



राष्ट्रीय अनुसूचित जनजाति आयोग
National Commission for Scheduled Tribes
(भारत के संविधान के अनुच्छेद 338क के अंतर्गत एक संवैधानिक निकाय)
(A Constitutional body under Article 338A of the Constitution of India)

F. No. NCST-16011(OD)/24/2021-RU-III
F. No. NCST-02/0102(OD)/1/2021-ESDW

Dated: 15.03.2023

To,

The Chief Secretary,
Government of Odisha,
Odisha Secretariat,
Bhubaneswar-751001, Odisha
E-Mail: csori@nic.in

The Collector & District Magistrate,
District Keonjhar,
Collectorate Keonjhar-758001
Odisha
E-Mail: dm-keonjhar@nic.in

The Registrar,
Cooperative Societies Odisha,
Heads of the Directorate Building,
7th and 8th floor, Keshari Nagar,
Bhubaneswar, 751001 (Odisha)
E-Mail: cooperationodisha@gmail.com.
rcs@nic.in

The Managing Director,
Odisha Mining Corporation Limited,
Post Box No. 34,
Bhubaneswar-751001,
Odisha
E-Mail: md@odishamining.in

Sub: Report of The Fact-Finding Team (FFT) of the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) to inquire the matter regarding mining labour, employment and assess the ground reality of peripheral PVTG Traditional Forest Dwelling areas in Gandhamandan Iron Ore Mines at Suakati, Keonjhar District, Odisha.

Sir/Madam,

I am directed to forward a copy of Report of the Fact-Finding Team (FFT) of the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) to inquire the matter regarding mining labour, employment and assess the ground reality of peripheral PVTG Traditional Forest Dwelling areas in Gandhamandan Iron Ore Mines at Suakati, Keonjhar District, Odisha.

2. It is, therefore requested that action taken Report on the recommendation of Fact-Finding Team may be furnished to this Commission within 30 days.

Encl: As Above

Copy to: -

Shri Khageswar Purthy,
S/o Ratha Purthy,
AT-Uparjagur,
PO-Uramunda,
Distt. Keonjhar
Odisha,

3662-66
16/3/23
जारी किया
ISSUED

Yours faithfully,
Jayant Sarode
15.03.2023
(Dr. Jayant Sarode)
Director

o/c

CASE NO – F.NO. NCST- 16011(OD)/24/2021-RU-III

F.NO.NCST-02/0102(OD)/1/2021-ESDW

REPORT OF THE FACT FINDING TEAM REGARDING MINING LABOUR, EMPLOYMENT AND ASSESS THE GROUND REALITY OF PERIPHERAL PVTG TRADITIONAL FOREST DWELLING AREAS IN GANDHAMADAN IRON ORE MINES AT SUAKATI KEONJHAR DISTRICT ODISHA.

The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) formed a Fact Finding Team (FFT) consisting of Shri K. Touthang, Joint Secretary, NCST, New Delhi; Shri Sudarshan Nayak, IAS (Retd.), Former Special Secretary, PG&PA Department, Govt. of Odisha; Shri Bhubananda Tripathy, Former General Manager (P&A), SAIL and Shri Radhakanta Tripathy, Senior Legal Advisor, NCST, New Delhi. Shri D.K. Palai, UDC, Regional Office, Bhubaneswar, of the Commission was assigned the duties to co-ordinate among the stakeholders.

2. Shri Sudarshan Nayak, IAS (Retd.), one of the Team members did not join the FFT. As per schedule, the Team reached Keonjhar on on 28th October, 2022 and halted for the night there. The following day, i.e. on the 29th October, 2022, the Team left Keonjhar and visited Suakati Area covering Salarapenth Village via Mahadeijoda, Naupada, Urumunda, Upar Urumunda and Benuadihi Sahi. The Team could not visit Kumundi, Upar Jagar and Tala Jagar due to obstruction of the route. However, representatives from these villages interacted with the Team at the Circuit House, Keonjhar and presented their grievances relating to non-availability of drinking water stating that the existing water is not fit even for animals.

