

# Mining Closure and the Issue of Livelihood in India

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'Mining Communities' around the world share several common characteristics. They are similar in nature, in the impact sharing mechanisms, as they may be associated through environmental, social, economic or some other impact. Apart from this, another very important issue where homogeneity in the character has been observed among the mining communities is the issue of mining closure and the associated socio-economic impact. Of the several mining issues, an important issue which has not received proper concern over a period of time is mining closure and the issue of livelihood in India. It is the mining communities who suffer a lot due to the closure as they derive their livelihood from it directly or indirectly. Also the local economy in the vicinity area largely depends on the mining activities. Hence, mine closure may affect the communities in a large number of ways - environmental plan of the mine, employment and education of the youth and continuation of social services, such as water, power, and health care. Government of India's National Policy 1993 emphasizes only on the issue of rehabilitation of mine closure whereas the New National Mineral Policy 2008 is an extension of the earlier one in a broader sense. Both policies are almost silent about the mining communities. Largely it can be said that the institutional frameworks should give more rooms to the livelihood aspect of mining communities as these are the people who always bear the cost where the other group shares the benefit of development. With this background, the study attempts to analyze the shift in the livelihoods of people during and post-mining operations.

The results based on data collected from a sample of 500 different types of stakeholders of Hindustan Zinc Limited, Sargipalli of the state Odisha, India of 24 mining villages; and on the basis of available evidence of documents and reports, interviews with officials of coal mine, show negative impact of closure in terms of decreased purchasing power of the people; under employment (e.g. a skilled labour working as a daily wage earner); the middle and upper age group people are commuting from their villages in search of livelihood and largely became the victims of vulnerability; the major impact is found to be on the losses of livelihood of small businesses like cycle repairing shops, grocery shops, weekly market and hotels; the paper also gives an indication of a special voluntary retirement scheme (VRS) of the employees which was a conspiracy and some middlemen were confusing the common man. All this happened because of the lack of transparency between the planners and the villagers. Lastly, the study has attempted to analyze the various key factors that bring difference in outcome, which have a bearing on policy.

**Keywords:** *Mining communities, Mining issues, Socio-economic impacts*