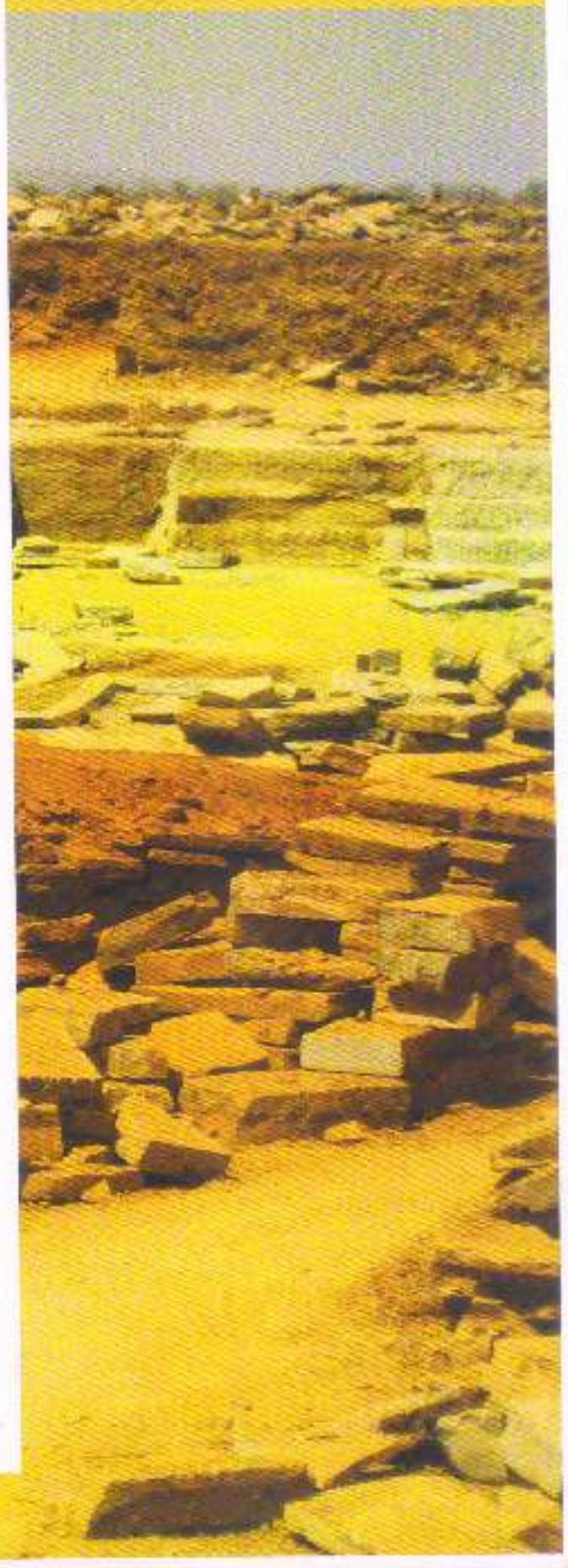
MLPC
Mine Labour Protection Campaign

ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020



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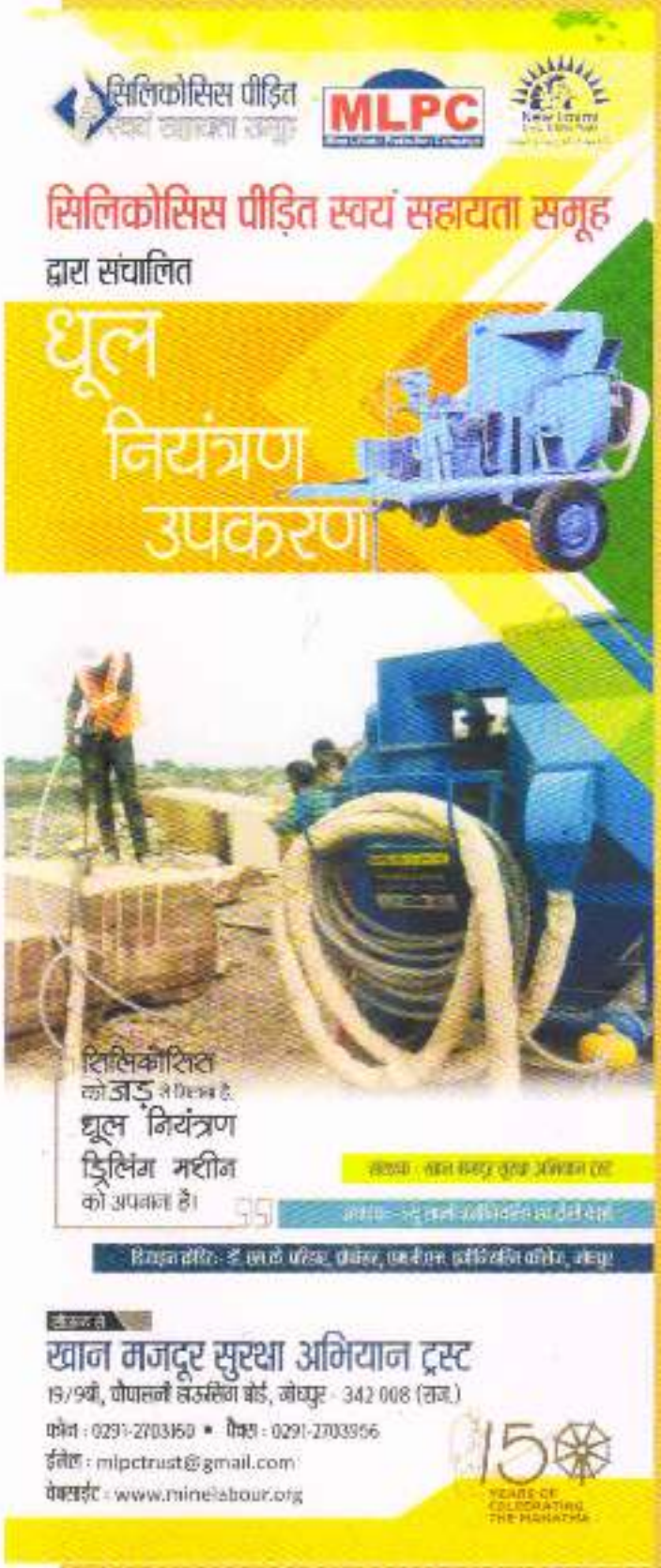
INTRODUCTION

MLPC works towards economic, social and legal empowerment of mineworkers by promoting responsible and sustainable mining with a people-centric approach. The organization is a strong voice of advocacy for occupational health and safety from the grassroots of Rajasthan and has a strong presence in five districts of Rajasthan and is planning to expand its work in Madhya Pradesh. MLPC believes in empowering mine workers to claim their rights using different community organizations and development initiatives like Self-help groups (SHGs) and cooperative unions.

To empower the communities of mineworkers in Rajasthan to have a minimum standard quality of life, there are different programmes run by MLPC.

- Advocating ethical trading in the natural stone industry by collaborating with other organizations government departments
- Increasing access to all federal and state government schemes and provisions by conducting OHS and Rights & Entitlements awareness campaigns
- Improving health and education for mine/stoneworkers children's' and adolescents by enrolling Crèche and Non formal education children into the mainstream education system

- Creating mechanisms of assuring labour rights, welfare and occupational health and safety by creating a gender-balanced local representation of mine worker welfare board and researching with mine workers through surveys
- Improving access to occupational medicine for all mineworkers by roundtable consultation on the subject with doctors and government officials and providing policy recommendation to relevant authorities in a public forum.
- Filling the gap of literature and research about the hazards faced by mineworkers by conducting meta-data studies on projects funded by royalty and cess from the natural stone industry
- Helping to find an alternative livelihood for Pneumoconiosis affected mineworkers and their families.



PREVENTION OF SILICOSIS

MLPC Trust is determined to establish a system that can offer a safe workplace during the mining operations. One of the major components of mining operations is drilling, dry drilling technique causes havoc in the mining industry and leads to dust bone diseases like Silicosis and Asbestosis.

MLPC encourages the idea of wet drilling since it's not only preventing silicosis but from the environmental point of view, it's essential. To this end, MLPC has been amplifying the cause with various stakeholders – government departmonts, mining communities, and mine owners.

