

**REPORT  
OF THE  
STUDY GROUP FOR  
COAL**



**LABOUR COMMISSION ON LABOUR**

Printed in India By M/s Samrat Press, Delhi in 1968.  
Published by Manager of Publications, Civil Lines, Delhi-6.

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## **F O R E W O R D**

The National Commission on Labour appointed the Study Group for Coal Industry in its attempt to understand the changes in conditions of labour in that industry since Independence. This was one of the series of Study Groups set up for different industries. The Study Group was required to analyse available information and project its thinking on labour problems in Coal industry for the years to come taking into account the possible developments in the industry.

The views expressed in the report are the views of the Study Group. In examining them for framing its final recommendations, the Commission will attach due importance to these views coming as they do from knowledgeable persons in the Coal industry. In the meanwhile, the report is being published by the Commission with a view to seeking comments on it from persons/institutions interested in the development of that industry.

The Commission is grateful to the Chairman and Members of the Study Group individually for completing their work within the time-limit fixed for them. The Commission is also grateful to all persons/institutions who may have helped the Study Group in reaching conclusions.

**P. B. Gajendragadkar**  
*Chairman*

**National Commission on Labour,  
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New Delhi-16.**

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Succeeded by  
Shri R.G. Deo,  
Director General of Mines Safety,  
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4. Shri P. Chandra,  
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**Observations made by Sri Chhedi Lal, Chairman of the Study Group, in presenting the Report to the Chairman, National Commission on Labour on May 28, 1968.**

Mr. Chairman,

The Study Group on Coal has great pleasure in presenting to you its Report. Coal mining, with ancillary activities like coke-making and bye-product recovery, is one of the major industries of the country employing over 400,000 workers. It is but natural that it has many complex labour problems. Numerous committees, tribunals and boards have, in the past, gone into these problems and suggested remedies ; and yet many problems continue to exist, which is not unexpected in an industry which is hazardous and where the techniques of working are changing. This Study Group has attempted to approach these current problems as realistically as possible and suggested measures which, in its view, will promote harmonious industrial relations on the one hand and, on the other, provide the worker the right kind of environment, both where he works and where he lives. The issues involved are so numerous and of such a varied nature that widely divergent views can be taken on many of these. But the members of the Study Group have shown great understanding of one another's viewpoint and, with a few exceptions, there has been general agreement on the recommendations made. I am personally grateful to all the members for the spirit of co-operation that was extended by them throughout the deliberations of the Study Group. I am also thankful to them for having found time, in the midst of their important pre-occupations, to serve on the Study Group and for having given it the benefit of their long experience of labour problems in the coal industry.

On behalf of the Study Group, I express my gratefulness to you for having spared your valuable time to meet the members of the Group in person and to receive this Report.

## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTION

The Government of India, Ministry of Labour, Employment & Rehabilitation (Department of Labour & Employment) under their Resolution No. 36/14/66-NCL dated the 24th December, 1966, set up the National Commission on Labour to review broadly the changes in the conditions of labour in the country since Independence, to report on existing conditions of labour and to make recommendations for improving their general well-being and promoting industrial peace. The Commission decided to set up a number of expert Study Groups to examine various aspects of labour problems concerning different industries and to report on these. These groups were left free to evolve their own procedure for work and the framework of their report. However, the emphasis was to be on interpretation of existing data and not on collection of additional information.

2. The Study Group on Coal was set up by the National Commission under its Circular No. 3 (21)/67-NCL dated the 5th July, 1967. The terms of reference of the Study Group were broadly as follows :—

“The Study Group will, in regard to the coal industry, ascertain facts from available literature on the subject, draw conclusions and suggest solutions to the problems posed by the Group for the consideration of the Commission. The Commission may also pose problems for consideration of the Study Group from time to time. The Study Group will submit its Report as early as possible”.

3. The composition of the Study Group was as follows :—

- (1) Sri Chhedi Lal,  
Adviser, Planning Commission,  
Yojana Bhavan, Parliament Street,  
New Delhi. ... Chairman
- (2) Sri K.S.R. Chari,  
Coal Mining Adviser,  
Ministry of Steel, Mines & Metals,  
(Department of Mines & Metals)  
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## *Chapter I*

### **INTRODUCTION**

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Director General of Mines Safety,  
Dhanbad. ... Member
- (4) Sri P. Chandra,  
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Jora Bungalows,  
P.O. Dhanbad (Bihar). ... Member
- (7) Sri A.H. Azad,  
Secretary,  
National Coal Development  
Corporation Ltd.,  
Ranchi. ... Member
- (8) Sri Kanti Mehta,  
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9, Elgin Road,  
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- (9) Sri Kalyan Roy,  
General Secretary,  
Indian Mines' Workers' Federation,  
G T. Road,  
Asansol. ... Member
- (10) Sri S.K. Dutta,  
Deputy Labour Commissioner,  
Office of the Labour Commissioner,  
Government of Bihar. ... Member-  
Patna. Secretary

4. Subsequently, Sri Deven Sen, M.P., another representative of labour, was appointed member of the Study Group, vide Government of India. National Commission on Labour Memo. No. 3(21)/67-NCL dated the 26th August, 1967. Sri A.H. Azad, member of the Study Group and representative of the National Coal Development Corporation Ltd., retired after attending the first and third meetings. Sri G.S. Jabbi, Director General of Mines Safety,

after having attended the first three meetings of the Group, also retired. His place was taken by his successor Sri K.G. Deo.

5. The Study Group on Coal held eight meetings in all. The first meeting was held on the 12th July, 1967 at Dhanbad when the scope and framework of the study to be undertaken by the Study Group was decided. The members of the group were also requested to prepare working papers on different aspects of labour problems in the coal industry, such as safety, social security, welfare, incentive and productivity and recruitment in order to provide background material for the preparation of the report.

6. The second meeting was held on the 23rd August, 1967 at New Delhi. The note sent by the Member-Secretary of the National Commission on Labour with his d.o. letter No 3(1)/67-NCL dated 18th August, 1967 was considered. The group decided that the guidelines provided in the above note may be kept in view, although it was free to evolve its own procedure and approach regarding the work. In the meeting, the background material and papers received from different members were also discussed. The Chairman of the Study Group indicated a broad outline of the Study Group's work and comments from members on these were invited.

7. The third meeting was held on 23rd September, 1967 at Dhanbad. In this meeting, the working of the various Acts, Regulations and schemes with reference to coal mining industry was comprehensively reviewed. Sri N. D. Bodade, Regional Labour Commissioner (Central) was also invited to participate in the meeting. It was agreed that all the members will forward their papers/notes highlighting the main provisions of the existing Acts, Laws, Conventions, etc., the lacunae experienced in their implementation and the suggested remedial measures to the Chairman well in time, so that they could be circulated in advance of the next meeting of the Group.

8. The next meeting of the Study Group was scheduled to be held on the 22nd November, 1967 at Calcutta. But it had to be postponed due to disturbed conditions in Calcutta. This somewhat delayed the finalisation of the report.

9. The fourth meeting of the Study Group was held on the 13th December, 1967 at New Delhi. In the meeting, broad conclusions were reached about the contents of the report. In the light of this decision a draft report was circu-

lated to members and they were requested to send their comments before the next meeting.

10. The fifth meeting of the Study Group took place on the 2nd and 3rd February, 1968 at New Delhi when it discussed the draft report, chapter by chapter, which had been earlier circulated to members. In the light of views expressed by different members of the Study Group on important aspects of the labour problem in the coal industry, it was decided that necessary changes should be incorporated and the report re-drafted.

11. The Study Group held its sixth meeting on the 22nd and 23rd February, 1968. The draft chapters earlier circulated, incorporating the comments and suggestions offered by the members in the preceding meeting, were discussed at great length. It was decided that the next meeting of the Study Group would be held on April 5, 1968 at New Delhi. However, the scheduled meeting could not be held due to the serious illness of the Chairman of the Study Group and the report which was expected to be finalised at the said meeting was unavoidably delayed further.

12. The seventh meeting held on the 15th and 16th May, 1968 at New Delhi discussed the latest draft when certain changes were suggested by members. Finally the Group met at Calcutta on the 28th May, 1968 and signed the report as approved by it.

13. Sri S.K. Dutta, Member-Secretary, attended only one meeting, namely that held on 12th July, 1967 at Dhanbad. Thereafter he did not attend any meetings nor did he intimate to the Study Group his reasons for not being able to participate in the work. Consequently the Chairman requested Dr. G. K. Sharma, Director, Natural Resources Division, Planning Commission, and Dr. K. P. Bhatnagar, Senior Research Officer in the same Division to perform the secretarial functions of the Study Group. They have ably discharged these functions and collated and analysed a lot of factual data. The Study Group gratefully acknowledges the valuable assistance they gave in the completion of this study.

14. The Report of the Study Group contains 9 chapters in the following order :—

- I. Introduction
- II. General Background
- III. Employment, Recruitment and Training

- IV. Conditions of Work
- V. Living Conditions and Amenities for Workers in the Coal Industry
- VI. Industrial Relations
- VII. Incentives and Productivity
- VIII. Social Security
- IX. Summary of Recommendations.

15. In each chapter, factual information on various aspects of labour problems has been given and the views of the Study Group highlighted. At the request of particular members, their difference of opinion on certain issues has been recorded at appropriate places. At the end of each chapter, excepting Chapters I and II, recommendations relating to the subject matter of the chapter have been given. The concluding chapter contains a summary of recommendations.

16. The Study Group has not dealt with the problem of wages of colliery labour as the Central Wage Board on Coal Industry has recently gone into the wage question and allied issues in great detail and Government is already seized of the recommendations made by it. Similarly, the Study Group has not touched upon the question of the industry's financial viability or its structural aspect including its nationalisation or otherwise.

## Chapter II

### GENERAL BACKGROUND

#### I

#### Importance of Coal as a Source of Energy

Coal occupies a dominant position in the energy economy of India. It constitutes as much as 42% of the total commercial energy consumed in the country at present and in any future programme of industrialisation it will continue to play a vital role. Though coal production has suffered a setback during the last two years due to industrial recession and other reasons well-known, its importance as a primary source of energy—and a major source of commercial energy—will continue to grow. According to the estimates of the Energy Survey of India Committee, on an assumption of 5% growth of national income per year, the total energy consumption will rise from 243 million tonnes of coal replacement in 1960-61 to 650 million tonnes of coal replacement in 1980-81, an increase of about 167%. The corresponding increase in total requirements of coal will be from 56 million tonnes to 180.5 million tonnes, an increase of about 221%. Even if it is assumed that these estimates are optimistic, there is no doubt that considerable expansion in the output of coal will be needed in the years to come—and even in the very near future, as the economy picks up, of which there are signs already, a demand for increase in coal output from the present level will arise.

2. Doubts are sometimes raised whether the future of coal will be as favourable as stated above if the changing pattern of energy needs is taken into account. For example, coal's share in relation to other energy resources is challenged by oil, natural gas and nuclear power. A comparison between proved reserves of coal, oil and natural gas in the country, at the estimated rate of consumption according to present knowledge, shows that coal reserves will last for centuries.\* They are many times higher than the reserves of

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\*N. B. There may be some shortage of coking coals in the future, but a well-planned policy of conservation and beneficiation of coking coals and their scientific utilisation will prolong their life too.

oil and natural gas—and for oil the country's dependence on imports will continue and one cannot foresee at this stage when such dependence will cease. This quantitative aspect of coal as an indigenous source of energy is certainly favourable to it.

3. Of course, coal has to reckon with the prospects offered by nuclear\* energy. It has been indicated that electricity production in nuclear power stations will be competitive with that from thermal power stations provided the generating plants are in large units of about 500 M.W. This may, in turn, necessitate high voltage super grids. Switch-over to nuclear generation will thus necessarily involve a highly capital intensive technology. The constraints on financial resources may not allow such an expansion of nuclear energy as to pose a threat to the expansion of coal production for generating thermal electricity. In this context, the increasing demand for energy would result, at least till 1980-81, in all sources of energy becoming complementary rather than competitive so that the importance of coal is not likely to diminish. The following observation of the Energy Survey of India Committee in the field of electricity generation would support this view :

“.....the best ultimate strategy of electricity generation is to use hydel increasingly to meet peak loads and to carry the base loads on steam plant.....and in some regions on nuclear plant” (para 503).

4. There is yet another factor that would tend to sustain the importance of coal. It is the social and human cost of any major shift from coal to other sources of energy. Among the major industries in the country (leaving out plantations), coal occupies the second place, next only to the textile industry as the largest employer of labour. Of the total employment in the mining industry, it is the largest employer, accounting for about 60% of the total average number of people employed daily in all mines taken together. Neither the oil industry nor the activities connected with generation of nuclear power can give such large-scale employment in a country where unemployment is colossal. Any slowing down of the tempo of coal production just because of a shift to other sources of energy may create economic and social problems, and this aspect cannot be overlooked in the framing of a national fuel policy.

5. It is true, however, that coal, apart from its utilisation

tion for coke making for the iron and steel industry, will have to adapt itself in future to the new situation created by other forms of commercial energy entering the market. This should not be difficult because of the fundamental characteristics of coal. Research on gasification of coal and the transformation of coal into petrol open some interesting prospects. Certain experiments conducted by the C.F.R.I. have shown the possibility of converting the high sulphur coal of Assam into oil—and recovering of sulphur in the process. Bye-products from coke ovens provide raw materials for paint, aspirin, plastics and other chemicals. Even fly-ash from thermal stations is finding new uses. Diversification of coal utilisation thus opens up new avenues of development which the coal industry ought to explore.

5. In conclusion, there is little doubt that the present setback in the fortunes of coal is temporary, that it will maintain a position of major importance in the total energy balance of the country, and that, corresponding to the great human effort invested in it, the coal industry will continue to expand. But such expansion and development will be possible only if the two partners in this process, viz. employers and labour, make a joint and co-operative effort and create conditions that will lead to unhampered growth of the industry. It is in this context that this Study Group has approached its task of examining labour problems in the industry and exploring possible solutions to such problems.

## II

### Brief History of the Coal Industry

It would be pertinent to give here a brief history of the coal industry stating the efforts made in the past towards progressive amelioration of the socio-economic conditions of labour and of integrating the workers' interests with the wider process of development of the coal industry in India.

2. Regular production of coal in India started after 1850. Workings commenced at a number of places in Central India, Singareni field and upper Assam, although attention continued to be focussed mainly on the Raniganj and Jharia coalfields. Raniganj was producing 2.55 million tons by 1900 out of a total Indian production of 6.12 million tons. With the development of railways the output of the Jharia coalfield grew rapidly. The years preceding World War I saw the opening of coal mines in Bokaro, Pench Valley and Chanda Valley. By 1914 the total Indian

output of coal rose to 14 million tons per year. The period thereafter was one of continuous development. By 1945 the annual production rose to 29 million tons.

3. The first enquiry into a specific aspect of colliery labour was made by the Labour Enquiry Commission appointed by the Government of Bengal in 1896 to ascertain the best means of supplying labour to coal mines. The recommendations of this Commission do not appear to have been acted upon. However, the Government passed the first Mines Act in 1901. The Act contained provisions relating to safety and health, but it did not put any restriction on the employment of child labour. In 1919, Mr. R.A. Rees was deputed to report on the methods of coal mining industry, as the existing unscientific methods not only affected production but also caused hardship to labour. His report was followed by the appointment of the Indian Coal Fields Committee in 1920 under the chairmanship of Mr. Fowley to examine the recommendations made by Mr. Rees. The Committee, inter alia, made recommendations for regulating the methods of working in mines, and for ensuring safety of workers. On hours of work the Committee felt that the time had not arrived for statutory interference.

4. In 1923, an amended and more elaborate Mines Act was brought on the Statute Book replacing the Act of 1901. It contained provisions for exclusion of children under 13 years, grant of weekly holidays, and limitation of weekly hours of work to 60 for workers above ground and to 54 for those below ground. The Act was further amended in 1928 to provide that no mine shall be open for more than 12 hours in 24, unless it had a system of shifts, each shift not exceeding 12 hours. Employment of women underground was prohibited in 1929 by introduction of a clause to this effect in the Regulations.