3. **Report of the field visit:**


3.1 **SALARAPENTHHA VILLAGE**

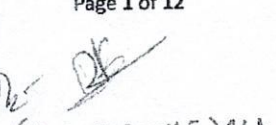
Dated: 29.10.2022 (10.30 AM)

The team interacted with the villagers in Salarapenthha village. Shri Sudarshan Penthei stated that although Salarapenth Mouza of Mahadei Joda GP is placed within 1 km radius of the OMC Gandhmadham Mines and affected by mines yet these villages are not provided basic amenities. They are living with their families in a very pathetic condition, without any livelihood support. Earlier, ten to twelve years back, they were engaged in mining activities, in particular, loading in vehicles and they got enough wages such works. But not now anymore.

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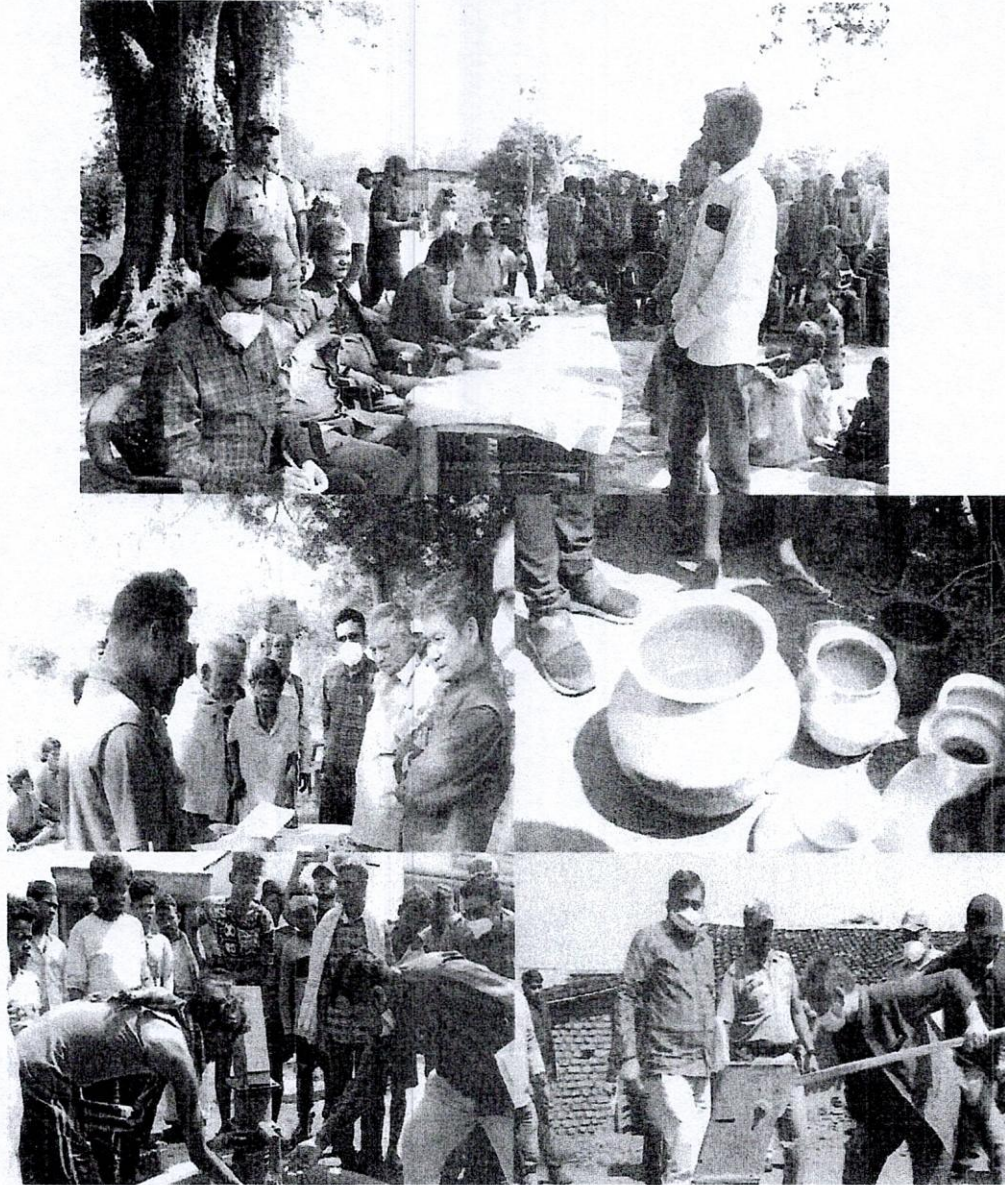

(B. T. Tripathy)



(K. Touthang, JS)



(R. K. Tripathy) SCA


253306/2023/(ESSW) Bhagirathi Penthei made complaint with reference to non-availability of road, drinking water and school. In addition, he also complained against OMC as no employment opportunity is provided. Further, he demanded for enrolment as Member of the Cooperative Society.