In 2019, Ajmer Region's Mines Safety Week was organized by Directorate General of Mines Safety, and its theme was the Prevention of Silicosis. MLPC participated wholeheartedly in this program and conducted several innovative activities:

- Publicity Campaign was conducted before the week through pamphlets, and an audio announcement was made through mobile vans in mining-affected villages across 4 districts of Jodhpur, Bundi, Bhilwara and Nagour.
- Radio Campaign was conducted across Jodhpur, Bundi, Bhilwara and Nagour.

- A Radio Campaign was conducted from 2nd to 4th October 2019, in Jodhpur & Jaipur, where the objective was to generate awareness regarding possible ways to prevent Silicosis.
- Dust Control Device demonstration was conducted at Mines Safety Week to demonstrate 100% silicosis prevention through the use of this device.
- Dust Control Device demonstration was also conducted in mining areas of 4 districts of Jodhpur, Bundi, Bhilwara and Nagour.

- Street Plays through professional artists was organized for mining-affected communities, Mining Dept officials, and silicosis victims. This play depicted the pain of silicosis victims, the aftermath of the families after the victim dies and how to prevent silicosis. Prevention of silicosis was shown through Dust Control Device, DGMS safety measures, use of masks etc. The play highlighted the responsibility of mine owners and state govt. It also appreciated the state for bringing the country's first Pneumoconiosis Policy.
- We used IEC Material to create awareness regarding and build outreach around dust control machine, prevention of silicosis.
- From 1st to 18th November 2019, radio announcements were played in Jodhpur and Kota regarding Mines Safety Week.
- From 7th to 12th January 2020 Radio Jingles were played in Jodhpur to promote the Dust Control Demonstration usage to prevent silicosis.
- Utsav 2020, also known as Western Rajasthan Industry Handicraft Festival was organised by Desert Industries Association, District Administration, and District Industries Centre. In this festival, MLPC demonstrated the dust control device and it gained much attention. The Mines Minister visited this demonstration.
- MLPC Conducted 96 Street Plays across Bundi, Bhilwara and Jodhpur themed prevention of silicosis, use of dust control device etc. Each of these plays was followed by community meetings by all the people present to contextualize the localities' content.

- Community gatherings were organised with more than 5500 mine workers as part of Mines Safety Week outreach.

LABOUR RIGHTS, WELFARE AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

MLPC has been instrumental in highlighting the incidence of Occupational Diseases like Silicosis and Asbestosis in Rajasthan. As a result of our intervention, thousands of mineworkers have got monetary relief from the Government. The government has paid 60 crores and 49 lacs as financial relief to silicosis victims to date. Prolonged exposure to dust particles efficiently reduces a worker's life expectancy by ten years, and occupational diseases like silicosis and Asbestosis are common among labourers. Silicosis leads to a dysfunction of the respiratory system causing workers to age faster and eventually lose the capacity to work. Poor working conditions in the stone quarries of Rajasthan lead to severe occupational health hazards and diseases. Dangerous diseases like silicosis and Asbestosis are widespread among the quarry workers.

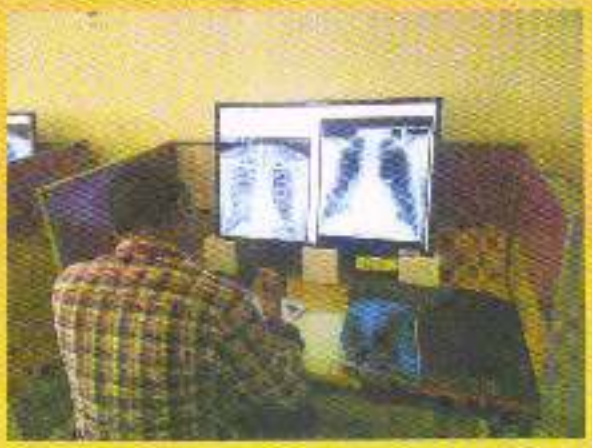
Mineworkers in Rajasthan are eligible for compensation for occupational diseases, as stated under the Workers Compensation Act of 1965. Working for these communities' occupational rights is a challenge because workers often are unaware that they are suffering from an occupational disease and rural areas where they live to make it very difficult for outreach and timely medical care. Most workers do not have access to healthcare. Nor do they have any medical insurance provided by the state, or through their employers, neither do they undergo any medical check-ups until their health situation is dire. Further, they do not receive proper treatment as the local doctors are not specialized or familiar with occupational health diseases such as silicosis. Besides, though these silicosis victims are afflicted through their occupation, they are not covered under workers compensation as mine owners do not keep employee records despite legal compliances needing them to, thereby denying them the worker's identity.


