussion that prohibited the group from opening up. But once the group was focused on the subject some interesting revelation were discovered. They provided with information that complimented the one given by the children thus authenticating the information.

They shared that child abuse was widespread particularly sexual abuse, complained of unavailability of any facilities in the vicinity of the mines. The reason for sexual misbehavior was put upon the high temperatures inside the mines and staying away from home (wives) for long periods of time. All in all the issues discussed earlier in the report were shared with the research team. They thought of a continuing situation and one that could not be reversed.

Mine owners

Mine owners are among the very influential people of province belonging to various strong political groups and members of both provincial and national parliaments. They had competent staff at Quetta offices that dealt with wages and other matters of the labor and mines. Most of them had leased their mines to petty contractors and received the royalty only.

In Balochistan a body exists by the name of Pakistan Coal Miners Association that is kind of a regulatory body that stands for the betterment and improvement of coal mining in Balochistan? During the course of the study they provided utmost support in the process and gave a free hand to the research team to visit the mining areas any time even offered logistic and professional support.

In the interviews with mine owners they lacked any knowledge of any child abuse being carried out in the coal mines but agreed on low living standards as being out their capacity to provide for everything. They were of the opinion that government has not been playing its due role in providing for education, health, sanitation and drinking water facilities. The miners on their own tried their best but maybe that was not good enough.

In regard to mine operation and engineering they had been employing best possible methodologies as it was considered the most critical. They had to be very pro labor because each mine had its own way of exploitation which a certain experienced labor knew that ruled out the possibility of any children working inside. The children were only employed as mait coolies out the mines taking into account the abject poverty these were living in. Several mines had been closed considering the level of risk for the labor.

The compensation or expenses for causality and injury respectively were shared as per government policy by both the government and mine owners. Well the miners shared that the government processes were so complicated that they themselves had to bear all costs for treatment of the labor faced with accidents at the mines.

Another major area of concern was the take over of most of mines by the so called Balochistan Liberation Army BLA that was taking extortion from the mine owners and had declared the area as free state therefore no tax ought to be paid to government. Some thousands of labor had been kept hostage which also included according to verbal estimates large population of children. Recent development in the situation has been organized military operation against BLA which has put children in high risk of armed conflict between government and BLA.

Mine contractors

The mine contractors were among the labor community that somehow in some way had gained enough resources to take the mines in lease. As they had very limited resources therefore they could not maintain the quality of mine operation as stated in the Government Mining Act – safety and health guidelines. The contractors were very difficult to initiate a dialogue with because they themselves felt vulnerable in situation of strangers at their mines and it had been a difficult task of gaining their trust.

Contractors shared their restraints in regard to the lack of any form of support in any service of education, health etc. they could not afford every thing and thus government was blamed for not playing their due role. There was no proper process of employing registered labor and thus cheap easy labor could be found not registered.

Several diseases were common that retired everyday some labor to bed and the work was immensely disrupted. Clean and safe drinking water was not available and in case of accidents they had to respond to the situation and arrange for the rescue. They had never ever seen of rescue teams arriving for their assistance. All the concerned government staff was always on leave or absent from duties. No safety equipment being very expensive was provided by the government. All in all they said that the mine was still carried out by the miracle of God otherwise the situations are so worse that no human life can be sustained at the mines.

Managers/supervisors

The managers/supervisors were in direct charge of the operation and management of labor and equipment at the mines. They were in day to day contact with the labor and children working at the mines. It was believed that dialogues with them would provide very significant information in regard to the quantum and magnitude of the child protection issues if any at the mines.

These were the people in constant contact with the mine inspectors and other officials and thus were apprehensive of sharing much with the teams. They outright rejected any notion of children working at the mines except at the surface in few cases. They said they only let people with medical certificate by doctors certifying them above the age of 18 years to work inside the mines. They said the children mostly get themselves certified as both Afghan and Pashtun labor body growth is large passing young one to look as adults. Therefore the question of child protection was out of the way. Abnormal sexual practices did exist but they said that where they didn't.