Shri Sura Penthei stated that they used to earn livelihood from loading activities but after engagement of machines in mining activities, they have been disengaged. So the OMC may re-engage them, or else, allowance may be given to them on monthly basis. In addition to that, entire village may be included as affected list of villages.




(B. T. Gupta)


(K. Touhng, JS)

 (R. K. Tripathy, SCA)




3.2 NAUPADA WARD NO.4Dated: 29.10.2022 (11.30 AM)

Shri Kanhu Naik, S/o Late Dukha Naik raised the issue of road condition and stated that the road condition bad that even ambulance cannot reach their village. Earlier their parents used to get employment, but now adays there is no employment opportunity due to which people of this area are preparing to go on 'DADAN', as migrant workers. So, he demanded that employment be provided to them as it was done in earlier years. In case they cannot be provided employment, they may be included as members of cooperative society and government may pay monetary relief each month to all the affected families.

Shri Maghu Naik pointed out that there are one hundred families in Naupada village. They may be given employment in the OMC Mines, because earlier they used to work in the mines along with their forefathers. From the day machinery activities began in mines, they lost their employment. He stated that they had taken the matter with the agencies who assured that, although they are not in employment, they will get compensation. But no compensation is paid to them and their only source of livelihood now is the local forest.

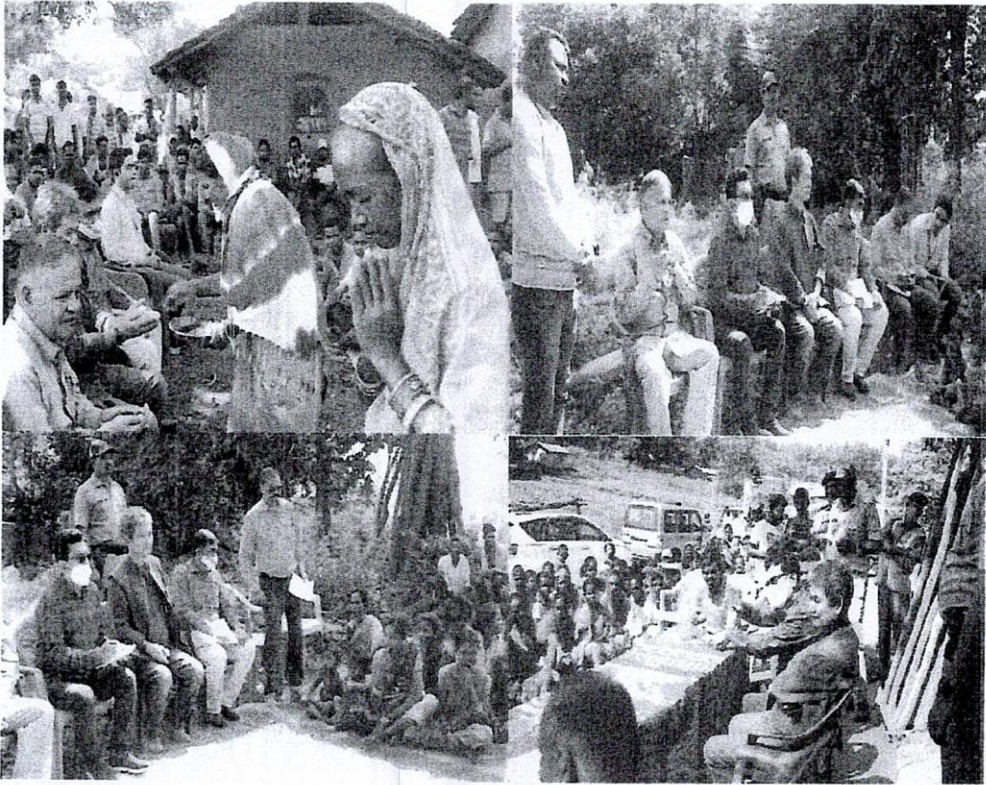
Smt. Gouri Naik stated that ambulance is unable to reach their village and the OMC is not providing any medical aid, so at the time of child birth, the pregnant women have to go to the Keonjhar Medical and the CHC Padmapur in Auto causing a lot of hardships.