दैनिक भास्कर

मामाशाह कार्ड नहीं होने पर सिलिकोसिस योजना में न तो रजिस्ट्रेशन और न ही जांच

- On 16th & 17th Oct 2019 MLPC hosted a two day Networking Meeting on Occupational Health and Safety to replicate the Rajasthan Policy model in other states like Madhya Pradesh Gujarat, and Odisha. This event was hosted in Bhilwara district (Bijolia). It was attended by 48 union representatives, NGO representatives, etc.
- In Bundi to build Mobile Oxygen Concentrator's outreach awareness amongst the mining-affected communities, several meetings were conducted with a total attendance of 1200 mine workers and silicosis victims from heavily mining-affected areas like Dabi and Budhpura.
- On International Women's Day 2020, a unique program was conducted through radio announcements to highlight the need to test silicosis amongst women and generate awareness that women in mining are equally susceptible to Silicosis. So far, most detected silicosis cases are amongst men, and very few women have been diagnosed with silicosis. However, women in mining spend equally long hours, for years, in the mines and are exposed to the same dust. Until the awareness of silicosis started rising in mining communities since about 2016, many families migrated with the women and children and lived within a1 km radius of mines. This is reason to believe that women may suffer from silicosis, and there is a need to test them more to detect cases in time
- Case Study and Medical Examination of Migrant Mine Workers was conducted on 27th 28th 29th September 2019, in Bundi. It was attended by 50 Migrant Mine Workers.

This event was held in collaboration with Bundi Tuberculosis Hospital. On 17th 18th October 2019, this same event was conducted in Bijoliya. 63 Migrant Mine Workers attended it. This camp was organized in collaboration with AIIMS.



ACCESS TO SOCIAL SECURITY

Mining affected communities need sustainable and systemic solutions to cope with the complicated problems they are a part of. MLPC has strengthened the awareness regarding the rights and entitlements provided by the Pneumoconiosis Policy of Government of Rajasthan.

- MLPC conducted a unique inauguration programme across 4 districts of Jodhpur, Bhilwara, Bundi, and Nagour attended by hundreds of people to inaugurate the Pneumoconiosis policy of Rajasthan. In these programmes, the aim was to popularize the community's rights and entitlements as per the procedure. This happened through community gatherings.
- 25 silicosis victims from Bundi went to submit an appeal to the Chief Minister in 2019, after our community engagement regarding the prevention of silicosis.
- To create awareness regarding Pneumoconiosis policy, MLPC hosted a string of 200 community awareness meetings with a total attendance of 9753 people.
- 35 silicosis widows in Jodhpur went to the District Collectorate for pending ex gratia payment after community engagement by MLPC.

COVID RESPONSE

MLPC's covid response started with a need assessment amongst the widows to map their needs with available resources and document their challenges in this pandemic. In this endeavour, we found that the average debt of widows was anywhere between INR 50,000 to INR 1,20,000. 73.9% of these widows did not have access to water. 54% of the silicosis widows were unemployed, and only 50% had received any Covid Relief.

MLPC distributed 3310 dry ration kits amongst the silicosis victims and widows in Jodhpur, Bhilwara, and Bundi as an immediate response to the acute food insecurity. This was done in collaboration with the district administration with the block development offices.

As a part of our covid response strategy, we recognised the need to make social security more accessible. MLPC launched its mobile assistance unit with the support of district administration in Jodhpur, Bundi and Bhilwara. This assistance unit was equipped with Mobile Emitra and Mobile Oxygen. Our pilot Mobile EMitra facilitated 1190 applications of silicosis victims and widows of three major schemes – Silicosis Pension, Widow Pension and Palanhar Yojana. We also assisted more than 100 widows through home visits in Bhilwara to apply for their ex gratia relief amount in collaboration with the Mining Engineer of Bhilwara.