5. During the years 1929 to 1936 several fires, explosions and cases of roof collapse occurred in Jharia and Raniganj Coalfields, mainly due to defective methods of working. Government then appointed the Coal Mining Committee in 1937 to report on measures to secure the safety of those employed in coal mines and to make recommendations to prevent wastage of coal. The committee made numerous suggestions to amend the existing coal mining regulations in order to promote safety in mines. As a result, a large number of new regulations were added to

the Indian Coal Mines Regulations, 1926 to improve safety standards.

6. All these years the coal industry was functioning in a free market economy. The year 1944, however, brought in a new era when control over prices was introduced and along with that also distribution control. This measure was introduced to stabilise production which was heretofore governed by the normal forces of supply and demand, under which prices fluctuated widely and the interaction of prices and production led sometimes to over-production and slaughter mining, and at others to acute scarcity of coal. During the years 1942 to 1945 there was "a coal famine of unparalleled proportions". This happened at a time when war production made the utmost possible calls on coal so that, on the one hand, boosting of production was felt necessary as also control over prices in order to give economic stability to the industry.

7. Simultaneously, it was also felt necessary to attract labour to the industry as the war had provided them more attractive and profitable employment elsewhere. Hence certain welfare measures for colliery workers were introduced such as Mines Maternity Benefit Rules, Coalmines Labour Welfare Fund, Coalmines Pit-head Bath Rules, Coalmines Creche Rules. In 1945, the Government of India asked Sri S.R. Deshpande, Director, Cost of Living Index Scheme, to undertake an investigation of the conditions of labour in the coalfields. He was also asked to conduct a wage census of colliery labour. He presented a comprehensive report in 1946 dealing with various facets of labour situation in the coalmines including wages and earnings, housing, health and medical relief, welfare work, workers' unions, industrial relations and legislation governing various conditions of work.

8. The Indian Coalfields Committee 1946, though it was not primarily appointed to deal with labour problems, had necessarily to go into some important aspects of labour as these were intimately connected with its main terms of reference which were to ensure conservation of coal and rationalisation of the coal industry. This committee laid considerable stress on improving the working and living conditions of coal miners and providing them better wages and amenities in order to secure for the industry a settled mining force.

9. Following this report, a Board of Conciliation was set up which gave its award on May 12, 1947. This award which was mainly applicable to Bengal and Bihar coalfields settled several disputes and helped in establishing industrial peace. Separate awards on similar lines followed in other coalfields in the outlying areas, including Assam.

10. Next came the appointment of the Working Party for the Coal Industry in 1950 which was required to examine and to make recommendations on such aspects as improving the efficiency of labour and management and organisation of the industry as a whole.

11. Subsequent measures to regulate the wages and other conditions of the industry are recent history. There was the Majumdar Tribunal Award of May 1956, which was followed by the Labour Appellate Tribunal Award of January 1957. As some outstanding issues still continued to be under dispute, these were referred to arbitration by Sri Dasgupta who gave his award in December 1959. Some of the important benefits granted by the Dasgupta Award were the introduction of incremental scales of pay to the daily rated workers and time-scales for certain monthly rated categories.

12. The last in the series is the appointment of the Central Wage Board for the coal mining industry in August 1962. The Board went exhaustively into the wage structure and other related aspects of colliery labour and gave its report early in 1967. Some of the recommendations of the Wage Board are stated to have already been implemented.

13. The latest event of far-reaching significance to the coal industry is the decontrol of prices effected by Government in July 1967. Simultaneously, distribution control too was lifted except in the case of coking coals. It is not possible to assess the impact of this measure yet, but it is hoped that the unhealthy situation that had necessitated the introduction of control in 1944 will not repeat itself. Of course, the industry faces a new challenge and, in the words of a representative of the coal industry "it should be able to breathe the fresh air once again, the fresh air of normal trade channels". This again calls for perfect understanding between employers and labour and also the consumers of coal. In the present situation, it is essential that there is industrial peace and it is vital that both labour and employers work together to achieve this.

### Chapter III

## EMPLOYMENT, RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

### Employment Trends :

The trend of employment and production in coal mines during the last seventeen years has been as follows :

#### Employment in Coal mines and production of Coal

Year	Average daily number of persons employed (in thousands)	Production **  (million tonnes)
1951	339.2	34.98
1956	333.5	40.06
1961	398.7	56.10
1962	416.9	61.55
1963	433.4	66.92
1964	414.0	63.99
1965	406.7	69.46
1966	406.2	70.54
1967	411.5	71.30

Source: \* 1. Director General, Mines Safety.

\*\* 2. Monthly Review, Coal Controller.

2. These figures reveal that an increase in production of coal is not necessarily accompanied with increase in employment in coal mines and during the last four years employment has shown a declining trend though production has been going up. In view of this trend, any sizeable increase in employment potential in the industry cannot be expected during the next four to five years.

3. Varying estimates have been made about the demand for coal during the next few years. The Coal Development Council's Committee on Assessment of Demand for Coal estimated the requirement during 1970-71 at 99.51 million tonnes and in 1972-73 at 118.77 million tonnes. However, knowledgeable sources have indicated that the demand by 1970-71 may range between 80 to 85 million tonnes. The present trends indicate that even these estimates may not materialise.

4. At the end of the Third Plan, the production of

coal reached only a level of 68 million tonnes. This output generally satisfied all consumer requirements for coal. Rapid dieselisation of railways, economy in the use of coal by various consuming sectors and the slowing down of the tempo of industrial development are the main reasons for the demand for coal not picking up to the anticipated level. In the Fourth Plan expected to commence from 1969-70, the demand will undoubtedly increase, but any increase in the labour force will be only marginal. Moreover, the future increase in demand will be for particular types and grades of coal only, so that certain pits from which coal is not needed may close down, rendering labour in those particular areas surplus. Now that control over price of coal and its distribution (except for coking coal) has been lifted, some uneconomic collieries too may close down, and this may further add to the problems of surplus labour. The absorbing capacity of the coal industry in a particular region may not be commensurate with this surplus labour force. If, as a result of this, and the industry's efforts to improve productive efficiency a large number of workers in the coal industry are rendered redundant for some time, this will create social problems. It is, therefore, necessary to take care of this problem by instituting a system of unemployment insurance or redundancy payments.

5. It is learnt that the Government are already contemplating introducing a pilot scheme of unemployment insurance in coal mines so that retrenched workers may be paid 50% of their average wages during the period of their unemployment, subject to a maximum of six months. The Study Group suggests that Government should formulate this scheme as early as possible to cover the entire coal industry. For this purpose, a special fund may be created by levying a new cess on coal similar to the welfare cess. The details of the scheme may be worked out in consultation with the interests concerned.

#### **Recruitment :**

6. In the late twenties, most collieries recruited labour through a contractor and the common practice was to employ a raising contractor. Two other systems also existed : (i) a miners' sirdar brought a gang to the mine and was responsible to the manager for the work undertaken by the gang ; (ii) the management sent out its own recruiters in much the same way. An increasing number of miners found their way to the coalfields from outside without the assistance of the recruiter. Even now some recruitment

continues to be done through contractors and recruiting agents.

7. **Coalfields Recruiting Organisation (C.R.O.)**—During the Second World War, due to difficulties of securing adequate labour, there came into existence a system of recruitment under which workers, mostly from the eastern districts of U.P., were recruited at the Gorakhpur Labour Depot of the C.R.O. This system of recruitment continued after the Second World War, even though the exigencies created by the war had ended. The system was strongly criticised by workers' representatives as, according to them, it amounted to indentured labour. A tripartite committee under the chairmanship of Sri Vishnu Sahay, then Secretary, Ministry of Labour, was set up to inquire into these complaints. This committee submitted its report on September 29, 1954, which was accepted by Government. In this report the committee recommended, inter alia, continuity of service for workmen recruited through this organisation, freedom of movement and association, option to live in quarters with families, and provision of the same terms and conditions of service as for other workers. However, in spite of these recommendations, the system continued to exist with some changes, as the employers felt that, for various reasons, it could not be done away with completely. At a tripartite meeting held in New Delhi on December 21, 1963, a decision was taken to abolish altogether the system of recruitment through C.R.O. Workers' representatives have alleged that this decision too has not been implemented yet and unauthorised miners' camps and hostels continue to exist. It is further reported that the number of workers recruited through the C.R.O. and employed in the coal mining industry in the States of West Bengal, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Maharashtra and Jammu and Kashmir was 19,301 on 31.1.1968.

8. The Central Wage Board for the Coal Mining Industry also went into this question in their report furnished to Government in February 1967. Their majority recommendation was that the system be abolished at the earliest. The employers' representatives on the Board had, however, disagreed with this recommendation. Subsequently, the 25th session of the Indian Labour Conference held at New Delhi in April 1968 also discussed this subject and recorded the following view :

“The Conference desired that the decision of the

9th session of the Industrial Committee on Coal Mining about the abolition of the C.R.O. should be implemented before the 31st December 1968."

The employers' representatives on the Study Group were of the view that this is impracticable.

9. The fact that changes in the system were made from time to time and these changes were accepted by the industry, indicates that the system had certain inherent evils. It appears that though, to some extent, the evils of the system have been mitigated, major complaints still persist and continue to be an irritant in employer-employee relations. The Study Group feels (the employers' representatives dissenting) that in order to create healthy employer-employee relations, it is time that the system is completely abolished.

#### **Employment Exchanges :**

10. The recruitment of labour to collieries has now to be done through Employment Exchanges, as in other industries. The Employment Exchanges (Compulsory Notification of Vacancies) Act 1959, which came into force in 1960, requires that vacancies should be notified to Employment Exchanges. To facilitate the implementation of this measure in the coalfield areas, 7 colliery exchanges have been set up—2 in West Bengal, 3 in Madhya Pradesh and one each in Bihar and Orissa. The principal object of regulating the recruitment of labour through the employment exchanges was to avoid waste of manpower, to effect speedy re-employment of experienced surplus labour and to eliminate malpractices in recruitment.

11. The table in next page shows the number of registrations and placements effected by the Colliery Employment Exchanges during the period July, 1966 to June, 1967 and the number of applicants on the live register of these exchanges as on 30.6.1967 :—

Name of State Exchange	Registrations effected during July 66 to June 67	Placement effected during July 66 to June 67	Vacancies notified during July 66 to June 67	Submission made during July 66 to June 67	No. on live registers as on 30-6-67
1. Jharia, Bihar	10,592	2,983	2,695	10,472	3,822
2. Burhar, M.P.	2,800	932	1,064	2,583	570
. Junner- deo	-do- 2,439	1,476	1,697	2,091	416
4. Manen- dragarh	-do- 1,835	92	226	813	899
5. Talchar	-do- 4,491	666	701	2,658	1,961
6. Rani- ganj,	W.B. 11,380	3,915	4,632	10,298	5,587
7. Sitaram- pur	-do 7,311	1,683	2,442	8,012	3,315

12. The procedure for the registration and submission of workers by the exchanges was reviewed in August, 1965 at a seminar of employment officers held at Asansol. As a result of the revised procedure then introduced, the record pertaining to each candidate has been made more precise and spells out his experience and fitness for particular jobs more clearly. This facilitates placement.

13. Both the workers' representatives and those of employers held the common view that in spite of the improvements effected in 1965, the employment exchanges have not served the purpose for which they were set up. A comprehensive review of the working of these employment exchanges is thus called for. A careful evaluation of their performance should be undertaken speedily, shortcomings in their functioning ascertained, particularly the reasons why they have failed to achieve their purpose and appropriate steps be then taken to make them effective instruments of serving both industry and labour.

14. **Problem of migration, absenteeism, badlis and casual labour :**

The terms 'migration' and 'migratory labour' seem to have been wrongly applied to colliery labour, since the workers do not so much change their place of work, but return to their land seasonally for short periods during the year for agricultural operations and again report back to their employer in due course. A seasonal drift of a large number of workers from coal mines to their land takes place twice a year, once in May-August for sowing and transplanting, and again in October-November for harvesting. The peculiar

socio-economic structure of the rural population causes this seasonal fluctuation in the labour force in collieries and this has to be reckoned with. Other factors like the prevailing scarcity of foodgrains and their high prices, abolition of cash and food concessions after the Award in 1957 also contribute to the seasonal drift.

15. The table below, giving the rate of absenteeism for the period 1951 to 1964, indicates that the rate of absenteeism among colliery workers had long remained almost constant. During 1965 and 1966, this rate has recorded a decline which is a healthy sign.

<i>Year</i>	<i>All India</i>
1951	13.31
1956	13.83
1957	13.66
1958	13.21
1959	13.11
1960	13.27
1961	13.53
1962	12.85
1963	12.70
1964	13.06
1965	12.67
1966	11.18
1967 (August)	11.75

*Source* : D.G. Mines Safety.

The rate of absenteeism in the Indian coal industry does not compare unfavourably with that of other countries, when due allowance is given for the various socio-economic factors that operate in the case of Indian colliery labour.

16. With suitable wages, bonus, provident fund benefits, better living conditions, greater security of service, absenteeism is not likely to pose a serious problem in the coal industry. Measures like provisions of rations at reasonable prices through company-operated stores would prove further useful. With a view to reducing absenteeism in coal mines, the Board of Conciliation (1947) recommended the payment of attendance and production bonus. But the payment of bonus under the Coal Mines Bonus Scheme Act (1948) has played a limited part, if at all, in reducing absenteeism.

17. Fluctuations in labour strength due to leave and other factors necessitate employment of badlis. But badlis have been almost a regular part of the labour force, though their employment is intermittent. Under the Model Standing Orders for Coal Mining Industry, a badli ceases to be a 'badli' on completion of a continuous period of service

of one year (190 attendances in the case of a workman below ground and 240 attendances in the case of any other workman) in the same post or other post or posts in the same category, or earlier if the post is vacated by the permanent workman or probationer. Under these Standing Orders, in the matter of filling up of permanent vacancies, badli and temporary workmen and probationers are to be given preference in the order of their seniority. But the problem of regular absorption of badlis in vacancies suited to their training and experience continues to exist. The National Employment Service has been making efforts to tackle the problem. A scheme was introduced on a pilot basis in Sindri applicable to the Sindri Fertilizer Factory. Under this scheme, a register of badlis is maintained and workers on this register are invariably given preference at the time of fresh recruitment by the factory provided they fit in with the prescribed requirements. This enables surplus labour on the register of badlis getting a placement in a reasonably short time. At the seminar of August 1965, referred to above, a scheme of registering badlis in the coal industry on similar lines had been suggested. Employment officers were required to pay frequent visits to collieries to watch the operation of the badli register, and to ensure that only recognised badlis got jobs. But the scheme did not make much headway. In the view of the Study Group, the scheme of maintenance of badli register, its regular inspection by appropriate officers and the employment of such registered workers on a priority basis be introduced in the coal mines, and to begin with, a few pilot schemes on the lines of the Sindri scheme, with suitable modifications, may be started. The scope of the scheme may be expanded in the light of the experience gained from the working of these pilot schemes.

18. In a wider context, special measures to secure employment for not only badli labour but all colliery labour rendered surplus for any reason are necessary. A suggestion about introducing a scheme of unemployment insurance or of redundancy payments has been made in a preceding paragraph. As a complement to that scheme, it is necessary that a register of all surplus workers may be maintained in the form of a pool\* and that it may be made incumbent for

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N. B. \*One of the employers' representatives was of the view that this pool idea should not be misunderstood with Schemes where maintenance of the pool involves payment of a regular salary or an allowance till a member of the pool secures employment.

employers to draw workers from this pool before resorting to any other form of recruitment. The Study Group recommends the creation of such a pool and the formulation of a suitable scheme in this regard. Such lists of colliery workers of different categories should be maintained on a regional basis, and for operational purposes suitable regions should be drawn up after taking into account the feasibility of movement of workers within that region.

19. Views of Committees on contract labour and implementation of their recommendations—As far back as 1931, the Royal Commission on Labour (1931) had recommended the gradual elimination of contract labour and substitution by direct labour. The Board of Conciliation, 1947 recommended that contract labour should be given the same benefits as labour employed directly. The question of the employment of contract labour was also discussed at several sessions of the Industrial Committee on Coal Mining. As a result of the resolution passed at the 7th session of the Industrial Committee in 1960, a Court of Enquiry (Dave Court of Enquiry) was set up with the following terms of reference :—

- (i) Whether the system of employment of labour through or by contractors and sub-contractors in the coal mining industry in the country can be abolished without impairing productivity, and if so, in which case of employment and within what period ?
- (ii) To the extent that contract system cannot be abolished in the industry, what measures, statutory or otherwise, should be devised to ensure fair wages and conditions of employment to labour employment through or by contractors and sub-contractors ?