Shri Krushna Chandra Naik stated that, prior to digging of mines, people of the village used to practice PUDU cultivation for growing rice and maize, etc. and they were dependants on forest produces for their livelihood. But, after digging of mines, the crops got destroyed by wild animals, especially elephants. According to him, their village is within 1/2Km radius of the mines. Without giving them employment, OMC preferred to engage machines for mining activities, as a result they do not get any benefit from the mines. Moreover, the OMC authorities turned down their demand.


(B. Singh)
(K. Toukhang, JS)
(R. K. Tripathy, SLA)



F.F.T.VISIT-2,PLACE-NAUPADA,TIME-11.30 A.M



[Signature]
 (B. Tripada)

[Signature]
 (K. Toukhary, JS) (R.K. Tripathy, SLA)

253306/2023 (ESDM) Urumunda Ward No.11Dated 29.10.2022 (12.15 PM)

Shri Sarat Chandra Puhana stated that, although more than hundreds of people of this area are eligible for Old Age Pension/ Widow Pension, not a single case was taken into consideration for grant of any government pension. There are cases which were already uploaded online, yet there is no further action and there is no satisfactory reply from the concerned authority. Although arrangements have been made under 'Basudha' with expenditures in lakhs, yet problem of drinking water persists.

There is need for Anganwadi Centre and High School in the locality because the nearest High School is located in the Suakati Area which is almost 15 km distance from their village. The School located at Suakati covers two blocks i.e. Bansapal and Telkoi. More schools can be set up which is a necessity for good education of children. Otherwise these children may choose to engage themselves in employment related activities and forego their education. Many people are yet to get a house under PMAY. He also demanded membership in the Gandhamardan Loading Cooperative Society as he is already having a receipt of Rs.10.00 for more than two years.

The villagers also demanded setting up of Sub Centre for Health at the Ward No.11 because due to absence of this, people of this area have been facing a lot of problems including instances of infant deaths in the locality.


3.4 Urumunda Ward No.09

Dated 29.10.2022 (12.25 PM)

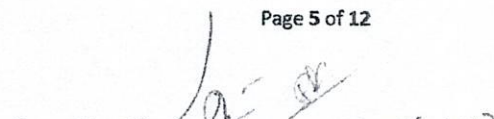
Shri Sudam Munda highlighted the following issues:-

- Earlier our parents used to work in the mines for livelihood of our family, but after use of machines in mining activities, we are now jobless. So, we may be re-employed in the mines for our livelihood. A large number of youth are educated unemployed, so they may be given employment.
- The long persisting issue of damaged roads may be given emphasis and the roads may be reconstructed. Although application have already been submitted to the RI and the Tahsildar for construction of village road, there is no action till date.
- Also there are issues relating to PMAY.
- Although people close to ruling party have been enrolled as members of the society and paid Rs.5,000.00 (Five Thousand) per month, but others were not enlisted as members of the society.

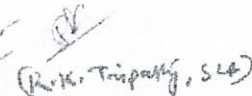
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(B. Tripathy)



(K. Touhnam, JS)




(R. K. Tripathy, SLE)

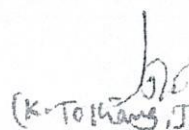

253306/2023/(ESDW) OMC is not having its proper parking facilities, hence, the trucks park at different places and the drivers of these vehicles misbehave with the ladies of the nearby villages.