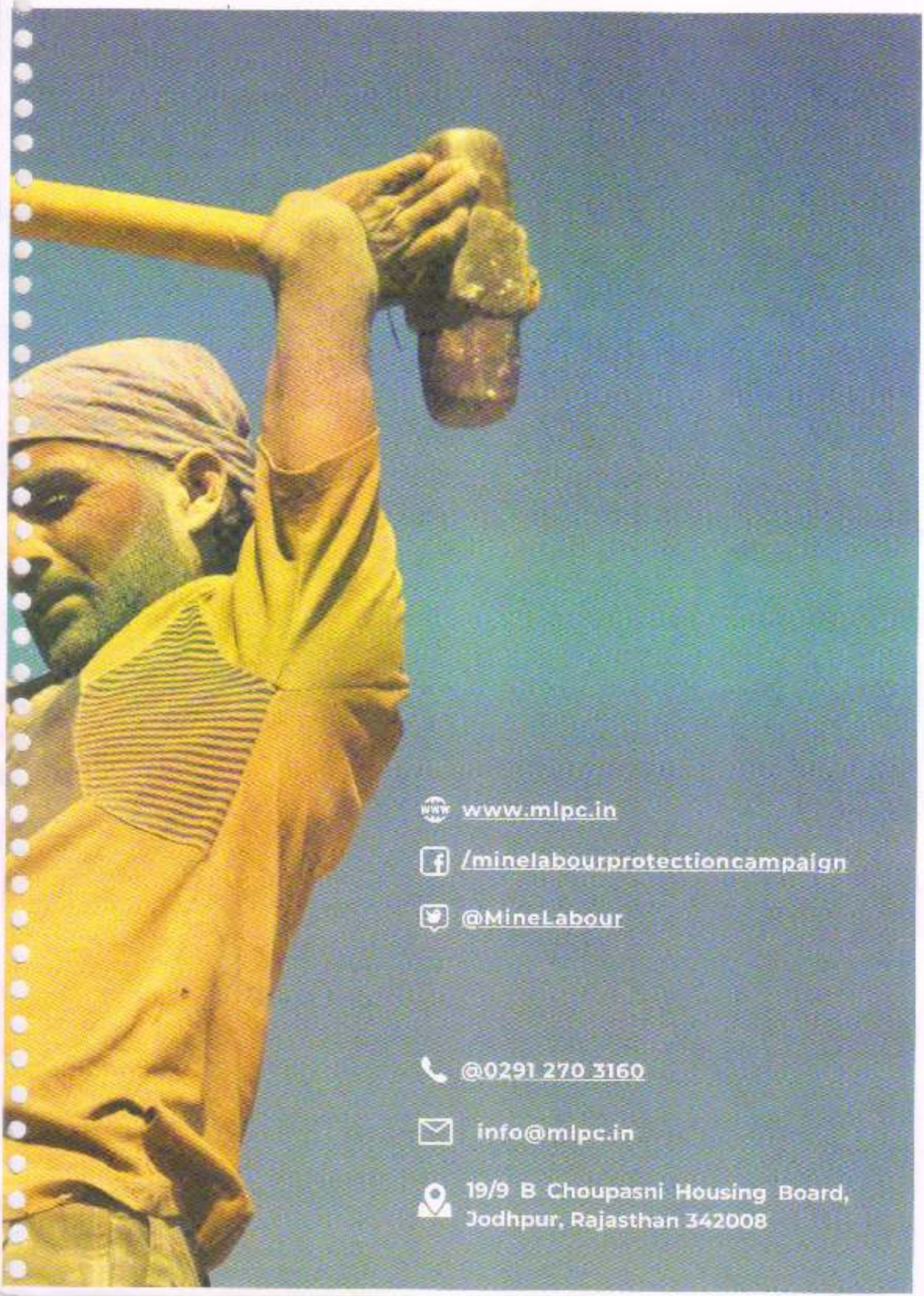
This year of the pandemic highlighted the severe lack of livelihood options when the world went into lockdown.

The lack of any alternative form of livelihood is especially true of mining communities. As the mines stopped in the pandemic, these communities were striving hard to simply survive. This year MLPC has initiated a goat farming project with the widows of silicosis victims, who we found to be one of the worst affected and highly in debt. This initiative has connected 150 widows to a form of alternative livelihood. This project is not only going to build additional income for them it is also going to capacitate these women with a skill they earlier did not process. Their capacity building is essential to the sustainability of this initiative.

3310
RATION KITS

1190
LINKED WITH SECURITY SCHEMES

150
WOMEN LINKED TO ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOOD



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