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Report I, Visit of Dr. Jinesh Aggarwal, Special Rapporteur, Central Zone, NEERC to Brick kilns in Khunti, Saraikela and Jangamdi districts, of Jharkhand from 30th January to 2nd February, 19.

In Khunti district, a meeting was conducted by Deputy Development Commissioner in absence of Deputy Commissioner and officers of district labour office on 30th January. It came to my information that about 50 license holders of brick kiln units are there in the district. Many of the brick kilns are running without proper license. The matter may be considered by the Mines and labour departments along with the Deputy Commissioner about the issue of brick kilns running without proper certification. About 50-55 workers are engaged in one of the brick kiln on average. The Mines department personal at Khunti informed that there was no child labour identified at the brick kiln in the last 2-3 years. The brick kilns of M/S Harsh Brick Works, Bejahain and M/S S.B.C. Bricks, Datiya were accordingly visited in the Khunti district. The Khunti report in is enclosed. As the kilns now are working at full steam, about 40 labourers and Munshi(clerks) were found. As this area is near the State Capital, there was no case of under payment of under wages. But one fact was realised the houses in which brick kiln workers are expected to live, are not even 6 feet high. Only few of houses were more than 7 feet high. There were no windows in these tenements. There were no toilets or community bathrooms. There is no separate arrangement of women labourers. There seemed to be arrangement of illegal electric connections in the so called huts. The water available for drinking is from a hand pump, but water is not tested for minerals or other impurities or whether water is good enough for drinking or not. The visit report to brick kilns in Khunti district is enclosed as annexure-1. Despite of a MOU between the 5-6 adjoining states of providing ration alternatively by the concerned state even the implementation NFSA even in the districts of same state is not being implemented and it seems the brick kiln workers purchase the food material at the market price. Majority of the workers are

belonging to SC, ST or OBC. The vigilance committee is not formed and meetings are not taking place.

The firemen are working for about 12 hours and the head fireman doesnot have a spare man and works 24 hours but has breaks in between. The labourers who make the bricks generally make 400 rupees and if 2 family member(husband -wife) team is there they make 600-700 rupees per day.

In Saraikela district, a meeting was conducted with District mining officer on 31st January. It came to my information that about 100 license holders of brick kiln units in the district. About 50-55 workers are engaged in one of the brick kiln on average. At present kilns are working in full steam. The labour department personal at **Saraikela** informed that there was no child labour identified at the brick kiln in the last 2-3 years. They were enrolled in the schools. It was also informed by the factory inspector that there is no incident of any child labour working in the Hazardous industries.

While visiting the district, brick kilns of Santosh Kumar Singh, in **Jojo, Khurshid Ali in kamalpur Saraikela** district were visited. The visit reports are enclosed. As the kilns are at bloom, lot of labours were found. As this area is in the industrial belt of the state, there was no case of payment of under wages. But one fact was realised the houses in which brick kiln workers will leave are not even 5.5 feet high. There were no windows in these tenements. There were no toilets or community bathrooms. There is no separate arrangement of toilets for women labourers. There was no arrangement of electric connections in the so called huts. The water available for drinking is from a hand pump, but water is not tested for minerals or other impurities or whether water is good enough for drinking or not. Despite of a MOU between the 3-6 adjoining states of providing ration alternatively by the concerned state even the implementation NFSA even in the districts of same state is not being implemented and it seems the brick kiln workers purchase the food material at the market price. The visit report to brick kilns in **Saraikela** is enclosed as

annexure-2. But it was informed that the brick kiln workers were registered with construction workers welfare board and were given various benefits like Prime Minister Jeevan Jyoti Yojana and Group Insurance Policy is given. Although it was said children less than 6 years are being sent to aangan wari but it was not a fact. The elder children were supposed to be sent to the schools but that was also not happening in all cases.