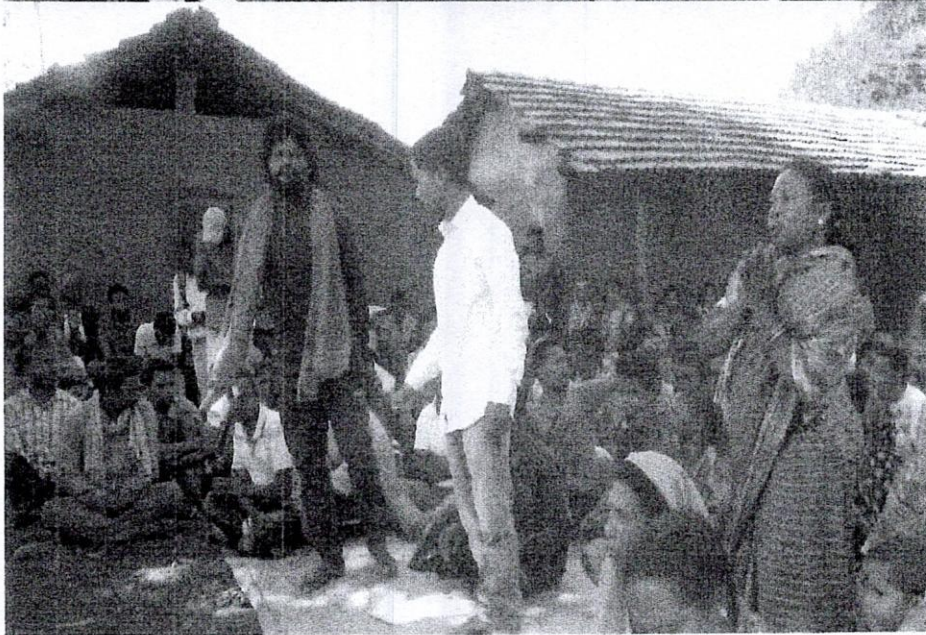
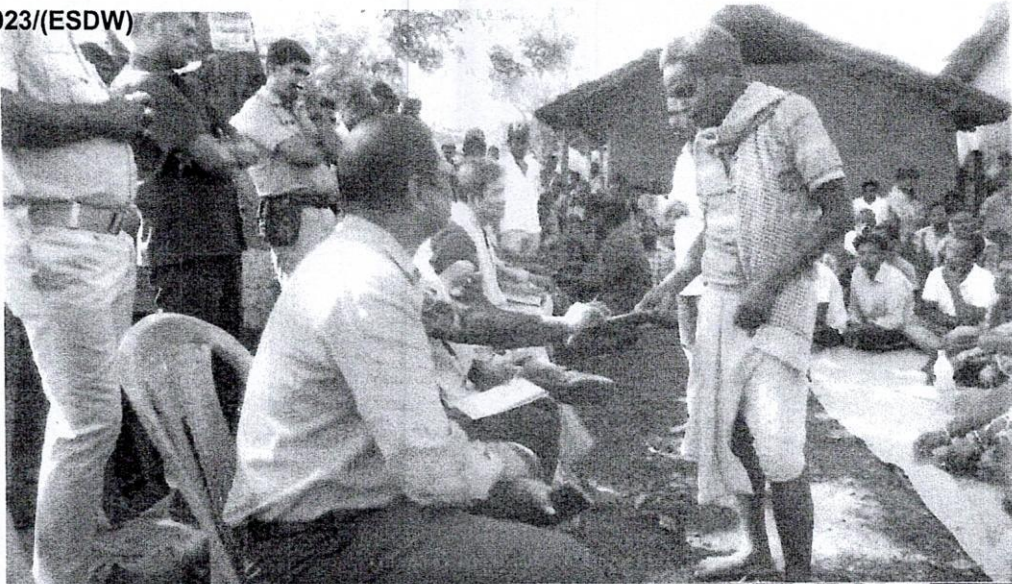
- That 95% of Iron Ore comes from Kumundi GP and the transportation has been done from Suakati GP, yet the villagers of the Kumundi GP are ignored and they were not enrolled in the society as members.

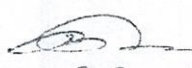
Shri Sanjay Dehury narrated an incidence where a person (Muna Munda) died because of starvation. He also reported that there are many infant deaths in this area due to malnutrition. They are unable to get benefits of government schemes and problem of drinking water persist in this area. Although located in mining area, yet they are deprived off getting any benefits from the Mines.


Shri Santaan Dehury, Wards No.11 stated that although they are living within the mining area of the OMC and the RM of OMC had already been communicated in writing, yet there is no response to our applications. As a result of that, School going children have to walk 7 kms to reach school on daily basis. Because of which there is risk to their life. Hence, school bus may be provided to the Urumunda village.