Before Sri Dave completed the enquiry, representatives of employers and employees entered into an agreement on 30.10.1961. The agreement provided for the abolition of contract labour in all processes connected with the raising and despatch of coal and the manufacture and the despatch of hard coke which was to be the direct responsibility of the principal employer, except for the following seven processes : (i) Sinking of pits and driving of inclines ; (ii) Sand loading ; (iii) Dyke cutting and driving of stone drift and miscellaneous stone work underground ; (iv) Coal loading and unloading provided that the principal employer shall engage a nucleus

of wagon and truck loaders to whom regular work can be guaranteed, the number of such nucleus to be reviewed quarterly ; (v) Miscellaneous civil engineering works of an irregular and intermittent nature ; (vi) Overburden removal and earth cutting ; and (vii) Soft coke manufacturing.

20. The Court of Enquiry accepted the bipartite Agreement as the basis of their report and held that contract labour should be abolished by the 30th September, 1962 in all processes excepting in the seven categories mentioned in the agreement. For regulating the working conditions of contract labour, the Court suggested amendment of the Payment of Wages Act, so as to enable contractors' labourers to claim wages from the principal employer. The Court also suggested the revision of the definition of the principal employer under the Industrial Disputes Act, so as to include workmen employed by contractors.

21. During 1963-64, a study was undertaken to find out the extent to which the bipartite agreement and the recommendations of the Court of Enquiry have been implemented. Of the 720 collieries to which a questionnaire was sent, 337 employing over 2½ lakh workers replied. The replies received revealed that in these collieries the number of workers employed through contractors declined from 21,000 to 13,000 between October 1961 and the end of March 1963. However, at the meeting of the Industrial Committee on Coal Mining in 1964, the workers' representatives challenged the authenticity of these figures and maintained that in a large number of cases the recommendations of the Dave's Court of Enquiry have not been implemented.

22. It is understood that the Government have introduced in the Parliament the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Bill which aims at the abolition of contract labour in respect of such categories as may be notified by the appropriate Government in the light of certain criteria that have been laid down.

23. The Study Group recommends that effective steps be taken by Government to implement the report of the Dave Court of Enquiry and the Bipartite Agreement of October 30, 1961.

24. Women workers—The number of women employed in the industry has tended to decline in recent years. It dropped from 55,000 in 1951 to 37,000 in 1963, and to 26,000 in June 1967. This decline has taken place due to a number of causes, such as, payment of equal wages for

men and women, restriction on their employment during night, maternity leave and provision of creches. However, the number of women employees is still quite large. According to the Labour Bureau (Vide Industry Reports Vol. I—Plantations and Mines), women in coal industry were found to be employed only in 12 occupations and they constituted 10 per cent of the total employment in 1958-59. Their percentage to total employment in 1966 was 7.25%. The scope for employment of women in the coal industry seems to be extremely limited. Moreover, in the present context of underemployment of men, who are the chief bread earners of the family, the trend may be a fall in the employment of women workers. Only in certain jobs such as those of doctors, nurses, matrons, ayahs, teachers, social workers and quarry loaders and wagon loaders, women may continue to find employment and, to the extent there is expansion of these activities, small additions in the number of such employees may be possible. However, since a large number of women workers would still continue to be employed in the coal industry, watch needs to be kept on implementation of the statutory provisions regulating the working conditions of women, and provision of creches etc., meant for them.

25. **Absorption of physically disabled workmen**—The problem of physically disabled or handicapped workmen who had put in long years of service but had not been provided with alternative employment is a serious one in the coal industry. Formulation of a proper scheme to ensure that every disabled workman, who is capable of performing lighter work, is provided with such alternative employment is required. This is in line with the recommendation of the Industrial Committee to provide light jobs to disabled persons. Cases of disabled persons who suffer from Pneumoconiosis may be dealt with by providing them employment in coal mines under suitable dust free conditions. It may be advisable to provide, in the new development sites, suitable trades for disabled miners. An Act like the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944 in the U.K. providing obligations on the part of employers to engage a quota of disabled persons is another solution. It is understood that the Government of India have set up a committee under the Chairmanship of the Director General of Mines Safety to go into the problem of disabled miners and their rehabilitation. The terms of reference of the committee include the following :—

- (i) to examine the extent of benefits at present available to mine workers declared medically unfit under the Regulations or otherwise, or disabled by accidents, or by Pneumoconiosis as defined for purpose of the Workmen's Compensation Act, and to recommend what further benefits could be given ;
- (ii) to examine in all its aspects, the question of rehabilitation/re-employment of such persons and particularly to consider and make recommendations in this regard for :
- (iii) the setting up of one or more production-cum-training institutes for disabled persons producing such equipment and materials as could be absorbed by the mining industry assessing the requirements of the industry for such produce ;
- (iv) the setting up of such industries as may absorb persons trained in production-cum-training institutes.

The rehabilitation of such disabled workers should be regarded as a social obligation. The Study Group, therefore, hopes that the above mentioned committee would expedite its work and suggest appropriate measures to provide for vocational training and industrial rehabilitation of disabled coal miners. As soon as the committee's report is received, the Government should take a quick decision on its recommendations and take speedy action to rehabilitate disabled coal miners.

**26. Problem of Casual Labour**—The need for casual labour in the coal mining industry arises due to peculiar exigencies of work. For example, due to uncertain position of wagon supply, wagon loaders have to be engaged on a casual basis. The employment of casual labour is also required at short notice when work relating to safety has to be completed. There may be some other odd jobs for which casual labour has to be employed. The existence of such a body of workers who have no continuity of employment, and who are every day uncertain about being provided with work, creates socio-economic problems. While agreeing that it may be difficult for the coal industry to do away with casual labour so long as erratic and irregular supply of wagons by the Railways continues, the Study Group is of the view that the employment of such labour on other jobs of a continuing nature is not desirable and this practice should be done away with.

**Training :**

27. In 1966, the Mines Vocational Training Rules framed under the Mines Act, were brought into force. They were made applicable to coal and other minerals. This has promoted the setting up of Vocational Training Centres, and larger groups of mines have already established them. 92 such Training Centres have been set up in different parts of the country. For the present, the training is confined mostly to refresher courses for the old workers. Some special course for the categories of workers engaged in handling explosives and in gas testing under relevant schedules have also been organised. The quarterly progress reports of Vocational Training Centres for the two quarters ending March and June 1967 give the number of workers successfully trained since 1st January 1967 as follows :—

(i) No. of new entrants trained	...	375
(ii) No. of underground workers trained	...	
in refresher courses		7,849
(iii) No. of persons trained in special	...	1,179
course for timbermen, explosive		
handling personnel and in gas testing		

The scheme is thus contributing to improvement in the efficiency and safety consciousness of workers. However, the mining industry is exempted from operation of rule 9 (of the Mines Vocational Training Rules) which makes it compulsory for persons employed in mines to undergo refresher courses training. At present this rule is applicable to new entrants only, but from the 1st June 1968 it will also apply to those who have been in employment in mines for a period not exceeding one year. Even after this amendment a very large number of workers in mines will remain out of the scope of refresher training. Hence it is desirable that this rule be made applicable to all workers in mines. To ensure the success of these training courses, a further prerequisite is that experienced officials from mines are available for imparting instruction.

28. In order to standardise the training course and to create interest in the worker for his own training, it is necessary to bring out suitable literature in local languages and distribute it freely to those who attend such courses. The co-operation of the National Council for Safety in Mines may be sought in the matter.

29. **Mine Mechanisation Training Institutes**—At present only two Mine Mechanisation Training Institutes have

been opened. More such centres have not been set up by the Director General, Employment & Training, due to poor response from the industry in getting their unskilled workers trained at these institutes in various trades. The position was reviewed at the last meeting (fourth meeting) of the Advisory Committee for the Mine Mechanisation Training Scheme held at Calcutta on the 8th March, 1967. The committee felt that it was possible that one of the reasons for the low response might be that the location of these institutes was not the best possible one. Initially, these institutes for training were attached to the N.C.D.C. mines. The committee decided to examine the possibility of locating these institutes elsewhere. In the meantime, in order to ensure employment of trained personnel in the industry, the Director General of Mines Safety has advised mine managements in his circular No. 12 of 1967 to arrange that :—

- (i) all their existing personnel in the categories of electrician, mechanic, machine operator/ attendant in mines undergo the respective refresher course of training, and
- (ii) sufficient number of fresh entrants are sent to the institutes to undergo the basic course of training to enable future vacancies (resulting from wastage or expansion) in the categories of electrician/mechanic/machine operators/ attendants being filled up by trained personnel.

One of the workers' representatives expressed deep concern at the lack of training of piece-rated workers who are greatly responsible for production and he felt that sufficient advantage had not been taken of the mine mechanisation training scheme. His suggestion was that it should be made compulsory that no person should be allowed to work below ground without a minimum training of three months for which a certificate should be issued to him.

30. The Apprentices Act, 1961 has now been extended to the Coal Industry, but the mining trades have not yet been designated under the Act so far. In the view of the Study Group, the provisions of the Apprentices Act to be applied to the coal industry should supplement what has been provided for already under the mines vocational training scheme and the trades to be designated under the Act should be selected accordingly so that there may be no duplication. For example, trades relating to operation and

**maintenance of machinery, equipment and those relating to mine mechanics, mine electricians, diesel mechanics, blacksmith and fitter may be selected for this purpose.**

**Recommendations :**

(1) It is learnt that the Government are already contemplating introducing a pilot scheme of unemployment insurance in coal mines so that retrenched workers may be paid 50% of their average wages during the period of their unemployment subject to a maximum of six months. The Study Group suggests that Government should formulate this scheme as early as possible and introduce it progressively to cover the entire coal industry. For this purpose, a special fund may be created by levying a new cess on coal similar to the welfare cess. The details of the scheme may be worked out in consultation with the interests concerned.

(2) The Study Group feels (employers' representatives dissenting) that in order to create healthy employer-employee relations, it is time that the system of recruitment through C.R.O. is completely abolished.

(3) A comprehensive review of the working of the Employment Exchanges set up in the coalfields is called for. A careful evaluation of their performance should be undertaken speedily and appropriate remedial action suggested to make them effective instruments of serving both industry and labour.

(4) The Study Group suggests that the scheme of maintenance of Badli Register, its regular inspection by appropriate officers and the employment of such registered workers on a priority basis be introduced in the coal mines, and to begin with, a few pilot schemes on the lines of the Sindri scheme, with suitable modifications, may be started. The scope of the scheme may be expanded in the light of the experience gained from the working of these pilot schemes.

(5) A register of all surplus workers should be maintained in the form of a pool and it should be made incumbent for employers to draw workers from this pool before resorting to any other form of recruitment. Lists of colliery workers of different categories should be maintained on a regional basis, and for operational purposes suitable regions should be drawn up after taking into account the feasibility of movement of workers within that region.

(6) The implementation machinery of Government should take effective steps to implement the report of the

**Dave Court of Enquiry and the Bipartite Agreement of October 30, 1961.**

(7) Since a large number of women workers would continue to be employed in the coal industry, the Study Group feels that watch needs to be kept on implementation of the statutory provisions regulating the working conditions of women, and provision of creches etc. meant for them.

(8) Formulation of a proper scheme to ensure that every disabled workman, who is capable of performing lighter work, is provided with alternative employment, is essential. It is understood that the Government of India have set up a committee under the chairmanship of the Director General of Mines Safety to go into the problem of disabled miners and their rehabilitation. The Study Group hopes that this committee would expedite its work and suggest appropriate measures to provide for vocational training and industrial rehabilitation of disabled coal miners. As soon as the committee's report is received, the Government should take appropriate steps to implement its recommendations speedily.

(9) While agreeing that it may be difficult for the coal industry to do away with casual labour so long as erratic and irregular supply of wagons by the Railways continues, the Study Group is of the view that the employment of such labour on other jobs of a continuing nature is not desirable and this practice should be done away with.

(10) In order to improve the efficiency of workers and create better safety consciousness among them, it is essential that all of them undergo training in refresher courses as prescribed in the Mines Vocational Training Rules, 1966. In order that it may become obligatory for all workers to undergo such refresher courses, it is suggested that the operation of rule 9 of the Rules be extended to all coal mines.

(11) In order to standardise the training course and to create interest in the worker for his own training, it is necessary to bring out suitable literature in local languages and distribute it freely to those who attend such courses. The co-operation of the National Council for Safety in Mines may be sought in the matter.

(12) The provisions of the Apprentices Act to be applied to the coal industry should supplement what has been provided for already under the Mines Vocational Training Scheme and the trades to be designated under the Act should be selected accordingly so that there may be no duplication.

## *Chapter IV*

### **SAFETY IN MINES AND CONDITIONS OF WORK**

Conditions of work in mines are regulated by the Mines Act, 1952 which deals with : (i) hours of work, rest interval, weekly off, etc. (ii) leave with wages ; (iii) health, safety and welfare ; (iv) employment of women and young persons. Subordinate legislation made under the Mines Act includes : (i) separate codes of regulations for coal mines, metalliferous mines and oil mines ; (ii) Coal Mines Rescue Rules ; (iii) Mines (Vocational Training) Rules ; (iv) Mines Rules ; (v) Creche Rules ; and (vi) Coal Mines Pithead Bath Rules. The following paragraphs deal with conditions of work from the point of view of (a) safety, (b) health and (c) working hours, including rest and holidays.

2. **Safety** : Statutory provisions for ensuring safety in mines are laid down in the Mines Act, 1952 and subordinate legislation mentioned above. The Coal Mines (Conservation and Safety) Act also makes some provisions regarding safety, particularly in relation to execution of protective measures, including stowing.

3. An important amendment that was recently made in the Mines Act was the extension of provisions applicable to gassy mines to all underground mines with effect from 1st April, 1967. This was done to ensure greater safety and to reduce the explosion hazard in mines. It is learnt that a further amendment is being considered to specify more directly the responsibility of mine owners and of the mine officials other than managers, in the field of safety. The definitions of the words "mines" and "persons employed" therein are being amplified and the definition of "serious injury" is being changed to provide greater safety to the worker. It is also proposed to incorporate proposals for association of workers with the drive for safety, by requiring the setting up of a Pit Safety Committee in mines (which would include workers' representatives) and by providing for inspection of mines by workers' representatives.

4. While the statutory provisions for safety are elaborate and they are modified from time to time to meet

changing conditions in the mining industry, it is in the implementation of safety measures that lacunae have been noticed. Whereas safety is a responsibility of management, the enforcement of safety measures ultimately depends on the full co-operation of all concerned. It is felt that by taking adequate precautionary measures in advance accidents may be prevented. Enthusiasm for safety measures needs to be created and encouragement of enduring habits of safe working is necessary. Periodical refresher courses on safety training should be organised—as already suggested in the previous chapter. There should be more frequent conferences on safety in mines to facilitate exchange of views on various aspects which affect safety and which keep on changing. Some useful work in this direction has been done by the National Council for Safety in Mines which has been conducting a regular safety campaign through safety weeks, films, exhibitions, posters and competitions. It is through such processes that safety consciousness will become an in-built quality in all those concerned with extraction of coal. Collective consciousness of the community, including the managements, trade unions and Government officials, is of supreme importance and, in the last analysis, observance of safety provisions depends very much on the prevailing labour-management relations and the sense of joint responsibility between the workers and the managements. However, in order that the National Council for Safety may become a more effective instrument for creating an all-round awareness of the need for ensuring safety throughout the mining operations, the Council's working and its powers and functions as also its composition should be reviewed.

5. **Accidents:** The position in regard to accident rate in coal mines is as follows :

Table 'A'  
Accident Rate:

Year	Death rate per 1000 persons	Serious injury rate per 1000 persons	Death rate per 1000,000 tonnes of coal raised	Serious injury rate per 1000,000 tonnes of coal raised
1960	0.59	8.41	4.47	64.09
1961	0.65	8.77	4.81	64.71
1962	0.61	7.41	4.33	52.26
1963	0.59	5.62	4.00	37.94
1964	0.42	4.83	2.84	32.51
1965	1.10	4.73	6.70	28.90
1966	0.51	4.71	3.11	28.50

Source: Director General of Mines Safety.

