

CHAPTER VI

RECOMMENDATIONS

Between the 17th and the 18th of December Oxfam had organized a workshop on mining issues in Orissa. The participants were Oxfam programme partners in Orissa and Rajasthan and the Oxfam staff members.

The objective of the workshop was to develop an understanding of the mining issue and help identify the nature of intervention to be undertaken on this issue in the coming years.

The following recommendations emerged out of the various suggestions made by the participants in the concluding session.

Possible Lines of Intervention

The scope for intervention among other things would be dependent on the stage of the said project or activity. Although the basic pattern of happenings may be quite similar in such projects there will be specific differences. These will be in terms of the physical size of the project, the nature of mineral, the particular mining process, the end use of the mineral (which would determine in turn the nature of ancillary industries, need for easy access to roads/rail/ports, whether of critical/strategic needs according to state policy, etc) the nature of ownership (whether public sector, private sector or owned by multinationals or private individuals), the applicable legislation, the kind of area where the mining activity is planned or is already under operation (for instance the composition of population, the extent of forest cover, the nature of local economy, the net resources in the area and the pattern of ownership).

All these would determine the critical issues requiring intervention in any particular case. At any point in time some process might outweigh the others in terms of relative criticality but at all times the situation is in some form of dynamic equilibrium. The question of criticality has to be carefully looked at because there can be serious differences of opinion regarding this among the various stakeholders.

The actual situation can however be quite complex where the concerns of the entities might be interrelated and overlapping in many cases. The point one is trying to make from an exercise like this is that for any intervention purpose the identification of 1) the nature of stakeholders and 2) the extent to which their concerns may affect the entitlements of other stakeholders is important. That the latter is bound to happen is ensured by the skewed power distribution in the socio-economic-political system.

To define the most critical concern justifying intervention among competing claims could be a tricky affair. Since we have begun on a premise that the external

agency in the form of the mining corporation is impinging on the territorial context of the local population, we already have at the outset a broad division. The framework of intervention also is designed from the point of view of the affected population. The intervening agency could be an external or a local organization. The following could be broadly the areas and methods of intervention. It has been attempted to classify the process under three main sub heads, namely, the broad area of concern of the intervening agency (which would include defining the problem), the objective of intervention and the intervention strategy.

- 1) Broad area of concern: large-scale displacement and resulting losses encountered by the people.

Objective of intervention: effective fulfillment of the entitlement claims of the people affected by the project.

Intervention strategies:

- Organization of local people to demand access to resources, livelihoods, information, etc.
- Legal pressure on the mining corporation state to fulfill the requirements of compensation, resettlement, etc.
- Campaigning at the regional national level on the broader issue of the fallout of macro-development projects.

- 2) Broad area of concern: -degradation of the environment due the project activities affecting the ecosystem and the people dependent on it.

Objective of intervention: To make the polluting agency accountable and responsible for the restoration of the environment damaged due to it's activities.

Intervention strategies:

- Redefining environmental management plans and campaigning for the mandatory inclusion of the same in all major development projects
- Pressurizing the corporations to implement the environmental programmes
- Treatment, reduction, recycling of mine wastes and dumps
- Regeneration of the ecosystem, land, soil and water conservation

- 3) Broad area of concern: to meet people's livelihood needs

Objective of intervention: assessment of livelihood and fulfillment of basic survival needs of the people.

Intervention strategies:

- Alternative employment generation
- Husbanding and efficacious use of shrinking resource base
- Working and living conditions. Wages and other benefits
- Ensuring the provision of basic amenities

Recommendations emerging out of the workshop on Mining issues

1. Identification of issues
2. The possible approaches to intervention

Issues:

- There was an expressed need to make existing mining legislation more transparent.
- The need to create stronger mechanisms for the implementation of these legislation.
- To understand the distribution of resources, the nature of ownership and the resulting exploitative mechanisms.
- The rehabilitation of mineworkers by providing them with alternative means of livelihood
- Regeneration of natural resources to create alternative means of livelihood
- Transfer of power to gram sabha
- Mine workers should be treated at par with Industrial workers
- To situate the problem in the context
- To make political parties and trade unions accountable to the people
- To make available the existing social safety measures for the Mineworkers and bargain for more
- Whenever displacement has taken place due to mining, organizing peoples committee to monitor the rehabilitation process
- The emphasis on non funding support, programme development inputs for peoples groups, community based organization
- The nature of involvement of the tribal communities with the mining activities
- The issue of bondage in the mines how far would the laws apply
- The ineffective trade unions which does not represent the interests of the majority of mineworkers
- To bargain for a separate wage policy for mineworkers
- To bargain for the control of the panchayats on village CPR (common property resource)
- To make environmental laws applicable

Intervention:

- To conduct alcohol de-addiction camps for mine workers
- To set up Local information centers
- To Implement existing legal provisions
- Detailed analysis of the mining legislation
- Local mobilization and public campaigning
- Addressing the problems of the unorganized sectors
- Intervention through community based organizations. Linkages with the state
- Sensitizing legislators
- Enabling women to establish local leadership
- Developing local level leadership
- Creating resource center to exchange information between state
- Develop local skills
- Empowering village level organizations
- Identifying legal loopholes and devise strategies to act
- Micro level research and study on impact
- Pressure group at the community level
- Participation of NGO in devising policy
- Protecting people's access over the means of livelihood
- Empowerment of gramshabhas
- Formation of cooperatives
- Capacity building of miners to organize themselves as a cohesive group
- Donor agency's support towards project oriented activities
- Informing people about policies loopholes
- Expand the definition of project affected people
- For rehabilitation purposes tackle money at the source
- Holding public debate on issues related to mining
- Exposure and training programmes for voluntary groups
- Compilation and dissemination of resettlement and rehabilitation policy
- Legal support from Oxfam
- More emphasis on process oriented rather than project oriented approach
- Emphasis on non funding support from Oxfam