(B. T. Jais)


(K. Tolhans, JS) 
(R. K. Tiwari, SL)




(B. T. Jacobs)


(K. Touffes, JS)


(R. K. Tripathy, SMO)

Dated 29.10.2022 (1.30 PM)

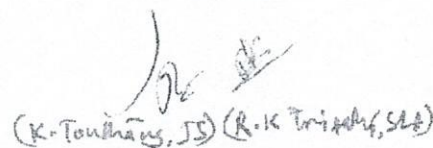
Shri Govind Munda S/o Matai Munda stated that their parents used to do various agricultural activities including PUDU cultivation for growing fruits and vegetables in nearby hills prior to 1972, but after starting of mining activities all those have been stopped. On the other hand, they are now disengaged from mines after use of machines in mining activities.

Shri Khageswar Purty mentioned that earlier, their forefathers used to work in mines and everything was okay. Thereafter, from 2006-07, machines completely took over charge of mining activities. At that time, since his parents were leaders of the labourers they continued to be employed. However, the younger generation were not enrolled as members of the society, and they lost their job. Earlier, they used to do loading job and levelling activities, as those cannot done with support of machines. About 7000-8000 people of Suakati, Kumundi, Banspal, Kanjipani Ghat, Mahadeijoda, Kainsari were engaged in mines and used to earn livelihood for their respective family. From the time the machines took over the mining activities, they lost their livelihood. Outsiders are now owners of the society. Although the villagers had already made written complaints, neither the administration nor the OMC management listened to them. He reported that the police have been conducting raids at his house and implicating him with false cases.

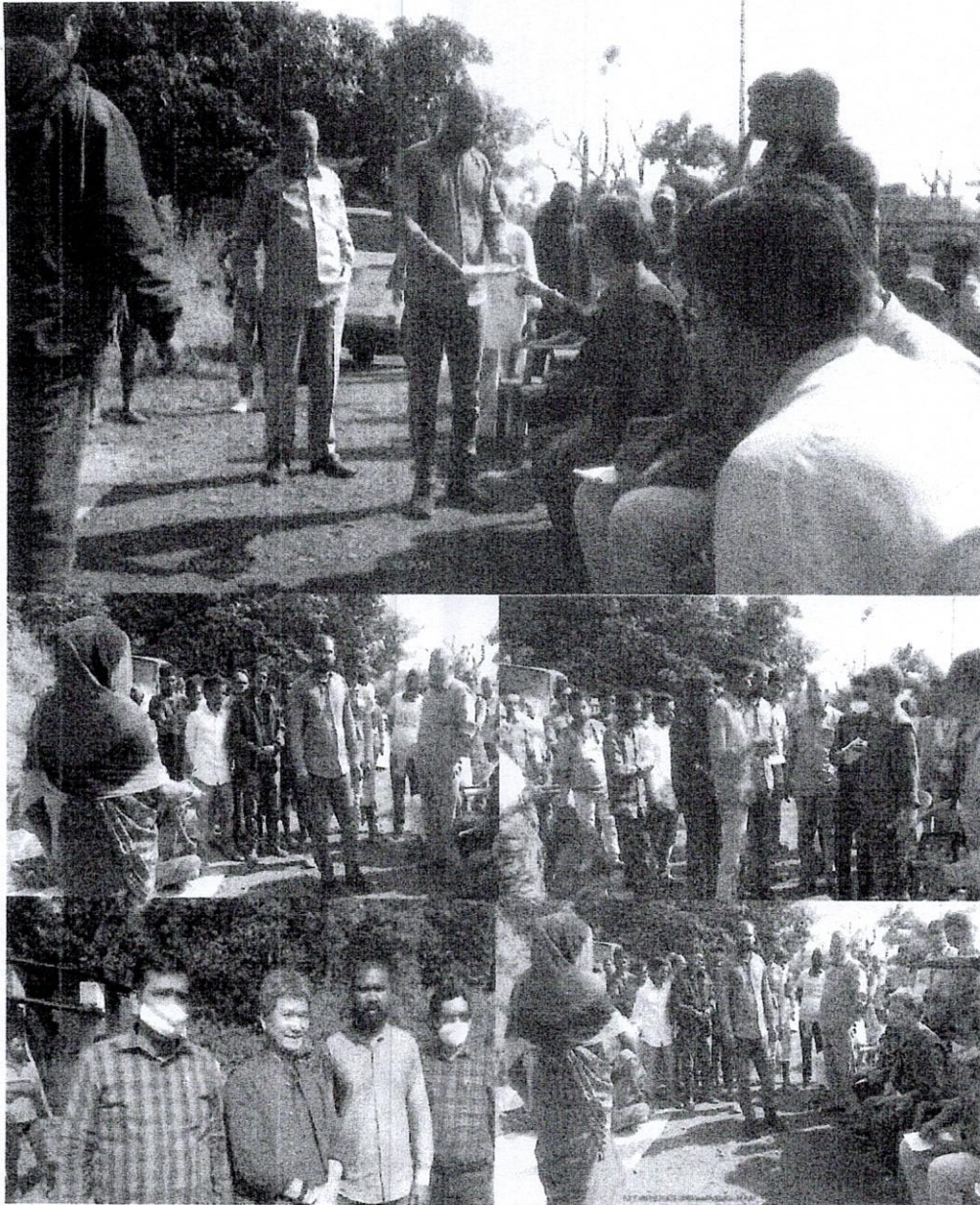
The FFT met the petitioner at his native village who explained his fear and apprehension from local goons as well as from the Police. He went on to say that he kept hiding due to the high handed attitude of Police. The FFT observed that there is need for authorities to take appropriate and unbiased action and guarantee safety of the life of the petitioner.