6. The above table indicates that the fatality rate in India has registered a downward trend in coal mines in recent years. The sudden increase in 1965 was due to a major disaster in a coal mine which took a large toll of lives.

7. Fatality rates as related to coal output in India and other countries are given in the tables on the next few pages :—

**Table 'B'**  
**Death rates per million tonne of Coal raised**

Year	Austra- lia (New South Waite)	Belgium	Canada	France	Holland	India	Japan	Poland	U.K.	USA	West Germany
1960	0.79	3.20	1.80	2.01	0.80	4.47	12.06	2.14	1.66	0.82	2.81
1961	0.41	3.11	1.48	2.13	1.43	4.81	11.78	2.41	1.25	0.77	2.84
1962	0.83	3.30	1.07	1.79	0.95	4.33	9.03	2.31	1.32	0.72	5.18
1963	0.26	3.69	1.25	1.65	1.13	4.00	16.92	1.96	1.31	0.65	2.46
1964	0.38	2.63	1.07	1.84	1.22	2.84	6.71	1.68	1.04	0.53	1.97
1965	0.66	2.73	1.05	2.05*	1.40	6.70		1.32	1.17	0.54	1.87
1966	0.74	2.69	0.96	1.99	0.80	3.11		1.17		0.47	

\*Provisional figure.

Source: Director General of Mines Safety.

**Table 'C'**  
**Death rates per 300,000 manshifts worked in coalmines in some countries**

Year	Austra- lia (New South Wales)	Belgium	Canada	France	Holland	India	Japan	U.K.	U.S.A.	West Germany
1956	1.39	3.31	5.30	0.79	0.40	0.75	1.96	0.56	2.48	1.10
1957	1.47	0.85	1.81	0.98	0.24	0.51	1.98	0.69	2.81	1.10
1958	0.99	0.81	9.90	0.97	0.59	1.20	1.92	0.60	2.67	1.16
1959	0.83	0.86	2.18	0.91	0.46	0.57	1.90	0.69	2.38	1.12
1960	1.38	0.98	2.12	0.67	0.23	0.60	2.15	0.69	2.77	1.04
1961	0.84	1.02	1.83	0.74	0.47	0.66	2.51	0.54	2.76	1.14
1962	1.87	1.16	1.39	0.63	0.31	0.63	2.17	0.60	2.79	2.21
1963	0.56	1.25	1.61	0.59	0.37	0.60	4.76	0.64	2.66	1.12
1964	0.89	0.89	1.48	0.70	0.41	0.42	2.12	0.51	2.30	0.92
1965	1.68	0.99	1.48	0.78	0.48	1.12		0.60	2.50	0.87
1966	2.01	1.02	1.35	0.78	0.57	0.52			2.32	

*Source:* Director General of Mines Safety,

**Table 'D'**  
**Death rates per 1000 persons employed in coal mines in some countries**

Year	Australia (New South Wales)	Belgium	Canada	France	Holland	India	Japan	Poland	U.K.	USA	W. Germany	Czechoslovakia
1956	0.99	3.49	4.16	0.62	0.35	0.7	1.84	—	0.45	1.72	0.98	1.50
1957	0.77	0.86	1.37	0.77	0.20	0.49	1.86	0.97	0.54	1.88	0.94	1.32
1958	0.72	0.83	7.14	0.79	0.50	1.10	1.77	1.16	0.45	1.59	0.98	1.39
1959	0.67	0.81	1.57	0.73	0.39	0.55	1.70	0.88	0.51	1.44	0.88	1.40
1960	1.06	0.93	1.55	0.54	0.20	0.59	1.99	0.70	0.51	1.71	0.79	1.73
1961	0.64	1.01	1.34	0.50	0.37	0.65	2.29	0.80	0.40	1.75	0.88	1.90
1962	1.41	1.09	1.05	0.49	0.23	0.61	1.97	0.80	0.45	1.79	1.70	1.17
1963	0.43	1.23	1.35	0.42	0.28	0.59	4.38	0.69	0.47	1.81	0.86	1.45
1964	0.70	0.85	1.21	0.53	0.30	0.42	1.97	0.60	0.38	1.61	0.71	1.26
1965	1.37	0.94	1.21	0.60	0.36	1.10		0.45	0.45	1.74	0.66	1.08
1966	1.56	0.99	1.17	0.60	0.21	0.51		0.43		1.59		

Source: Director General of Mines Safety.

8. For the purpose of assessment of safety performance fatality rates may be interpreted either in relation to the tonnage of coal raised or manshifts worked. A third method is to relate it to number of persons employed. The Tables 'B', 'C' and 'D' given in previous pages reveal the fatality rates in different countries, including India, in terms of the above criteria. The first table gives the position in relation to every million tonne of coal raised ; table 'C' gives the death rates per 300,000 manshifts, whereas the last table states the rate for every 1,000 persons employed in coal mines. In terms of table 'B' the fatality rate would appear to be high but the figures in tables 'C' and 'D', which are based on the principle of "exposure to risk", would appear to be more appropriate for purposes of comparison in the peculiar conditions of this country. They indicate that the fatality rate in the coal-mines in this country is lower in comparison with several important coal producing countries and the situation is comparatively not so bad here. However, this should not result in complacency among those responsible for ensuring safety. Constant vigilance is called for and Government should spare no efforts to ensure safety conditions in coal mines. The Study Group was given to understand that Government have kept under review all the prevailing safety measures. There is a Standing Safety Committee which meets quarterly and reviews the progress in the implementation of various recommendations of Safety Conferences and other measures suggested in this behalf. However, one of the workers' representatives expressed the view that the present penal provisions to deal with violation of safety laws are inadequate and these need to be made more stringent. Other members did not agree with this and, according to them, what is more important is to streamline the procedures for dealing with such violations.

9. The same representative further pointed out that when mines are closed under the orders of the Department of Mines for gross violation of safety laws, the workers are put to hardship for no fault of theirs. He observed that, in many cases, mine owners welcome and invite a temporary closure in order to get rid of old workmen. To remedy this state of affairs full wages should be paid to workers when mines are closed down for violation of safety laws. The employers' representatives, however, totally disagreed with these observations and the remedy suggested.

10. The main task of enforcing safety provisions devolves on the Directorate General of Mines Safety. It

has been argued before the Study Group that the capacity of the Directorate has not kept pace with the development of the mining industry and the vast changes that have taken place in Mines Safety Legislation. The following table gives the comparative position about the average workload per Inspector in some other countries as compared to India :

Average workload per Inspector in 1963\*

Name of Country	No. of persons employed in coal mines	Coal production (m. tonnes)	No. of mine workers per Inspector (in thousands)	Coal output (m. tonnes) per Inspector
Belgium	84,000	21.5	2.3	0.59
France	1,62,000	47.8	1.9	0.55
West Germany	3,39,000	142.1	2.3	0.95
U.K.	5,42,000	194.4	3.1	1.09
India	4,50,679	66.77	6.7	0.99

It is understood that in Russia and Poland there is generally one Inspector of Mines for 2 to 3 mines and the larger mines may even receive the whole-time attention of one or, in some cases, even 2 Inspectors. In the U.S.A. there is one Federal Inspector for every 600 workers, there being at least an equivalent number of State Inspectors.\*

\* Source: Director General of Mines Safety.

11. In terms of output per Inspector the position in India is practically not much different from that in West Germany and the U.K. But it has to be remembered that in those two countries production is concentrated in a few big mines whereas in India we have a comparatively lower total output with number of mines exceeding 800 and spreading out in different parts of the country, inspection of which requires comparatively more effort. The Study Group feels that Government may consider reorganisation of the Directorate in the context of its scope and functioning in order to enable it to devote more attention to the technical and qualitative aspects of inspections.

12. It is understood that some time ago 5 Committees were set up to examine in detail various problems of safety in mines. These Committees are: (i) The Technical Committee on Mines Ventilation, Lighting and Mines Plans; (2) Committee on Fatigue among Mine Workers; (3) Safety Equipment Committee; (4) Technical Committee on Problems of

Dust in Mines ; and (5) Committee on Safety Education and Propaganda. Only 4 of these committees are stated to have submitted their reports and one has yet to complete its work. These committees seem to have taken too long a time to conclude their deliberations and there has also been delay in the implementation of their recommendations. By such delays the main purpose of ensuring better standards of safety gets defeated. The Study Group expresses concern over the slow progress in the examination and implementation of matters concerning safety.

13. **Safety Equipment :** The availability of safety equipment considerably influences the implementation of safety provisions. An ad hoc committee was set up in October, 1959 to look into this aspect and to suggest steps to ensure adequate availability of such equipment. The committee in its report submitted in February, 1961, assessed the requirement for safety equipment and material, evaluated the indigenous capacity for their manufacture and suggested that the gap between the requirement and indigenous production should be filled by imports in full and in time. It also recommended the setting up of a Mines Safety Equipment Advisory Board to keep the problem under constant review. Accordingly, a Board was set up on 7th June, 1963. The Board was to assess the requirements of safety equipment and materials, and ascertain the latest position regarding indigenous manufacture. According to a recommendation of the Second Safety Conference held in July, 1966, the Board has recently set up a Committee on Indigenous Production of Mines Safety Equipment. It is understood that this committee has compiled useful information on indigenous manufacture of equipment, present installed capacity for this and anticipated production by 1970. Some information about development plans of the manufacturing units and users' requirements has also been collected. The data compiled should be immediately published and circulated widely among colliery management. The committee should review the position at least once every year and bring the information up-to-date.

The above committee should make a detailed assessment of import requirements for safety equipment and spare parts in the context of the availability of these from indigenous sources. For the present, urgent necessity is felt for certain basic equipment of the approved type for safety in mines, which is available only through imports, such as electric cap lamps, bulbs and spares, winding ropes for deep shafts, cage

suspension gears, exploder spares and flame-proof equipment. Methanometers for gassy mines and several types of rescue and safety equipment also come in this category. Since the requirements of safety can be ignored only at the risk of valuable lives, Government may make necessary provision of foreign exchange for import of such equipment till indigenous capacity is established and the required type and quality of equipment is actually available in the country.

14. **Protective Equipment :** Supply of protective equipment to persons employed in coal mines is governed by the Coal Mines Regulation 1967. These provide for supply and maintenance of protective footwear, helmets and other equipment such as gloves, goggles and skin-guards. The provision for the use, supply and maintenance of footwear came into force on August 22, 1967. The Study Group was given to understand by the representative of workers that the position about the supply of the above equipment has not been satisfactory but the position in respect of helmets is better. This matter needs special attention.

15. **Rescue Stations :** The Central Coal Mines Rescue Stations Committee set up under the Coal Mines Rescue Rules is charged with the responsibility of establishment, maintenance and proper functioning of the Rescue Stations in the coalfields. They maintain rescue equipment, conduct rescue and regulatory work in mines, and take necessary steps to minimize danger in mines after any explosion or outbreak of fire or dangerous eruption of noxious or inflammable gases. At present there exist nine rescue stations in the coalfields, namely those at Parasia, Giridih, Singareni, Ramgarh, Ledo, Bijuri, Bokaro, Dhanesar and Sitarampur. It has been decided to open four more rescue stations in the near future at the following places in order of priority : (1) Talchar (Orissa) ; (2) Bellampalli (Andhra Pradesh) ; (3) Hingir Rampur (Orissa) and (4) Ballarpur (Maharashtra). These stations have trained 3,492 persons in rescue work since the inception of the scheme. During the year 1967-68 they organised 2,013 practice operations. The I. L. O. Report to the Government of India on Mines Safety, prepared under the expanded programme of technical assistance in 1961, observed that the number of trained rescue workers available is inadequate in the context of the present number of workers employed underground. The report suggested that trained rescue teams should be available on the basis of one team for each small mine or group of small mines employing upto 500 workers underground, and two or more

in the larger mines. The establishment of permanent central rescue stations and training centres is recommended in each mining area in order to ensure that every mine is within 40 kilometres of such a centre. The centres should have facilities for carrying out air and gas analysis ; all stations should be equipped with modern safety equipment and breathing apparatus which should be kept in perfect working condition. The Study Group understands that these recommendations could not be implemented so far due to financial constraint. It suggests that Government may give fresh consideration to these recommendations in the interest of the safety of workers.

16) On the question of safety, the workers' representatives suggested certain specific lines of action which are essential for greater participation by workers in safety measures, such as (i) posting of inspection reports by the D.G.M.S on the notice board ; (ii) D.G.M.S's circulars to be given legal status ; (iii) constitution of a Standing Committee comprising representatives of workers and employers with an independent chairman to enquire into the cause of major accidents and to suggest remedial measures. The employers' representatives, however, do not consider these to be feasible.

17. Health : Health and safety in mines being inter-related are dealt with under the same legislation, i.e. the Mines Act, 1952, and the Coal Mines Regulations framed thereunder. These Regulations have been amended from time to time mainly in regard to the provisions relating to ventilation, gas and coal dust. A committee was set up in September, 1959, for assessing the present position in regard to ventilation and lighting and for suggesting standards that may be laid down in this regard. On the basis of recommendations made by this committee, the Director General of Mines Safety has laid down revised ventilation standards for mines. He has also issued statutory orders requiring all workers employed below ground to be provided with approved type of electric lamps. There are mandatory rules for suppression of dust in mines. Suppression of coal dust is necessary not only to safeguard the explosion hazard but also to prevent pneumoconiosis, notified as occupational disease under the Workmen's Compensation Act. For the treatment of persons suffering from this disease and for conducting periodic check-up, an ad hoc pneumoconiosis Medical Board was set up in 1964. The disease is fairly common in the mining areas. But the workers do not report

the disease to the medical authorities due to the fear of losing their job for being declared medically unfit. This is supported by the fact that till May 1968, the total number of cases of pneumoconiosis reported from different mines of Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal was only fourteen. In view of the poor response, the authorities are understood to have issued a fresh circular to all managements and labour unions asking them to take advantage of this facility.

18. However, the Study Group feels that the existing arrangements for the diagnosis and treatment of occupational diseases like pneumoconiosis and silicosis are far from satisfactory. There is even a dearth of competent doctors who can determine, for the purpose of awarding compensation under the Workmen's Compensation Act, the percentage of disability under these occupational diseases. The diagnosis of the disease itself presents a difficult problem. The Study Group expresses deep concern at this situation and recommends that Government should train some competent Medical Officers for dealing with such occupational diseases and attach them to the Pneumoconiosis Medical Board.

19. A committee was set up in November 1959 to examine the problem of hazards due to dust and to recommend measures to combat this danger. The final report of the committee is awaited. This Study Group expresses its concern over the delay in the completion of this enquiry and suggests that this be completed without further delay. It also feels that the problem of occupational disease of workers in the collieries needs to be taken up by a regular "Industrial Health Service", which to-day does not exist in India. However, in the meantime, it is suggested that the work of this committee should be of a continuous nature which should frequently review the effect of controlled measures against various occupational diseases in coal mines and it should furnish its report every year wherein any further measure necessary to prevent such diseases should be suggested.

20. According to information available from the Director General of Mines Safety, the following is the position about incidence of persons declared medically unfit in various categories. The figures relate to the year 1967 :

Category of persons examined	No. of persons examined	No. of persons declared medically unfit
Overman	525	56.
Sirdars	1,807	257
Shot Firers	365	33

In addition, there are cases of other categories of workers. Representatives of workers have expressed their deep concern about the large number of people being thrown out of employment for having been declared medically unfit. Their suggestion is that such workers should be given compensation equivalent to retrenchment compensation. The employers, however, do not agree to this.

21. **Working Hours, Rest and Holidays :** The Central Wage Board for the Coal Mining Industry examined the question of working hours per week for mine workers. Representatives of the workmen proposed to the Board that due to hazardous and arduous nature of work in coal mines, five day week and reduction in the existing hours of work without reducing the pay packet should be introduced. This measure, they thought, would result in higher efficiency and lesser absenteeism. The employers did not favour a reduction in the hours of work in the present context of India's economy. The Wage Board was not able to come to any conclusion on this subject.

22. The question of hours of work was considered earlier, by the first "Safety in Mines Conference" in 1958-59, which suggested that there is need for a scientific investigation into the fatigue factor through systematic time studies of different categories of workers in different types of mines, and recommended that such an investigation be undertaken by a suitable body of experts at an early date. The investigation was to include the question of working hours.