The same lack of basic facilities at the mines by the government was discussed by all the manager/supervisors consulted. In some cases they even stated that it

was the first time some one had come and talked about them. Another aspect shared with them was that truck drivers come for loading when enough coal is ready for the truck. These drivers bring with them young boys as cleaners and abuse them sexually, these may also be used by the men at the mines but the children working at surface as came with some kin were pretty well protected.

Some of them had heard of HIV/AIDs but did not want to indulge in discussions over the probability of its prevalence among the labor community. Again it was a notion out right rejected as being even a possibility as these people were far away from evils and these only existed in big cities. The tone of conversation would even change to that of whispers as it being something bad to talk of. The basic issues identified; as by every one else was the; lack of health care centers in close radius that put the health and safety of labor in jeopardy.

Truck drivers

The group discussions with truck drivers were found to be of utmost interest pertaining to reason of them being much more confident in discussing issues. Again the truck drivers were never in continuous contact with the labor or children at the mines rather they dealt with only mangers/supervisors loaded their truck and went. A truck driver usually visited the mining field when the amount of coal to be transported by truck accumulated.

The facts revealed were quite different from seems from the above paragraph, the trucks came to a depot where coal was deposited always at walking distance from the mining fields and always there were truck drivers present at the depots. The children could easily come and maintain any sort of relation.



There were two levels of child abuse identified in regard to truck drivers. One of level was that of the children/adolescents employed by the drivers as cleaners and secondly of the children/adolescents working at the coal mines or simply living there. The stories related by the drivers were horrifying but they did not include those in which they were the key actors. They said that the children at the mining field were the most easy, available and cheap workers of the sex trade. They even went to the extent to saying that the boys were supplied to outsiders in the mining areas that lay close of towns of Quetta.

The children at the mines were in the most deplorable condition and nothing was done for their protection or development. They had some idea of HIV/AIDs and considered it a possibility among the children of the coal mines. Corporal punishment was a minor issue as compared to the physical and psychological damage to the children being carried out every day.

In retrospect the children when consulted had given the information of similar treatment at the hands of truck drivers. The reason for the employment of children was only sexual service and the children were inflicted upon by severe beatings by the drivers in case of slag in performance.

Some drivers did agree that there are some from their community that indulges in abusive activities but they feel against it and have never been part of such a practice.

CSO members

Before the initiation of the research study discussion with the members of CSO at each of the sampled mining field was planned but during the course of the research study it was found that in only two areas there were operational CSOs. RCDC Mach and Gul Welfare Society Duki provided tremendous support in the research process. They facilitated in regard to utilization their linkages at the community level and organizing group discussions.

Professionals from the organization worked in close collaboration with the research team. They arranged meetings with key people of the area and provided guidance in regard to field level sampling. During dialogue with the members of these organizations the findings were further authenticated and shared with the team the true picture of the respective areas.

They said the powerful people involved in the coal mining influenced both at the policy and grass root level. It was point of consideration that such lucrative industry be faced with such a deplorable situation where thousands of children are employed and living the most in human life. Child abuse and lack of proper health practices has rendered both the labor as well as the local population living nearby in high risk of fatal diseases.

The government departments if play their due role the situation could improve but in these areas always the relatives of the powerful were appointed that need not have to be present at offices. Areas producing such capital had been left out on the developmental front. Roads, hospitals and schools were the major fields where immediate improvement was required. They had been involved in awareness generation campaigns among labors regarding health and hygiene and regarding HIV/AIDs but these were even to limited scale. They were very much willing to render their services if any donor of government paid attention to the issues concerning the coal mine labor that included a large number of children.

Children were treated the most inhuman way; they worked in most hazardous conditions, were not paid accordingly, abuse and exposed to HIV/AIDs and other STIs. Concrete steps needed to be taken to provide the children of coal mines a protective environment in which they could develop and participate as dignified individuals.