(B. Gupta)




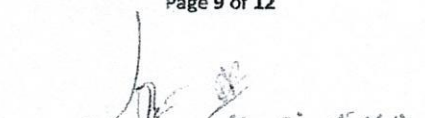
(K. Touhans, JS) (R. K. Tripathy, SLD)



Photographs of the Fact Finding Team with the Petitioner and with the affected villagers.

Other people with whom the FFT interacted are Sh. Sanjay Kumar Dehury, Sh. Pitambar Naik, Sh. Sudan Munda, Sh. Sarat Chandra Puhan, Sh. Kalhu Naik, Sh. Gouri Naik, Sh. Maghu Naik, Sh. Bijay Munda, Sh. Sushila Penthe, Sh. Pramila Barik, Sh. Pankajini Hembram


(B. Tripathy)


(K. Toukhan, J.S.) (R.K. Tripathy S.L.A.)

- 253306/2023/ESDW
 Sh. Munda Sarpanch, Sh. Sarat Dehury, Sh. Nilandri Senapati, Sh. Sukudev Mohanta, Sh. Biswabhusan Santa (Kumundi), Smt. Draupadi Padhan (Kumundi), Sh. Chagala Naik, Sh. Gobinda Munda, Sh. Khgeswar Purty, Sh. Nityananda Dehury and Sh. Krushna Ch. Naik

4. **Observation of the Fact Finding Team:**

4.1 **Drinking Water:** Some samples of drinking water were placed before the FFT. They were found completely unsuitable for drinking purpose. Although, at some pockets provisions of bore wells are there, but those bore wells needs maintenance. The FFT took a serious note of the lack of clean drinking water in the area.

4.2 **Education.**

Although Anganwadi Kendra's and UP Schools are there, but there are no facilities for education beyond that. It was learnt from the ADWO of the district that there is one school of ST&SC Development Department, Govt. of Odisha at Suakati with hostel facility but that is not enough to meet the need of the area.

4.3 **Electrification.**


Non-electrification was one of the major issues in many houses in these villages, barring one or two, the facility of Solar Lighting has also not been made available in most of the villages. The FFT took a serious note of the lack of electrification of houses.

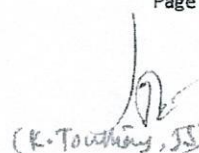
4.4 **Lack of provision for Primary Health Care, especially for pregnant women, new born babies, etc.**

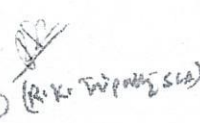
During the visit, it was observed that the villagers of the localities usually have to visit the Padmapur CHC or Keonjhar District Hospital for delivery cases. There is no facility available nearby. Similarly, the people take their infants to those hospitals for treatment, at the time of need. The FFT took a serious note of the issue of non-availability Primary Health Care to the villagers.