23. An Expert Committee was accordingly constituted by the Government to go into this matter. Its report is awaited. The Study Group expresses its concern at the delay in the committee completing its work and furnishing its report. It suggests that Government may get the expert committee's report expedited.

24. The workers' representatives on the Study Group, however, reiterated their stand that the working hours in mines should be reduced to 7 hours a shift or 5 days a week without any reduction in their emoluments.

25. An interesting study has been conducted by the

Central Mining Research Station in 1965 in regard to hours gainfully occupied by different categories of workers in some coal mines. The findings of such studies by the C.M.R.S. are summarised below :

Sl. No.	Category of worker	Possible output per shift	Actual output per shift	Percentage of Col. 4 to 3
1.	Fitters & Mechanics	7.25 hrs	3 hrs	41.4%
2.	Timbering	26 props	14 props	53.8%
3.	Barricading Group	12.5 ft.	5.5 ft.	44.0%
4.	Loaders (12 Nos.)	180 tonnes	120 tonnes	66.6%
5.	Loaders (42 Nos.)	156 tonnes	80 tonnes	51.3%
6.	Loaders (19 Nos.)	72 tonnes	36 tonnes	50.0%
7.	Loaders (23 Nos.)	105 tonnes	36 tonnes	34.3%

In the case of fitters and mechanics, it was found that they lost about 20% of their time while waiting for jobs to be allotted and getting materials issued. There was lack of proper planning of work.

In the case of timbering, there was considerable loss of time at the beginning of the shift and groups usually started work about 2 hours late. This was due to lack of proper supervision. Want of proper implements, for example, a properly sharpened saw, caused delay in cutting props and making wedges.

In the case of barricading, the loss of time is attributable to lack of proper size of drill bits, supply of mats in bundles of 3 when they were used 2 at a time, necessitating the opening of each bundle at face to take out the extra mat. Time was also lost due to dust entering the eyes of stone cutters which could have been avoided if they were supplied with goggles to protect their eyes.

The Study relating to loaders was conducted in three different districts. The time lost in this category due to various causes is indicated below :—

Dist. No. 1	Cause	Percentage of Shift time
	(a) Lack of co-ordination	21.6
	(b) Improper tub distribution	10.2
	(c) Delay caused by trammers	6.8
	(d) Sudden surge of load	7.0
Dist. No. 2	Cause	(Time in Minutes)
	(a) Lack of co-ordination	87 Mins.
	(b) Tub turnover	45 "
	(c) Delay caused by trammers	32 "
	(d) Derailments at loading point	43 "

	(Time in Minutes)
a) Non-availability of tubs	31 Mins.
b) Non-availability of coal cutting machine	upto 40
c) Improper tub distribution	much varying

It would be seen from the above that nearly 45% of the shift time was lost for various reasons. To prevent this wastage what is most essential is proper planning and organisation of jobs. Better co-ordination at faces is another necessity. The co-operation of all categories of workers and management at different levels is essential if such a large wastage of shift time is to be avoided. The Study Group suggest that managements should conduct similar work studies with the help of the C.M.R.S. from time to time and ensure scientific work organisation to eliminate the causes of wastage. The workers' representatives should extend their full co-operation in such work studies and in implementing the various measures which suggest themselves as a result of such studies. All this will bring about improvement in productivity, reduction of time lost, elimination of bottlenecks and ultimately to reduction of operational costs.

26. The question of holidays with pay was examined by the Majumdar Tribunal which directed the grant of seven paid holidays—(1) Republic Day ; (2) Independence Day ; (3) Mahatma Gandhi's birth day should be observed without option, the remaining four days being fixed by agreement according to local customs. The Central Wage Board for the Coal Mining Industry further considered this but no consensus could be arrived at between the representatives of workers and employers. The workmen's representatives on the Board desired it to be recorded that while they adhere to their view that a minimum of ten paid festival holidays in the year is justified, they have, as a compromise agreed to seven days.

27. The following are the recommendations of the Central Wage Board in regard to leave provisions :

Privilege leave or annual leave with wages  
(majority recommendation)—

- (a) A workman employed underground in a coal mine shall be entitled to annual leave with wages at the rate of one day for every twelve days of work performed by him ;

(b) a workman who is employed otherwise than as stated in (a) above shall be entitled to annual leave with wages at the rate of one day for every sixteen days of work performed by him.

- II. Casual leave (majority recommendations)—Five days paid casual leave in the year with liberty to prefix or suffix.
- III. Sick leave (majority recommendation)—All workmen shall be entitled to 15 days sick leave in the year on full pay or 30 days in the year on half pay with a right to the workman to accumulate.
- IV. Paid Festival Holidays—Seven.
- V. Leave Without Pay—One month's leave without pay in the year.

The employers' representatives on the Study Group observed that they adhered to the views on this subject they had advanced before the Wage Board and did not agree to the extended facilities under items I, II, III, & V as finally recommended by the Wage Board. On the other hand, the workers' representatives in the Study Group have pressed for the above facilities with regard to leave and holidays. It is understood that Government have accepted some of the above recommendations of the Wage Board. The workers' representatives were of the view that the rest of the recommendations should also be accepted by the Government and implemented. The employers' representatives expressed their opposition to this.

#### Recommendations :

##### *Safety :*

- (1) Periodical refresher courses on safety training should be organised by the Director General of Mines Safety. There should be more frequent conferences on safety in mines to facilitate exchange of views on various aspects of safety which keep on changing.
- (2) Government may consider reorganisation of the Directorate General of Mines Safety in the context of its scope and functions in order to enable it to devote more attention to the technical and qualitative aspects of inspections.
- (3) In order that the National Council for Safety may

become a more effective instrument for creating an all-round awareness of the need for ensuring safety throughout the mining operations, Council's working and its powers and functions as also its composition should be reviewed.

(4) The Study Group understands that the Mines Safety Equipment Advisory Board has set up a Committee on Indigenous Production of Mines Safety Equipment. This committee has compiled useful information on indigenous manufacture of equipment, present installed capacity for manufacture and anticipated production by 1970. Some information about development plans of the manufacturing units and users' requirements has also been collected. The data compiled should be immediately published and circulated widely among colliery management. The committee should review the position at least once every year and bring the information up-to-date.

(5) The above committee should make detailed assessment of import requirements for safety equipment and spare-parts in the context of the availability of these from indigenous sources. For the present, urgent necessity is felt for certain basic equipment of the approved type for ensuring safety in mines, which is available only through imports, such as electric cap lamps, bulbs and spares, winding ropes for deep shafts, cage suspension gears, exploder spares and flame-proof equipment. Methanometers for gassy mines and several types of rescue and safety equipment also come in this category. Since the requirements of safety can be ignored only at the risk of valuable lives, Government should make necessary provision of foreign exchange for import of equipment till indigenous capacity is established and the required type and quality of equipment is actually available in the country.

(6) The I.L.O report to the Government of India on Mines Safety had made some detailed recommendations about organisation of rescue stations and trained rescue teams. The Study Group recommends that Government may give consideration to these recommendations in the interests of the safety of workers.

*Health and Occupational Diseases :*

(7) The existing arrangements for diagnosis, survey and treatment of occupational diseases like pneumoconiosis and silicosis are far from satisfactory. The Study Group recommends that Government should train competent

medical officers for dealing with such occupational diseases and attach them to the Pneumoconiosis Medical Boards.

(8) The question of rehabilitation of workers disabled by occupational diseases has been dealt with in Chapter III.

(9) The committee set up in November 1959 to examine the problem of hazards due to dust and to suggest remedial measures should finalise its report expeditiously. Prompt action on the recommendations of the committee should then be taken.

(10) There should be more frequent reviews of the effect of controlled measures against various occupational diseases in coal mines. The work of the committee referred to above should be of a continuous nature and the committee should make a report every year regularly wherein further measures necessary to prevent such diseases should be suggested.

#### *Working Hours, Rest and Holidays*

(11) The workers' representatives have urged that working hours in mines should be reduced to 7 hours a shift, or 5 days a week without any reduction in their emoluments. In support of this, examples of other industries in the country and of the mining industry in other countries have been cited. The employers' representatives, however, feel this to be impracticable in the present conditions of the coal industry, particularly in the context of productivity. In the circumstances, the Study Group suggests that the problem be examined in all its aspects by a body of experts.

(12) In regard to the factor of fatigue which should justify lesser hours of work in mines, no view can be expressed unless the experts' opinion is available. The Study Group would suggest that the committee set up for this purpose in 1959 should expedite its report and Government may take appropriate measures, to see that the said report is not delayed.

(13) In modern times, method study in the industries has made a notable contribution towards bringing about the safest and most effective use of men, machines and materials. Such studies conducted by the Central Mining Research Station, Dhanbad, in several coal mines are a step in the right direction. The Study Group recommends that managements organise such studies more frequently with the help of the C.M.R.S. Workers' co-operation should be sought by the method study team fully discussing with them in advance the plan of the study.

## *Chapter V*

### **LIVING CONDITIONS AND AMENITIES FOR WORKERS IN THE COAL INDUSTRY**

Welfare facilities comprise all amenities and services, including those statutorily provided under "conditions of work", which govern the living conditions, health and welfare of workers in industrial establishments including mines and plantations. According to the I.L.O., the term is taken to mean, "such services, facilities and amenities as adequate canteens, rest and recreation facilities, sanitary and medical facilities, arrangements for travel to and from work and for the accommodation of workers employed at a distance from their homes, and such other services, amenities and facilities as contribute to improve the conditions under which workers are employed."

#### **Statutory Provisions :**

2. Under the Mines Act, 1952, there are statutory requirements in regard to obligations of the managements for providing certain amenities to workers in coal mines. The main obligations of the managements are : (1) maintenance of creches ; provision of shelters for taking food and rest if 150 or more persons are employed ; provision of a canteen in mines employing 250 or more persons ; (ii) appointment of a Welfare Officer in mines employing 500 or more persons to look after the matters relating to the welfare of the workers ; (iii) provision in coal mines of (a) pit-head baths equipped with shower baths, (b) lockers separately for men and women workers, (c) sanitary latrines ; (iv) maintenance of first-aid boxes and first-aid rooms (in mines employing more than 150 workers). The standards of equipment to be kept in connection with the provision of these amenities have been prescribed in the rules.

3. Specific provisions for creches and pit-head baths have been made in rules framed under the Mines Act. Under the Mines Creche Rules, 1966, creches of approved type have to be provided for children of the women workers at every coal mine wherein any women are employed or were employed on any day of the preceding 12 months. The report for the period ending on 31 March, 1967 shows that out of 605

coal mines required to provide creches, 450 had provided them.\* Creches are reported to be generally popular but in some cases women prefer to keep children at home. According to the same report, out of 574 coal mines required to provide pit-head baths, 301 collieries had provided them. It has been noticed that, strictly on the basis of the statutory provisions, cubicles for women in pit-head baths are provided and so are creches, even though the few women workers employed may not need them. This needs to be looked into so that the maximum use can be made of the money provided.

4. There was, however, a serious criticism of the working of these creches and pit-head baths by the workers' representatives. It was alleged that only a few mines were actually maintaining regular creches. It was further alleged that in many cases water supply is either inadequate or non-existent in baths. The provision of lockers, latrines and first-aid boxes also leaves much to be desired. The Study Group wishes to draw the attention of the authorities concerned to this inadequate implementation of provisions relating to such essential amenities and emphasises that effective steps be taken to implement them.

5. The Coal Mines Labour Welfare Fund Act replacing the Coal Mines Labour Fund Ordinance 1944 came into force as early as 1947. The Fund has been set up for the sole object of promoting the welfare of labour employed in the Coal Mining Industry and their dependents. A levy of cess on all coal and coke despatched from collieries constitutes the source of income to the Fund. The maximum rate of cess provided for in the Act viz., 50 paise per ton (or 49.12 paise per tonne) on coal or coke despatched from collieries by rail or road is levied and the income of the Fund at the above rate is estimated presently at Rs. 3.40 crores per year. This income is apportioned equally between two accounts ; (i) General Welfare Account and (ii) Housing Account. The Fund is administered by the Coal Mines Labour Welfare Commissioner in consultation with a Tripartite Advisory Committee appointed by Government. This committee recommended in 1962 that the welfare cess should be raised to one rupee per tonne as the present cess is inadequate to meet the increasing commitments of the welfare fund. The Study Group supports this recommendation. The Act provides for the constitution of a Coal Mines Labour Housing

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\*Source: Coal Mines Welfare Commissioner.

Board, which is responsible for building and construction operations. A bill to provide autonomous status to the Coal Mines Welfare Advisory Committee is stated to be under consideration of the Government.

**6. General Welfare Activities of the Coal Mines Welfare Organisation :**

These include provision of the following facilities :

- (i) *Medical and Public Health* : The Coal Mines Welfare Organisation has set up two large modern central hospitals, one at Dhanbad and another at Asansol, for providing specialised treatment to colliery workers and their dependents free of cost. For comparatively minor cases, nine regional hospitals have been established in different coal-fields. Ten more regional hospitals are proposed. The Fund has been paying substantial annual grant-in-aid to the Jharia and Asansol and Hazaribagh Mines Board of Health towards running Maternity and Child Welfare Centres. For treatment of T.B. cases, the organisation has provided 77 beds which have been reserved in different leading sanatoria in the country. There is a 100-bed T.B. block attached to Central Hospital, Dhanbad, a 12-bed T.B. clinic at Katras in Jharia coalfield, and a 50-bed T.B. hospital at Searsole in Raniganj coalfield for treatment of T.B. affected colliery employees and their dependents. The organisation also runs family planning clinics and conducts anti-malaria operations. Some progressive mineowners maintain well-equipped hospitals. However, on the whole, the existing hospital arrangements for mine workers and their dependents fall far short of requirements. There is terrible overcrowding in hospitals, besides shortage of doctors and medicines. T.B. is widely prevalent among workers in coal mines and existing beds meant for them in hospitals are very few. Leprosy patients also suffer from similar handicaps.

The Study Group recommends that the Welfare Organisation should pay more attention to these health problems and make efforts to provide for coal mines workers adequate medical facilities, including special facilities for T.B. patients, leprosy patients and those suffering from occupational diseases.

(ii) *Educational and Recreational*:— Several educational and recreational activities have been undertaken by the Coal Mines Welfare Organisation for the benefit of workers and their families. It has set up multi-purpose institutes for this purpose. One of the wings of such multi-purpose institutions is an adult education centre. The organisation has also set up holiday homes at Rajgir and Amarkantak in Madhya Pradesh. There are proposals to open holiday homes at Vishakhapatnam in A.P. Coal-field and Digha in West Bengal. A scheme of children's educational allowance and another scheme of granting school fees to sons and daughters of the colliery workers of low income groups have been introduced. However, not much seems to have been done to eradicate mass illiteracy among coal miners and educational facilities continue to be very inadequate. Some States, e.g. West Bengal levy an educational cess on coal for this purpose but the facilities provided are hardly commensurate with the needs of workers and their children. The Study Group feels that very little has been done by the State Governments to give the mine workers the benefits that they are entitled to out of this fund and urges upon the State Governments to give more attention to the problem of education of coal mine workers and their families.

(iii) *Miscellaneous* :

(a) Cooperatives—191 cooperative credit societies, 366 consumers cooperative stores and 21 multi-purpose cooperative societies and 11 whole-sale central cooperative consumers stores have so far been established in the different coalfields. The monthly turn-over of the central cooperative consumers stores is Rs. 70 lakhs approximately. A financial assistance of Rs. 1,33,87,500 was given by the organisation during 1966-67 to the cooperative societies, cooperative stores and central stores.