In Ramgarh district, it came to my information that more than 100 license holders of brick kiln units in the district. About 30-35 workers are engaged in one of the brick kiln on average. At present kilns have started and initial work of cleaning is being done and few workers were there who were making own huts or working on making the bricks which were getting dried before they would be put in the kiln for heating up. The labour department personal at Ranchi informed that there was no child labourer identified at the brick kiln in the last 2-3 years.

While visiting the district, 3 brick kilns in **Ramgarh** were visited. The report in Hindi/ English is enclosed. The brick kiln of Dharam Nath Mehta, Ratan pur in Mandu block, of bidyut kumar Boliya and rajendra kumar boliya in Mauza Kandha in Ramgarh block in the Ramgarh district were visited. The kilns are, at present, working in full bloom. Many labourers were found at the site but number was less than 39-47. As this area is in the industrial belt of the state, there was no case of payment of under wages. **The questionnaire format is enclosed as annexure -3.** But one fact was realised the houses in which brick kiln workers live are not even 5.5 feet high. There were no windows in these tenements. There were no toilets or community bathrooms. There is no separate arrangement for bathing of women labourers. There was arrangement of electric connections in the so called huts. The water available for drinking is from a hand pump, but water is not tested for minerals or other impurities or whether water is good enough for drinking or not. Despite of a MOU between the 5-6 adjoining states of providing action alternatively by the concerned state even the implementation NFSA even in the districts of same state is not

being implemented and it seems the brick kiln workers purchase the food material at the market price. But it was informed that the brick kiln workers were registered with construction workers welfare board and were given various benefits like Prime Minister Jeevan Jyoti Yojana and Group Insurance Policy is given.

The brick kiln owners were given directions to maintain wages register, muster roll, wage slips, copies of registers, inter-state migrant workmen act. On the day of visit no children aged between 14-18 were seen on the site.

Recommendations

- 1. The residential facility should be reasonable and provided by the brick kiln owner to the workers who are coming from more than 20-30 km away as at times the labour has to work in the evening hours. The huts should be of the design and height of Indira Awas, along with gas and electric connection to have a minimum living standard norm, for which State Government through labour or mines department issue instructions.**
- 2. The water provided is from hand pumps or deep boring, but is not being tasted by any authorities. The water made available should be tested every 15th day and report should be seen by the labour authorities. Water should be at least treated with chlorine to make it microbial safe. If a filter or RO water for drinking that would be ideal.**
- 3. In spite of Swachh Bharat program, and declaring the districts Open defecation free, the brick kiln sites are almost devoid of toilets. The work sites should also have clean toilets block for maintenance of cleanliness at the work places.**
- 4. There is an element of advance to some of the workers but it is not in all cases. The wages are paid more than the minimum wages but system of calculation in some cases is based on**

number of brick prepared from the mud. But there did not seem to be any element of coercion.

4. Vigilance committee has been constituted in some districts, but the meeting has not been held till now. It would be of importance that the meeting of vigilance committee be held regularly but that should not increase the cost of bricks. Already a situation has been seen that some brick kiln owners are not able to locate the labour to work at the kiln.

5. For license renewal the brick kiln need to have a new chimney of higher height and different design which also adding up the cost of bricks. But pollution clearance is a must and required. It is to be seen whether before renewal whether new chimney is being seen or license is given without seeing the new chimney.

6. Although there is a MOU has been signed between 5 adjoining state for providing migrant labour the ration under NFSA but at site it seemed that the labour of other districts were also not getting the Ration. It seems that some action at the level of district supply and labour office coordination is required.

7. Although there is a system of opening shops which provide one time meal in 10 rupees but there seemed no visible signs of opening such outlets in the vicinity. As there are many brick kiln at one site, which may have about 400-500 workers in near around kilns. It would be desirable that prepared food shops could be operated in each of the locations to give clean and cheap food to the brick kiln workers.

8. The nearby ICDS and primary schools are need to be given direction to admit the small children brought by the brick kiln workers coming from far off distances.

9. The firemen working at the site it seems work for 12 hours but the proprietors mention that they work for only 6 hours. The labourers are not underpaid as they are coming repeatedly at the same brick kiln but exploitation is not totally over.