Government officials

The government official that directly health with labor issues and coal mining and the doctors (private or government employed) were the key informants of the FGDs. The officials from, labor department, mining inspectorate, social welfare and rescue center were approached but without the exception of a few others could not be consulted bearing to the fact of appointment times not coinciding with that of the duration of research study.

Still a great insight in the situation was obtained through the interviews with the official both at Quetta and at the mining areas. The statistics could not be compiled regarding the number of registered labor and among them that of the children. As per ILO regulation 14 years of age is the minimum for working in the mines, but the research study accounted everyone below 18 years of age being a child.

Regarding the issues of child protection the government officials rejected it being a possibility as there were no children at the mines it being a very difficult and beyond children's capacity. They agreed there may be rare cases of employment of children at the mine surface working as Mait Cooley. Mines were thoroughly inspected and licenses were cancelled if ever they did not meet the standards. Rescue centers, schools and dispensaries had been established by the labor welfare department providing service to the labor community.

Strict rules are followed in regard to the safety of the labor and thus safety equipment has been provided to every area. A ward had been established at Quetta Civil Hospital for the labor and in case of injuries they can be brought here. Rescue centers have also been established (three in the sampled area) that are always prepared to respond to emergencies. Docs

Major findings

The issue of child rights came to the fore in Pakistan with the country's ratification of the CRC. The ratification of the CRC led to the setting up of an elaborate structure for its implementation and monitoring. The adoption of the Convention by Pakistan could have literally revolutionised the status of the child in country if it had been done with sincerity. "Ten years have passed and nothing has happened except a few seminars and workshops held here and there; and some spotty projects undertaken by a few government agencies and NGOs in the whole country", Jilani in 1989.

The child rights continue to be an issue in Pakistan. A country that is burdened with successive waves of increasing inflammation has not taken concrete measures to address the growing needs of the children particularly working children. Pakistan is at the crossroads heading towards a disastrous situation if the things are not taken care of now.

Through the research study in the coal mines SEHER was able to identify areas of concern of child protection issues and gravity of the situation in question in the perspective.

- No one accepted the fact of children being employed in the mining industry and had intentionally turned their eyes from children's existence and thus addressing to their basic needs for survival, protection, development and participation remains void. Only children told knew and accepted that large numbers were employed at the coal mines.
- Poverty is the main cause of lack of protection of children and a cross cutting theme of the whole research study. Children with large families, being only earning members and no other option of employment in their home communities take to coal mining where they are faced with severe conditions.
- The sensitivity and the magnitude of the issue in the perception of the adults are virtually contradictory to that of the children. What is regarded as trivial act by the adults is actually a serious offense for the children
- The children employed at the coal mines have to face tremendous hazards while labor at the mines that can lead to death, amputation, severe injury or exposed to some fatal disease
- The children live in isolation from normal communities that follow societal norms and therefore are exposed to violations and exploitations

- The children are not rewarded accordingly to the labor that they perform. That leaves them with little income and thus cannot afford a balanced diet. All the children at the mines had been mal nourished
- The under nourishment and lack of health & hygiene practices were exposed to diseases that can otherwise be prevented. Furthermore lack of any sort of health care center in the vicinity of the mines rendered the children always exposed to both minor and major ailments
- There was a common practice of sexually harassing children or minors. All the children consulted during the research study had one time or more harassed by the adults.
- The young boys that had come to mines without any kin were the most vulnerable to sexual abuse. They were at risk from perpetrators all the time and had one to concede to the fate because their life was intentionally made difficult if they did not agree to the proposal of the perpetrators
- Based upon the common ground of massive sexual abuse of children, Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children CSEC and prostitution were flourishing notions and had systematic approach towards engulfing the children
- The health services provided to the labor and thus to the children employed are negligible. The government though has established dispensaries throughout the mining field area but they remain to serve nothing. They lack any professional, equipment or simple medicines. The children do not have access to any health service in the vicinity of their dwelling and thus expose them to all forms of health hazards
- The abnormal sexual practices accompanied by unsafe sex and lack of information regarding HIV/AIDs and STIs have put the victimized children in a situation where they are exposed to being infected any time
- There is no opportunity for the children at the coal mines to development as in cases if the school is there they are not benefited because the teacher may not be there or they have to work in order to survive and in most there are no schools at all.
- There is no opportunity for the children to recreation for the positive development of the personalities and building their self confidence, self esteem and courage to ward off exploitations
- There is completely no concept of children in the decision making processes or voicing their in matters affecting their lives. They belong to

the rigid tribal cultural where the adults are the only decision makers and children are not allowed to interfere.