Mention may be made here of the special difficulties of the coal miners in regard to availability of food-grains and other essential commodities. The problem has acquired seriousness in recent years due to prevalence of scarcity conditions.

in the coal mining areas and the high prices of such commodities. The difficulties of the coal miners were further accentuated due to the selling of essential commodities by traders on credit at rates much higher than the market rates. The economic hardship of miners further increases due to the activities of money lenders who lend out money at exorbitant rates of interest. Under such a situation the co-operatives can play a significant role in the amelioration of the workers' conditions. It is necessary that special efforts are made to promote co-operative movement in the coal mining areas so that maximum number of colliery workers may be served by Co-operative Credit Societies and Co-operative Stores. For successful running of Co-operative Consumers Stores the civil supply authorities should give preferential treatment to such stores in the matter of allotment of supplies of controlled commodities and such authorities should also supply a minimum quota of rice and wheat, at least equivalent to what is made available to heavy manual workers in the statutory rationing areas. Further, to protect the workers from the exploitation of money lenders, colliery co-operatives should be made financially sound. This will require simplification of the procedure for grant of loans to colliery cooperatives. At the same time it is essential to maintain the efficiency of co-operatives, and, for this purpose the State Co-operative Departments should strictly enforce statutory requirements in such matters as auditing of accounts and regular inspections.

- b) Water Supply Scheme—Provision of adequate drinking water to the colliery workers continues to be one of the greatest problems in the coalfields. The Coal Mines Labour Welfare Organisation gives subsidy to the extent of 50% of the approved expenditure on water supply schemes and sinking of wells. Numerous water supply schemes are in operation in all the coalfields, such as Damodar

Reorganisation Scheme, Water Supply Scheme at South Karanpura Group of Collieries, Water Supply Scheme at Lalkdih Deep Colliery, Water Supply Scheme at Chanch, Integrated Water Supply Scheme for Raniganj Coalfield, Water Supply Scheme of M/s. Shaw Wallace & Co. Ltd. of Pench Valley Coalfield, Integrated Water Supply Scheme at Banki Sura Kachhar, Korba and Bistrampur, Water Supply Scheme at Kothagudium Collieries, and Water Supply Scheme at Balampalli. But in spite of these schemes, the problem of adequate water supply still remains.

7. The question of supplying drinking water to the colliery workers has been discussed practically at every session of the Industrial Committee for the last 10 years and more. The progress of water supply schemes has, however, been very unsatisfactory. At the 6th session of the Industrial Committee on Coalmining held at New Delhi on 29th February, 1959, a decision was taken that a sub-committee should go into the whole question and suggest suitable steps for the solution of the problem. It also suggested "that there should be Special Officer of a high level in the Coal Mines Welfare Organisation to deal with this question at least for the time being. Steps should be taken to get the services of a Public Health Engineer for this purpose with the help of the Health Ministry."

8. This matter was again taken up at the 7th session of the Industrial Committee on Coalmining held at New Delhi on 28th April, 1960, where the following decision was taken :—

"The consensus of opinion was that the whole question of water supply in the coalfields should be examined *de novo* by the Industrial Committee at its next meeting, when some definite proposals could be formulated. For this purpose, the parties concerned agreed to supply the necessary data to enable Government to circulate a note in good time."

At the 8th session of the Industrial Committee on Coalmining held at New Delhi on 25th and 26th April, 1961, which again took note of the slow progress in this matter, it was decided to set up a Special Board of Inquiry to examine the whole position and make appropriate recommendations for solving the problem expeditiously. The follow-

ing year, the 9th session of the Industrial Committee on Coalmining held in August, 1964 considered the suggestion of various representative organisations of workers that since water supply in coal fields had continued to be inadequate and appointment of various committees had produced very little results, something should be done on an emergency footing to remove the extreme shortage of water.

9. Special mention may be made here of the Integrated Water Supply Scheme of Raniganj coalfield. The scheme began to take shape in October, 1964. The area to be covered is about 32 miles in length with an average breadth of 13 miles. An expenditure of Rs. 1.27 crores is stated to have already been incurred and it is expected that Rs. 1.50 crores will be spent during the year ending 31st March, 1968. The western part of the scheme is going to cost Rs. 3.54 crores, which will be completed within a year or two. The whole scheme is divided into two phases. Phase I is expected to meet the requirements of the Raniganj coalfield upto 1981, whereas Phase II would cater to the needs upto 1996, taking into account the present rate of increase in population. The scheme is intended to serve three distinct areas : (i) the western part of the coalfield, (ii) middle Raniganj and Jambad Kajora coalfields and (iii) collieries situated alongside the Adjai river. It should be pointed out here that it is the second area that immediately requires help, since this area has no source of water supply at present and suffers from an acute shortage of potable water. But since the work has already commenced on the first area, it is desirable that this work be expedited as far as possible so that the greater needs of the second area are catered to as quickly as possible. It may be noted that the first area mentioned above, already has other water supply schemes, as for example, the water supply systems of Kulti Steel Works, the Railways and Asansol town.

10. As, however, the problem of water supply remained unsolved, in the main, the question again came up at the 10th session of the Industrial Committee on Coalmining held at Dhanbad on 30th January, 1967 and the Chairman announced that a 3-man committee would be set up to go into the difficulties that were coming in the way of quick implementation of the water supply schemes and suggest improvements in procedure, etc. to ensure their more rapid and satisfactory progress. It was also agreed that this committee should meet at least once in three months for the purpose.

11. It is understood that this committee has not been constituted yet.

12. It will thus be seen that though various decisions were taken from time to time over a long period and all concerned have expressed a sense of urgency in the matter, adequate action has not been taken to alleviate the difficulties of the coalmine workers in the matter of supply of drinking water. The Study Group views with seriousness the existing indifference to one of the basic needs of the colliery workers and recommends that the Central Government must now take a hand in the matter and draw up and implement a phased scheme of development of water supply in the coalfields. So far as the Integrated Water Supply Scheme of Raniganj is concerned, the Study Group suggests that execution of work in the first area be completed very early and work in the second area which suffers from acute shortage of water supply, be taken up immediately thereafter. It further suggests that, to the extent possible, water pumped out of the pits may be utilised for drinking purposes after necessary treatment. The Coal Mines Welfare Fund should subsidize such schemes.

### 13. Housing :

The Coal Mines Labour Welfare Organisation has introduced the following housing schemes :

- (i) Township scheme in centralised places—2153 houses have been constructed ;
- (ii) Subsidized Housing Scheme—a subsidy equal to 20% of the cost of production or Rs. 600/- whichever is less is given to the colliery owners. 1638 houses have been constructed under this scheme ;
- (iii) Subsidy-cum-Loan Scheme—under the scheme, in addition to a higher subsidy of 25% (subject to a maximum of Rs. 735/- per house), a loan equal to 37½% of the cost of the house (subject to a maximum of Rs. 1102.50 per house) is given. 2060 houses have been constructed under this scheme ;
- (iv) New Housing Scheme—envisaging construction of houses at the cost of the colliery owner, subject to the prescribed ceiling limit was introduced. The position of construction of houses under this scheme is : houses sanctioned 48000 ; allotment 47168 ; No. of houses under construction 4233 ; total number of

houses constructed so far 29247. In addition to the above, 3068 houses are under construction ;

- (v) Low Cost Housing Scheme—it provided for payment of the entire cost of construction of each house subject to a maximum of Rs. 1600/- per house and Rs. 3200/- per barrack. 11401 houses and 61 barracks (each one suitable for 12 bachelor workers) have been constructed ;
- (vi) Build Your Own House Scheme—it was sanctioned in 1962-63. The special feature of this scheme was that the workers would be the owners of the houses so built even after they ceased to be colliery workers. The scheme, it seems, did not become popular ;
- (vii) Schemes of financial assistance to Housing Co-operative Societies in Coal Mining Areas—Under the scheme, 22 houses were under different stages of construction and 7 completed (as in September, 1967) ;
- (viii) Kutcha Houses—the scheme provided payment of subsidy @ Rs. 200/- per house to the colliery owner.
- (ix) Wooden Houses—Government sanctioned 200 wooden houses for construction in the collieries of M/s. Assam Railways and Trading Co. Ltd. under the Low Cost Housing Scheme. The programme of wooden houses is now replaced by pucca houses.

14. The Labour Bureau of the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Rehabilitation conducted a survey of housing conditions for colliery workers during March-May 1967. The survey revealed that the percentage of workers provided with standard type of houses was the highest (56.51) in Korba coalfield in Madhya Pradesh followed by Ramgarh-Karanpura coalfield in Bihar (55.30) and Talcher coalfield in Orissa (52.30). The main producer of coal in these coalfields is the National Coal Development Corporation. In the remaining 10 coalfields relatively few workers (ranging between 1 to 14 per cent) were provided with standard type of accommodation. About 81% of the workers had not been provided with any accommodation in Mugma coalfield in Bihar, 77.28% in Sambalpur coalfield in Orissa and 68.52% in Chanda coalfield in Maharashtra. In 7 out of 13 coalfields surveyed, more than 50% of the workers were not provided with any accommodation, and in the rest of the coalfields the percentage of workers who were not provided with any accommodation

ranged from about 27 to 47. A large number of workers continue to live in dhowrahs. About 43% of the workers at Vindhya Pradesh Coalfield in Madhya Pradesh were living in dhowrahs which could be repaired or renovated, 36.11% in Pench Valley coalfield, 25.37% in Chanda coalfield in Maharashtra and 23.42% in Jharia in Bihar. In the remaining 9 coalfields, the percentage of such workers varied from nil to 8. Nearly 2% of the workers in Jharia coalfield in Bihar and 1.21% in Raniganj coalfield in West Bengal were living in dhowrahs beyond repairs. In the rest of the 11 coalfields workers were not found living in unrepairable dhowrahs.

15. An assessment was also made of workers living in villages and elsewhere who may not require housing accommodation. It was presumed that workers, living beyond 8 kms from the mine, were living in villages and elsewhere and did not normally require housing accommodation at or near the mine site. It was found that the percentage of such workers was negligible in five coalfields, ranging from 0.03 at Raniganj coalfield in West Bengal to 4.43 in Ramgarh-Karanpura coalfield in Bihar. In the rest of the coalfields the workers were not found living in villages and elsewhere, i.e. beyond 8 kms. It may, therefore, be safely presumed that the number of mine workers not requiring accommodation is insignificant.

16. The workers' representatives on the Study Group have made a suggestion that employers should be required to pay house rent to their employees whom they cannot provide with any quarters. They have observed as follows :—

“There will not be satisfactory progress in the construction of houses for the coalmine workers unless the employers are required to pay house rent to their employees whom they cannot provide with any quarters as has been recommended by the majority in the Coal Wage Board. Even though various incentives have been offered, including the grant of full cost for building houses for the coal mine workers, very little progress has been achieved. The employers are reluctant even to spend on the maintenance of such houses. The result has been that with very few exceptions employers in general have not come forward to take advantage of the new housing scheme.

There is another aspect to this question. Non-payment of house rent has created an anomalous position in

as much as the workers who have been given free housing are in a more advantageous position than other workmen who have not been provided with free houses. Even from the employers' point of view the position is anomalous in as much as while the better employers who are alive to their responsibilities have availed of one or the other housing scheme referred to earlier and thereby incurred expenditure and recurring liability on that account, others have not undertaken any liability or obligation, monetary or otherwise, in that regard. The payment of house rent to employees who have not been provided with free houses will set right this anomalous and discriminatory position.

We also feel that payment of house rent will also give a spurt to building activities in and around the coalfield by other agencies and thus help in removing the chronic shortage of housing accommodation in the coalfield."

The employers' representatives did not agree with this suggestion and regarded it as impracticable.

17. However, it is evident that the housing schemes have made very slow progress. The Study Group came to the conclusion that two factors, among others, are mainly responsible for this. One is the involved procedure for acquisition of land and for payment of subsidy. The other is the inadequacy of the subsidy itself. The Study Group recommends that the whole question should be gone into and appropriate measures taken to simplify the procedures and to expedite the system of payment, and where necessary, a system of advance payment may be introduced to facilitate quick construction of houses.

18. In the ultimate analysis, the living conditions of workers and various amenities like housing and clean drinking water supply and educational facilities have a direct impact on the active part they can play in ensuring safety in mines and in preventing situations to arise that cause accidents. Hence it is suggested that workers' representatives should be given an opportunity to inspect statutory welfare measures. The spirit of these inspections should be not just to level criticism but to make constructive suggestions for improvement.

#### **Recommendations**

(1) The Study Group wishes to draw the attention of the authorities concerned to this inadequate implementation of provisions relating to such essential amenities as canteens,

pit-head baths, creches, and sanitary latrines, and emphasises that effective measures be taken to implement them.

(2) As recommended by the Advisory Committee on Coal Mines Welfare in 1962, the Government should consider the question of increasing the Labour Welfare cess to Re. 1/- per tonne as the cost on implementation of various measures under the Welfare Fund has increased considerably.

(3) The Study Group recommends that the Welfare Organisation should pay more attention to the health problems of colliery workers and make efforts to provide for coal mine workers adequate medical facilities, including special facilities for T.B. patients, leprosy patients and those suffering from occupational diseases.

(4) Some States levy an educational cess on coal. They should provide adequate facilities for the education of workers and their families.

(5) Special efforts should be made to promote co-operative movement in the coal mining areas so that the maximum number of colliery workers may be served by Co-operative Societies and Co-operative Stores. For this purpose, it is necessary that the civil supply authorities give preferential treatment to Co-operative Stores in the matter of allotment of supplies of controlled commodities.

(6) Because of the hardship caused to colliery workers in the matter of food supplies, the Study Group recommends that steps should be taken to ensure them, on a preferential basis, minimum quota of rice and wheat equivalent to what is provided to heavy manual workers under the statutory rationing schemes. The colliery co-operatives can be utilised for this purpose by Government.

(7) Arrangements should be made to simplify the procedure for grant of loans to the colliery co-operatives.

(8) The Co-operative Departments of the State Governments should see that the statutory requirements in such matters as auditing of accounts and periodical inspections are strictly followed.

(9) (a) An urgent enquiry should be made into the slow progress of water supply schemes. The Study Group feels that supply of clean drinking water is a minimum facility that must be provided and any bottlenecks in the introduction and implementation of these schemes should

be expeditiously removed, specially in areas which have not been covered by existing water supply schemes. Because of the slow progress of these schemes, it is recommended that the Central Government must now take a hand in this matter and draw up and implement a scheme of phased development of water supply schemes in the coalfields. It also suggests expeditious completion of the work in the first area under the Integrated Water Supply Scheme of Raniganj.

(b) The Study Group suggests that, to the extent possible, water pumped out of the pits may be utilised for drinking purposes after necessary treatment. The Coal Mines Welfare Fund should subsidise such schemes.

(10) More attention needs to be given to the housing schemes as there is considerable shortfall in the targets of construction of houses. The Study Group expresses its concern over the very slow progress in the construction of houses. Two factors, among others, responsible for this slow progress are the involved procedure about acquisition of land and payment of subsidy. The inadequacy of subsidy is another factor. The Study Group recommends that the whole question should be gone into and appropriate measures taken to simplify the procedures and to expedite the system of payment, and where necessary, a system of advance payment may be introduced to facilitate quick construction of houses.

(11) Workers' representatives should be given an opportunity to inspect statutory welfare measures—but the spirit of these inspections should be not just to level criticism but to make constructive suggestions for improvement.

## Chapter VI

### INDUSTRIAL RELATION

The main labour laws of the country governing industrial relations are embodied in the Industrial Disputes Act 1947, the Trade Unions Act 1926 and the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act 1946. The first one provides machinery for investigation and settlement of industrial disputes. The Trade Unions Act provides for the registration of Trade Unions and defines the rights, privileges, obligations and liabilities of registered Trade Unions. It is learnt that Government is considering amending both these Acts; the first one to minimise disputes relating to such important aspects as discharge or dismissal and payment of compensation. So far as the Trade Unions Act is concerned, it is felt that it should be suitably amended so that the Trade Union movement may develop on more healthy lines and fulfil its responsibilities in the development of the country.

2. The general state of industrial relations in the coal-mining industry in recent years may be seen from the following table\* indicating the number of man-days lost through strikes and lock-outs :—

Year	No. of disputes resulting in work stoppages	No. of man- days lost (in lakhs)
(1)	(2)	(3)
1960	56	1.29
1961	65	2.01
1962	45	3.01
1963	57	0.42
1964	86	2.82
1965	72	1.66
1966	82	2.74
1967	122	9.09

3. The proportion of workers involved in strikes and lock-outs to the total number of persons employed in the coal industry was about 10 to 11 per cent in 1966.

\*Source : Labour Bureau of the Government of India.

4. Considering the size of the coal industry, industrial relations in the past can be said to be on the whole satisfactory. This is evident from the progressive increase in output of coal. But recently the labour situation in the country, including the coal industry, has shown deterioration as will be evident from the figures indicated above.