4.5 **Livelihood of villagers who are disengaged from mining activities due to use of machine in mining activities. Case of non-inclusion in the Society of the OMC.**

It was observed that majority of the villagers of these locality have been facing acute problem for livelihood after their disengagement from the mining activities. Although promises have been made for adequate compensation, but that has not been done so far. Moreover, most of these people were not enlisted as members of the mining society, for which promises were made to them. Earlier, these people were also using the forests for their livelihood, but at present, they are facing lot of difficulties in this area.


(B. Toppal)


(K. Touhary, JD)


(R. K. Tripathy, SA)

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4.6 Problems occurring in cultivation due to flowing of mud from mines.

These villagers are also dependent on cultivation for their livelihood, but off late, they have been facing difficulties in cultivating in their fields because of logging mining wastages in their fields and no compensation has been paid to them for the loss.

4.7 Road, transportation and communication.


The FFT could reach these areas with a lot of difficulties, as the approaching roads to these villagers are not in good condition. Moreover, there is no transportation facility for the people to go to district headquarters or any other major towns of the district. Also mobile network facility is a problem in many areas.

5. Recommendations:

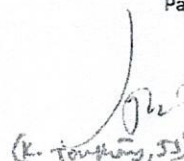
After visiting the areas and interacting with the affected persons and physically inspecting the areas affected by mining, the FFT makes the following recommendations:

- 5.1 The OMC Authorities and District Administration must ensure co-ordination between themselves to ensure availability of basic amenities like potable water, communication, electricity etc to the affected villagers.
- 5.2 Potable drinking water is the primary issue which needs to be addressed. Most samples of drinking water were found completely unsuitable for drinking purpose. Although, at some pockets provisions of bore wells are there, but those bore wells need maintenance. All the affected villagers must be ensured with safe, hygienic drinking water immediately.
- 5.3 The State Authorities must improve the education infrastructure expeditiously. Adequate number of teachers as well as proper facilities should also be provided so that these schools can provide holistic education to the tribal children. Since there is only one High School in the two Blocks, immediate action need to be taken for setting up of more High Schools.
- 5.4 Non-electrification of houses is one of the major issues in these villages, barring one or two. The facility of Solar Lighting has also not been made available in most of the villages. The District Administration need to take up immediate action for proper electrification of those uncovered households.
- 5.5 Primary Health Care centres need to be set up in every village and equipped with proper facilities and health workers so that the people do not have to travel long distances for basic health care. Moreover, the condition of roads is also bad which further escalates the problem. Road infrastructure also needs to be improved.

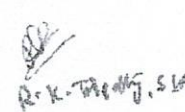
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(B. Pragnan)



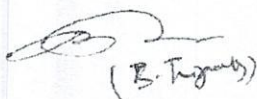
(K. Prathap, JS)



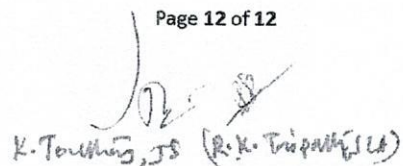
R. K. Prathap, SIA

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- 5.6 The OMC must include all the tribals who are eligible to be included as members in the Mining Society. All outsiders who have been included should be excluded after due inquiry. New members must be given the right to vote as per existing by-laws of the Society.
- 5.7 The District Administration and OMC to explore employment/engagement as wagers of atleast one member from each family in all those villages affected by the mining activities. This will somehow guarantee livelihood and check distress migration of labour.
- 5.8 Saplings of trees having traditional values to be planted by the Forest Department as per the demands and requirements of the local villagers.
- 5.9 Adequate Solar Lights may be installed in the periphery of the villages to protect the villagers and their farming activity from wildlife animals like, wild boar, elephants, bear, etc.
- 5.10 District Administration to guarantee safety of the life and properties of Shri Khageswar Purty, the petitioner, who has highlighted various issues to the Commission.
- 5.11 OMC may take initiatives under CSR immediately to benefit the mining affected tribal families in the area.



(B. Tripathy)



K. Tripathy, JS (R.K. Tripathy, I.A.)