- There is no space for a child to share its feelings. Children are completely neglected by adults and neglect is a serious emotional abuse. This gap of communication serves the interests of the perpetrators
- There exists a lack of primary care givers with the children at the mines that render them at the mercy the perpetrators. In many instances a kin usually himself is the perpetrator.
- Child beating emerged as the most common form of child abuse. This is because child beating has social acceptance among the labor communities. A general feeling about child beating is being a part of their proper development.
- Social construction of the society and the general trends towards 'masculinity' protects the perpetrator and hence the crime goes on and begins to take roots in the society. Instead of disowning the perpetrator and sympathizing with the victim, the opposite is done among labor communities. The victims are teased for their involvement in certain activities, which ends up in two fold reaction, the perpetrator gains strength rigorously continues with his evil practices, while the poor victim had no choice but to go back to the perpetrator. In this process, the victim begins to idealize the strength and power of the perpetrator. As soon as the child reaches to a certain age or cross its adolescence and assumes the position of the perpetrator and victimize other children. It is a fact that most of the perpetrators have themselves being victims at some stage of their lives.

Hope for future (Recommendations)

The fundamental objective of child protection is to ensure that all those with a duty to safeguard the protection of children recognize that duty, and are able to fulfill it.

Given the ethical and legal imperatives, child protection is the business of everyone at every level of the society in every function. (Child Protection – a hand book for parliamentarians)

- The results of this study highlight to make use of the findings to break the deafening silence around the issue of child protection and substance to the debate and decisions on the subject of the vulnerability of children within their homes, schools and outside in Pakistan
- A major awareness – raising campaign concerning the child protection issues needs to be developed and launched by the authorities, in collaboration with key members of civil society. Such campaigns should be aimed at removing taboos that prevent people from talking about these issues. It should also be aimed at removing the stigmatization of the victims in some of the issues in order to facilitate their eventual reintegration in society. It also be aimed at raising awareness about the impact of the treatment given to the children in our society and how it leads to the disintegration of the social fabric
- A child sensitive approach ought to applied in devising policies an determining the situation of child protection issues
- The children need to be provided a protective environment. The creation of the protective environment would entail various paradigms as suggested as under
 - ❖ Legislation and policy level concern should be raised for the child protection issues particularly coal mine children
 - ❖ Primary care givers and labor community capacity to protect the children from the exploitation ought to be enhanced
 - ❖ Sustainable protective measures can be ensured through providing concentrated services for recovery of children having been abused in one way or other
 - ❖ Children participation and knowledge enhancement can lead to a society of more protection and opportunities to development
 - ❖ Carrying out public discourses and turning the eye of media and government agencies towards child protection issues
- Child Care Centers aimed to provide a central place for primarily providing health services, referrals, sexual health education, non formal education, life

skills and etc to supplement and bring about improvement in the lives of the children

- ❖ Health services should concentrate with diagnostics and treatment for the common ailments of the children
- ❖ Referrals should be done for hospitals and doctors for complicated problems
- ❖ Sexual health education would enable a child to understand the nature and helps the sexually active children to protect themselves against sexually communicable diseases
- ❖ Non formal education could help in providing access to children for out of school children who are not schools going age
- ❖ In order to equip a child with a self protective environment life skills can prove to be beneficial
- Organization of vulnerable children into groups and strengthening these to respond and be able to address child protection issues
- Vocational skills training can provide means of enhancement of livelihood to the children facing abject poverty and thus at the mercy of perpetrators

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