5. Some of the common causes of deterioration in the industrial relations as reported in the coal mining industry are non-payment of dues, dissatisfaction on account of lack of amenities, delay in payment of bonus and other dues, retrenchment, lay-offs of individual workers on medical grounds, demand for higher wages and closure of mines. However, more recently, the main causes of industrial unrest in coal mines were reported to be related to : (i) rise in prices ; (ii) discharge, dismissal, retrenchment and lay-offs ; (iii) non-implementation of awards and settlements ; (iv) non-payment of legitimate and legal dues ; (v) profit-sharing bonus; (vi) recognition of unions and (vii) inter and intra-union rivalry. Conflicting views were expressed before the Study Group in regard to other extraneous factors that are responsible for industrial strife. The view held on one side was that inter-union and intra-union rivalries caused industrial unrest, and on the other side it was averred that managements are themselves responsible for it. The Study Group has considered different aspects of industrial relations in the subsequent paragraphs, but in so far as workers' legitimate claims are concerned, its view is that expeditious settlement of such claims goes a long way in improving industrial relations. The procedure involved in Payment of Wages Act and the settlement of Provident Fund dues should be reviewed immediately and a working arrangement evolved so that the payment of workers' dues is effected promptly and cumbersome procedures that cause delay are eliminated.

6. Various Standing Orders : The Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946 was enacted with a view to minimising friction between employers and employees in industrial establishments by laying down in precise terms the rights and duties of employers and workmen in matters of recruitment, discharge, disciplinary action, holidays, leave etc. It is obligatory for employers covered by the Act to frame standing orders providing for all matters set out in the schedule and to have the standing orders duly certified by the Certifying Officers appointed under the Act. A study available in the Ministry of Labour & Employment covering the period 1966 shows the following position in

regard to the certification of standing orders in the coal mines :

	<u>1964</u>	<u>1965</u>	<u>1966</u>
(A) No. of establishments required to frame Standing Orders	700	709	720
(B) No. of establishments which have got certified Standing Orders.	689	696	716

At the Industrial Committee meeting at Dhanbad on the 30th January, 1967 some of the workers' representatives had pointed out that very few collieries had revised their Standing Orders and brought them in line with the Model Standing Orders circulated by the Chief Labour Commissioner (Central). The employers' organisations were urged to take up the matter with their affiliates to ensure that this was done within a period of nine months. The latest Half-Yearly Progress Report for the period ending 30th November, 1967 from the Regional Labour Commissioner (Central) in regard to re-certification of Standing Orders revealed that out of 729 collieries covered by the Act, only 274 had Standing Orders certified on the basis of Revised Model Standing Orders. The progress in this regard is thus still slow.

7. Code of Discipline : In order to create mutual understanding between workers and employers about their respective rights and obligations to make industrial peace, the Code of Discipline was adopted in the coal industry in May, 1958. It became operative from June 1, 1958 and applies both to the public and private sectors. It lays down specific obligations for managements and unions with the object of promoting constructive co-operation between their representatives at all levels. The Central Implementation and Evaluation Division of the Ministry of Labour received 609 complaints of alleged breaches of the Code of Discipline and the Industrial Truce Resolution in respect of coal mines during 1966. Of these, 501 were against employers and 108 against workers/unions. Action by the I & E Division was required to be taken in 504 (or 83%) of the 609 cases. Action was completed in 369 cases and the rest were in various stages of investigation. No correct and objective evaluation of the Code of Discipline as applied to the coal industry is available—but the large number of complaints of its breach show that the Code has not been respected by employers and employees in the spirit in which it was framed.

8. **Grievance Procedure :** During 1962, the Implementation & Evaluation Division of the Ministry of Labour & Employment undertook a survey to study the progress made in the matter of evolving Grievance Procedures in the Coal Mining Industry. Of the 844 coal mines addressed, replies to the questionnaire were received from 398 units. In 102 or 25.6% of the mines which responded, regular Grievance Procedure was in existence. Another 273 i.e. 68.6% of the mines were found to be following either the provisions under the Standing Orders Act or had made some kind of arrangements for the redress of individual grievances. In the remaining 32 mines no arrangements had been made. Of the 102 mines having a regular Grievance Procedure, only in 4 the procedure was exactly in conformity with the Model Grievance Procedure, in 79, largely in conformity, and in the remaining ones not in conformity at all. In 90 mines, the procedures had been mutually agreed to by the managements and workers. Of the 273 mines having other means of redress, 114 mines had arrangements in compliance with the Standing Orders Act. The arrangements in the remaining 159 mines were of a casual nature. The main reasons given by the managements for not evolving a regular Grievance Procedure were the small size of the mines, the seasonal nature of their operations, satisfactory working of existing arrangements, or there being very few disputes. In some cases, there was ignorance of the recommendations of the Indian Labour Conference and the provisions of the Code of Discipline. Some units also reported non-co-operation on the part of the unions in this matter. Recently, the Central Implementation and Evaluation Division of the Labour Ministry has collected more information on the subject so that the units which have not fulfilled requirements of this provision could be persuaded to do so now. In the view of the Study Group, the Code of Discipline and the Model Grievance Procedure evolved under the Code have not so far become active instruments of maintaining industrial peace. They should be so modified as to bring essential ingredients like recognition of trade unions, implementation of awards, and setting up of grievance machinery under relevant statutory provisions—and only the operational details may be left to mutual agreement.

9. **Working of Conciliation Machinery :** The Central Industrial Relations Machinery is primarily responsible for prevention, investigation and settlement of industrial disputes.

under the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 and the enforcement of other labour laws (as also the rules made thereunder) such as the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, the Payment of Wages Act, 1936, the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946, the Coal Mines Bonus Scheme, the Payment of Bonus Act, 1965, in so far as they relate to the Central sphere. It is reported that a large number of disputes in the coal industry are being reported to the Conciliation Machinery, but at the same time failure reports have been increasing in recent years. However, since the conciliation machinery of the Government of India is serving a useful purpose it needs to be considerably strengthened, both in its character and in its composition, in order that it may serve as an effective instrument of resolving industrial disputes.

10. Accurate statistics about the extent of voluntary arbitration resorted to in coal mines are not available. The Implementation and Evaluation Division of the Ministry of Labour & Employment conducted two surveys in 1961 and 1963 on the subject of voluntary arbitration in all mines including coal mines. According to the survey of 1963, 693 cases in the mining industry were studied to ascertain the attitude towards voluntary arbitration. Out of this number, only in 78 cases both the parties were willing for arbitration. While separate data for the coal industry are not available, it can be concluded from the above that in the coal industry also, like the mining industry as a whole, very little recourse was taken to voluntary arbitration, and greater faith seems to have been placed on adjudication and invocation of statutory provisions for the settlement of disputes. The Study Group feels that the time has come when industrial disputes should be settled by greater recourse to bi-partite negotiations and voluntary arbitration rather than to adjudication and invocation of statutory provisions.

11. Working of Management Councils : The scheme of Workers' Participation in Management ensures closer and fuller association of workers in management through the formally constituted Joint Management Councils. Consultation, administration of welfare measures and sharing of information on specified items are the basic ingredients for an effective working of the Joint Management Councils. Since the formation of the Scheme in the Second Plan, Joint Management Councils were functioning in 145 establishments—49 in the public and 96 in the private sector. In the coal mining industry, 15 units under the N.C.D.C., 2

units of the Berhal Coal Company, 6 units under the TISCO management and 24 in other units in the private sector have introduced the scheme of workers' participation in management as on 8-3-1968. The Joint Management Councils are said to be still in the formative stage. They have been set up only in the larger establishments.\* The machinery for joint consultation in the coal industry needs to be activated. Works Committees, Joint Management Councils and Production Committees, with representatives of managements and workers, should be formed where they do not exist and they should be made active and effective instruments of ensuring industrial peace.

12. **Trade Unions :** The table below shows the number of unions registered under the Indian Trade Unions Act, 1926 and the membership of unions submitting returns for the three years—1962-63 to 1964-65 in the coal mining industry. It would be seen from the table that the number of unions submitting returns and their membership has declined during the period :

Year	No. of Unions Submitting Returns	Membership (in 000's)
1960-61	83	233
1961-62	89	220
1962-63	101	274
1963-64	97	277
1964-65 (P)	89	244

(P) Provisional—Excludes information in respect of Assam and Mysore.

Source: Labour Bureau, Government of India.

\*N. B. The workers' representatives did not accept the figures quoted in paragraphs 7 to 11.

### 13. **Affiliated and non-affiliated Unions in important Coal Mining Centres :**

All the four Central Trade Union Federations, namely, INTUC, AITUC, HMS & UTUC have their affiliate unions in the coal mining industry. In addition, a number of independent unions which are not affiliated to any central federation, also operate in the industry. The broad position as regards the number of such unions functioning at the important coal mining centres in 1965 and 1966 is shown in the table in the next page.

	1965		1966	
	Affiliated Unions	Non-affiliated	Affiliated Unions	Non-affiliated
Calcutta	11	9	11	5
Dhanbad	9	6	8	5
Jabalpur	7	6	9	1
Bombay	1	1	3	1
Hyderabad	4	2	6	4
Total :	32	24	37	16

#### 14. Region-wise Membership :

Region-wise trade union membership of unions, affiliated and independent, for the year 1965 is indicated below\* —

Region	INTUC	HMS	AITUC	UTUC	Independent	Total
West Bengal	25,065	28,402	13,996	4,746	8,775	80,984
Orissa	589	2,890	—	—	—	3,479
Assam	2,500	—	1,000	—	—	3,500
Bihar	63,260	19,056	10,087	9,477	5,379	1,07,259
M. Pradesh	12,123	1,736	480	3,520	8,081	25,940
Rajasthan	170	—	—	—	—	130
Maharashtra	531	—	—	—	501	1,032
Andhra	—	—	—	—	—	—
Pradesh	19,000	800	12,000	—	1,000	32,000
Total :	1,23,198	52,884	37,563	17,743	23,736	2,55,124

\*Source : Chief Labour Commissioner.

15. It was generally agreed that the sole bargaining agent in industrial disputes should be the recognised union with a representative character. The idea is to have one and not many voices on behalf of the workers to gain the strength that comes from united action. But in regard to the procedure for determining the representative character of a trade union for the purpose of recognition, widely divergent views were advanced.

The following criteria were mentioned, there being no agreement on any :

- (i) on the basis of verified membership, in line with provisions in the Bombay Industrial Relations Act, 1946, the Indian Trade Unions Act, 1926, being suitably amended for the purpose ;
- (ii) on the lines of the provisions of the Indian Trade Unions Amendment Act, 1947 ;
- (iii) on the basis of secret ballot ;
- (iv) on the basis of the Code of Discipline.

This is an issue which concerns not only the coal industry but other industries as well and a decision on this can be taken only at the national level. The Study Group would leave it to the National Commission on Labour to examine this issue and to suggest a workable formula. The point was made by some members of this Study Group that since this was an important issue, the different views expressed by members on the subject should be incorporated in the report. These are given below :

- (1) **SHRI KANTI MEHTA** : Representative of the Indian National Mine Workers' Federation.

'Regarding recognition of trade unions we feel that it should be on the basis of verified membership. We would welcome the provisions regarding recognition similar to that in the Bombay Industrial Relations Act, 1946, to be incorporated in the Indian Trade Unions Act, 1926 as far as the mining industry is concerned'.

- (2) **SHRI KALYAN ROY** : Representative of the Indian Mine Workers' Federation.

'I entirely agree that to determine the representative character of a trade union for the purpose of recognition, the method of elections by secret ballots should be adopted'.

- (3) **SHRI R. LALL** : Representative of the Employers: 'The criteria for determining the representative character of a trade union for the purpose of recognition should be governed by the provisions of the Code of Discipline'.

#### Recommendations

(1) Expeditious settlement of workers' legitimate claims goes a long way in improving industrial relations. The procedure involved in Payment of Wages Act and settlement of Provident Fund dues should be reviewed immediately and a working arrangement evolved so that the payment of workers' dues is effected promptly and cumbersome procedures which cause delay are eliminated.

(2) The Code of Discipline and the Model Grievance Procedure evolved under the Code have not so far become active instruments of maintaining industrial peace. They

should be so modified as to bring essential ingredients like recognition of trade unions, implementation of awards, and setting up of grievance machinery under relevant statutory provisions—and only the operational details may be left to mutual agreement.

(3) The conciliation machinery of the Government of India needs to be considerably strengthened, both in its character and in its composition, in order that it may serve as an effective instrument of resolving industrial disputes.

(4) The time has come when industrial disputes should be settled by greater recourse to bi-partite negotiations and voluntary arbitration rather than to adjudication and invocation of statutory provision.

(5) The machinery for joint consultation in the coal industry needs to be activated. Works Committees, Joint Management Councils and Production Committees, with representatives of managements and workers, should be formed where they do not exist and they should be made active and effective instruments of ensuring industrial peace.

(6) In order that collective bargaining may replace recourse to third parties for settlement of issues and, in the interest of promoting good industrial relations, it is necessary that the sole bargaining agent should be the recognised union with a representative character. In regard to the procedure for determining the representative character of a trade union for purposes of recognition, widely divergent views are held by representatives of workers and employers. This is a wider issue which can be decided only at the national level. The Study Group feels that it may be considered by the National Commission on Labour, which may evolve a workable formula in this regard.

## Chapter VII

### INCENTIVES AND PRODUCTIVITY

At present there are no incentive schemes which are linked with payments by results covering the whole of the coal industry. Individual units have introduced certain types of incentive schemes of their own. Information is available about incentive schemes working in Singhereni and the N.C.D.C. It applies only to operative, maintenance and supervisory personnel in mines. No information is available about any such schemes in the private sector.

2. The question of incentive scheme in public sector enterprises in India was examined by an I.L.O. team of Russian experts a few years back. Their report submitted in 1961 recommended the scheme outlined below :

- (i) Bonus should be awarded to the labour, engineers, technicians and employees working at the undertaking for fulfilment and over-fulfilment of (a) the targets of coal output, and (b) reduction of cost.
- (ii) Piece work system of payment based on the quantity of coal output should be introduced.
- (iii) A fund should be created out of the project for the welfare activities and improvement of production.
- (iv) The workers, engineers and technicians should be awarded bonus at a rate of 20% of their monthly salary for fulfilment of the monthly coal output target and 2% of their salary for each 1% of over-fulfilment of the target with the maximum not exceeding 4% of the salary or wages.
- (v) The managerial staff should be suitably awarded bonus for fulfilment of the output by the whole undertaking.
- (vi) The labourers may be awarded bonus on the basis of the results of the production sections in which they are employed.
- (vii) The payment of bonus would be subject to the-

conditions that the targets of mining preparatory work and the targets of cost reduction are achieved.

3. These experts also emphasised that the introduction of the piece work system of payment would require a good deal of preparatory work involving "time and motion study observation" and organisational improvements as also technical studies necessary for working out the complex output norms. Their reports were reviewed by a sub-committee on wage incentives. The sub-committee did not favour the elaborate production bonus scheme in the existing Indian conditions where strength of the labour force in the case of most undertakings has not been determined on work and the studies. But they fully agreed that (i) the incentive system should also apply to higher technical and non-technical staff and officers of production and management departments ; (ii) that a staff benefit Fund in each undertaking for the welfare of the staff should be created ; and (iii) that the introduction of non-monetary incentives such as the award of 'medals' and 'distinctions' is worthy of adoption. However, no such schemes have been introduced in the industry.

4. A production bonus scheme may provide the colliery workers with incentives and initiative for stepping up output, but effective ways and means for implementing such schemes have to be studied and devised. The difficulties in implementing the scheme are : want of a suitable yardstick for (i) determining fair or standard output, (ii) fixing normal workload of different categories of workers in different collieries with varying working conditions. Then extraneous factors like power failures and breakdown of machinery would render the workers ineligible for bonus for no fault of theirs.

5. On the recommendation of the Bonus Commission, Government has applied the provision of profit sharing bonus to the coal industry on the same basis as in other industries. This scheme has no bearing on productivity.

6. The matter of introducing an industry-wise incentive scheme was examined recently by the Wage Board also which came to the conclusion that it would not be possible to do so because of patent difficulties. The matter has been left to individual collieries to introduce such schemes wherever feasible.

7. So far, output-per-manshift has been considered as the yardstick for measuring productivity in the Indian Coal Industry. This is assessed, separately for miners and loaders,

all employees below ground and in open cast mines and all persons "employed at a mine" by the Director General of Mines Safety based on returns submitted by collieries.

8. There has, in recent years, been some doubt as to whether output per manshift can be considered as a true measure to gauge productivity in the coal industry. As long ago as 1953, the International Labour Office, in a report submitted to its Coal Mines Committee, stated :

"There is no doubt whatsoever that coal statistics do not make it possible to form an accurate idea of productivity in coal mines. Undeniably, productivity is a complex notion. In its wider sense, it expresses the relationship of a given quantity of coal to the total factors involved in producing it. In the present state of knowledge, it is not possible to express all the factors that enter mining in a single figure by the addition of units representing work, capital and the natural conditions of the deposits. It is for this reason that coal statistics have not gone beyond relating production to the labour factor by measuring individual output. But this measurement is far from satisfactory".

9. The average output per manshift in India is only about 0.57 tonnes as against 11.32 tonnes in U.S.A., 2.16 tonnes in U.K., 2.54 tonnes in West Germany, 1.96 tonnes in France, 1.88 tonnes in Belgium and 2.24 tonnes in Netherlands. The trend in output per manshift in India in recent years is brought out by the figures given below :—

Output per man-shift in Indian Coal Mines\*  
(Metric Tonnes)

Year	Miners and Loaders	All persons below ground and open cast workings	Overall
1951	1.65	0.57	0.35
1956	1.14	0.60	0.40
1961	1.26	0.66	0.48
1962	1.27	0.67	0.48
1963	1.32	0.70	0.51
1964	1.35	0.72	0.51
1965	1.49	0.78	0.55
1966	1.52	0.80	0.57
1967 (Sept.)	1.55	0.79	0.56

\*Source: Director General of Mines Safety.

10. It is often said that the increase in productivity of the coal mine workers in India is due to mechanisation, that higher productivity in other countries too is due to mechanisation and rationalisation. I.L.O. studies on productivity in coal mines have emphasised the fact that productivity does not depend so much on the number of coal cutting machines as on how the coal is conveyed from the face to the wagon and in this respect we have made very little progress. The method of mining and geological conditions are other important factors. Working and living conditions, particularly housing and water supply, have also a great bearing on productivity. The low productivity of Indian mines has to be judged against this background.

11. There is also the special problem of small and scattered collieries. Without their consolidation and amalgamation it may be difficult to improve their productivity.

12. With regard to the desirability of extending the system of payment by results, the Wage Board in their report has stated that :

“at present the majority of the workmen in the coal mining industry are piece-rated, constituting about 55% of the total workmen employed in the industry. We have, however, not been able to extend the piece-rated system prevailing in the industry because of certain inhibiting factors in the very nature of production in the industry. While the industry generally has urged the extension of the system of payment by results, a section of labour has advocated replacement of piece-rated system where at present it prevails, by the time-rated. We are, however, confident that at local levels it will be possible for the unions and the employers to evolve a scheme by which the system of payment by results can be extended”.

13. It has been stated that a common incentive scheme cannot be applied to the entire coal industry as has been the case in other industries. The main reasons stipulated are that the coal industry covers nearly 900 units, that the quality of machinery and equipment used and working conditions differ from mine to mine, that the scale of production and profit vary, that the degree of mechanisation varies in different units, that the method and objectives of management differ and that some units have better labour and management relations as compared to others.

14. The Wage Board has fully supported the introduction of incentive production bonus schemes at individual collieries. It has suggested that such schemes should be worked out by the employers in consultation with their workmen or their representatives.

15. Some criteria for the guidance of managements and unions in regard to individual incentive scheme may be suggested here :

- (i) It should be shown that the workers are making a direct contribution towards increasing productivity by accepting more exacting work or a major change in working practices.
- (ii) Forecasts of increased productivity should be derived by the application of proper work standards.
- (iii) An accurate calculation of the gains and the costs should normally show that the total cost per unit of output, taking into account the effect on capital, will be reduced.
- (iv) The scheme should contain effective controls to ensure that the projected increase in productivity is achieved, and that payment is made only as productivity increases or as changes in working practice take place.
- (v) The undertaking should be ready to show clear benefits to the consumer through a contribution to stable prices.

16. Some of the operations on which work study has been conducted by the Central Mining Research Station can also be linked with an incentive system in order to eliminate factors that lead to waste of time. Criteria can be laid down for evaluation of performance for various groups of workers and group incentives introduced.

17. It has to be emphasised that the responsibility of working any incentive scheme rests equally with the employers and the unions. Both are responsible for seeing that there is a direct contribution, that proper controls are included and that practicable and workable criteria are adopted. The Coal Development Council appointed by the Government of India is stated to have set up an experts' committee to examine all aspects relating to improvement in productivity. The Study Group suggests that it may take the initiative in evolving an incentive scheme linked with productivity.

### Recommendations

(1) The Study Group recommends that steps should be taken to evolve productivity agreements between managements and workers. In its very nature such an agreement cannot be a general one, applicable to all units in the industry, but it should be tailored to the individual circumstances of particular units and take account of such aspects as geological features, working practices, levels of pay and other criteria suggested above. The scheme should apply both to direct and indirect or productive or non-productive workers, as workers in administration and sales and other direct activities have an important role in promoting productivity. The Expert Committee set up by the Coal Development Council may take initiative in this matter.

(2) As a first step in formulation of such schemes, method studies may be conducted in regard to specific operations with the assistance of the C.M.R.S., and, where possible, individual or group incentives introduced to eliminate factors that cause waste of time.

Chapter VIII

SOCIAL SECURITY

Coal mining is a hazardous industry, and workers are exposed to constant risk to their lives. Many undergo disability due to occupational diseases. Hence social security schemes are vital to this industry, more than to any other.

2. *The Coal Mines Provident Fund and Bonus Schemes Act, 1948* : The Coal Mines Provident Fund and Bonus Schemes Act (1948) was brought into force as a result of the recommendations of the Conciliation Board 1947, and of various Fact Finding Committees which suggested that Bonus should be paid to the workers of the coal industry. The Act is designed to make financial provision for the future of workers' families, to inculcate in workers a habit of thrift and to stabilise the labour force in coal mining. The schemes are applicable to all the coal mines both in the public and private sectors.

3. The administration of the Fund vests in a tripartite Board of Trustees, consisting of representatives of the Central and State Governments, employers and employees. The Coal Mines Provident Fund Commissioner is the Chief Executive Officer of the Fund appointed by the Central Government and is subject to the general control and superintendence of the Board. For efficient administration of the scheme in far-flung States, three Regional Offices of the Fund have been opened.

4. The Fund is invested in Central Government Securities according to the pattern laid down by the Government, viz.,

National Defence Certificates and Defence Deposits (including holdings of National Plan Savings Certificates and Treasury Savings Deposit Certificates)	... 20%
Other Government of India Securities (including National Defence Bonds)	... 80%

The Board of Trustees of the Fund decided some time ago that 10% of the investible surplus as well as the proceeds of all National Savings Certificates, National Plan Saving Certificates and National Defence Certificates maturing in future should be invested in 6½% 5-Year Fixed Deposits of the State Bank of India. This decision is being acted upon in anticipation of revision of the aforesaid pattern of investment. In order that the beneficiaries of the P.F. may get the maximum benefit out of interest accruing on deposits invested, it is suggested that all investible surpluses should be invested in securities guaranteed by Central Government earning the best rate of interest. The investment policy may be revised accordingly.

5. During the year 1961, the Coal Mines Provident Fund Scheme was delinked from the Coal Mines Bonus Scheme providing independent attendance qualification for the membership of the Fund. By an amendment of the Fund Scheme the mine managers and supervisory staff drawing basic salary exceeding Rs. 300 per month are also covered under it with the exception of those employed under the N.C.D.C. which has its own separate scheme for this category. The present rate of recovery of Provident Fund Contribution from workers is 8% of the total emoluments, employers contributing an equivalent amount together with administrative charges at 2.4% on both the contributions. Accumulations in the Fund are refundable to members or their nominees in the event of death, retirement after attaining the age of 50 years, retrenchment en-masse, individual retrenchment, permanent and total incapacity, termination of service on expiry of the fixed term of contract, migration to foreign country, etc. During 1965-66 the number of live subscribers to the Fund was 4,38,565. The total number of collieries including ancillary organisations covered by the scheme on 30-4-1967 was 1288. Compulsory Provident Fund Contribution realised from 1st January, 1949 onwards was Rs. 64,35,27,839 at the end of April 1967. Upto 30th April, 1967, 3,78,643 claims involving a payment of about Rs. 16.28 crores were settled.

6. From the 1st December, 1962, a Special Reserve Fund has been created by transferring initially a sum of Rs. 5 lakhs from the Forfeiture Account of the Fund. Provident Fund accumulations of outgoing members for whom contributions have not been deposited by defaulting employers are refunded out of this Special Reserve Fund which is

recouped as and when amounts are realised from the defaulting employers.

7. A Death Relief Fund was set up in January, 1965 with an initial transfer of Rs. 1 lakh from the Forfeiture Account of the Fund to ensure a minimum refund of Rs. 400/- to the nominees/heirs of each member who died on or after the 6th October, 1964. The guaranteed minimum payment in cases of death is at present Rs. 500/- in each case. Upto the 30th April, 1967, payment of Rs. 93,380 was made out of this fund to 432 beneficiaries.

8. In recent years numerous cases of default by employers in payment of Provident Fund contributions have been noticed and an increasing incidence of retrenchment in the coal industry has been seen. In 1964-65 total amount outstanding from defaulting employers was about Rs. 1.27 crores, constituting 2.57% of the total contributions realised. In 1965-66, such outstanding amount was about Rs. 2.98 crores constituting 5.35% of the total contributions realised. In 1966-67 the corresponding figures were Rs. 4.40 crores and 6.9% respectively. During the calendar year 1965, 8,154 subscribers of the Fund were retrenched. In 1966, the total number of retrenchees rose to 11,326. During the calendar year 1967 between January to November, however, the total number of retrenchees was only 5,392. In view of the large arrears of contributions to the Provident Fund, the Study Group recommends that the administration of the C.M.P.F. Scheme should be streamlined in order to ensure timely recovery of contributions and prompt payment to the beneficiaries. One of the methods of streamlining the procedure may be to introduce a system of Pass Book for each worker in which the credits should be posted regularly by the office of C.M.P.F. Commissioner.

9. **Gratuity** : The question of gratuity benefits for the workers in the coal industry was referred to the Wage Board on coal in 1962. The Board in its report has recommended an industry-wise scheme of gratuity to be financed by the levy of a cess on despatches of coal. The Board has further recommended that the proposed scheme should be administered by the Board of Trustees of the Coal Mines Provident Fund or a similar tripartite autonomous body and that workmen shall be entitled to the payment of gratuity with effect from 1.1.1967 irrespective of the date from which the gratuity scheme is put into force. (The representative of the employers on the Board did not agree that the scheme

should be introduced from 1.1.1967). The Board recommended 60 years as the age of superannuation. Different conditions were suggested for entitlement to gratuity for surface and underground workers. One of the representatives of the employers, however, felt that the conditions should be uniform so as to extend equal benefits to all. Later on, a comprehensive social insurance scheme should be introduced by pooling together all such funds as the gratuity fund, P.F. and the like. The Study Group recommends that the scheme should be introduced early.

10. Other measures of social security in operation are the Workmen's Compensation Act and the Maternity Benefit Act. The Workmen's Compensation Act is operated by the Coal Mines Welfare Organisation. The Inspectorate of this Organisation follows up cases of accidents in coal mines which involve payment of compensation under the Act in order to get payment expedited. The Coal Mines Welfare Commissioner has as yet no legal authority to enforce quick settlement of such cases. The Maternity Benefit Rules (Mines) prescribes the Maternity Benefit and certain other benefits to women employed in coal mines. During the year 1966-67, maternity benefit was paid by the employers in a total number of 2,151 cases. As mentioned in an earlier chapter in this report, it is understood that the Central Government has prepared an Unemployment Insurance Scheme which is proposed to be tried out on a pilot basis in the coal industry.

11. The Fatal and Serious Accident Benefits Scheme is run for colliery workers who meet fatal accident or are totally or permanently incapacitated due to accidents in coal mines. Under this scheme the following benefits are admissible: (a) A lump sum of Rs. 150/- (b) Monthly scholarship of Rs. 10/- for each school-going child of the deceased worker till he/she attains the age of 15 or is married, whichever is earlier. The scheme is operated by the Coal Mines Labour Welfare Commissioner and is financed in the proportion of 1 : 9 by the Coal Mines Provident Fund and the Coal Mines Welfare Fund.

12. Other measures of social security such as sickness benefits and medical care have been dealt with under the chapter on "Amenities for Workers".

13. The Study Group considered the question whether certain social security schemes should be handed over to workers' unions to operate. Such a change would be

a welcome feature but it is not immediately possible due to multiplicity of unions. However, workers' representatives should be increasingly associated with the working of these schemes.

### Recommendations

(1) It is desirable that all investible surpluses of Provident Fund are invested in securities guaranteed by Central Government earning the best rate of interest. The relevant rules laying down the pattern of investment should be amended accordingly.

(2) The administration of the C.M.P.F. Scheme should be streamlined in order to ensure timely recovery of contributions and prompt payment to the beneficiaries. One of the methods of streamlining the procedure may be to introduce a system of Pass Book for each worker in which the credits should be posted regularly by the office of C.M.P.F. Commissioner.

(3) The scheme of gratuity for coal mine workers recommended by the Central Wage Board on Coal Mining Industry should be implemented early. This should be financed by the levy of a cess similar to that recommended by the Wage Board.

(4) After the gratuity scheme has been introduced, a comprehensive Social Insurance Scheme should be drawn up which may be financed by pooling together the gratuity fund, provident fund and any other benefit fund in existence. The scheme should cover pension, life insurance and accident benefits.

(5) The handing over of Social Security Scheme to trade unions would be a welcome feature, but it is not immediately possible due to multiplicity of unions. However, workers' unions should be increasingly associated with the working of Social Security Schemes.

## *Chapter IX*

### **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Chapter III—Employment, Recruitment and Training.**

(1) It is learnt that the Government are already contemplating introducing a pilot scheme of unemployment insurance in coal mines so that retrenched workers may be paid 50% of their average wages during the period of their unemployment subject to a maximum of six months. The Study Group suggests that Government should formulate this scheme as early as possible and introduce it progressively to cover the entire coal industry. For this purpose, a special fund may be created by levying a new cess on coal similar to the welfare cess. The details of the scheme may be worked out in consultation with the interests concerned.

(2) The Study Group feels (employers' representatives dissenting) that in order to create healthy employer-employee relations it is time that the system of recruitment through C.R.O. is completely abolished.

(3) A comprehensive review of the working of the Employment Exchanges set up in the coalfields is called for. A careful evaluation of their performance should be undertaken speedily and appropriate remedial action suggested to make them effective instruments of serving both industry and labour.

(4) The Study Group suggests that the scheme of maintenance of Badli Register, its regular inspection by appropriate officers and the employment of such registered workers on a priority basis be introduced in the coal mines, and to begin with, a few pilot schemes on the lines of the Sindri Scheme, with suitable modifications, may be started. The scope of the scheme may be expanded in the light of the experience gained from the working of these pilot schemes.

(5) A register of all surplus workers should be maintained in the form of a pool and it should be made incumbent for employers to draw workers from this pool before resorting to any other form of recruitment. Lists of colliery workers of different categories should be maintained on a

regional basis, and for operational purposes suitable region should be drawn up after taking into account the feasibility of movement of workers within that region.

(6) The implementation machinery of Government should take effective steps to implement the report of the Dave Court of Enquiry and the Bipartite Agreement of October 30, 1961.

(7) Despite the downward trend in the employment of women workers, a large number of them would still continue to be employed in the coal industry. Hence the Study Group feels that watch needs to be kept on implementation of the statutory provisions regulating the working conditions of women and provision of creches, etc. meant for them.

(8) Formulation of a proper scheme to ensure that every disabled workman, who is capable of performing lighter work, is provided with alternative employment, is essential. It is understood that the Government of India have set up a committee under the chairmanship of the Director General of Mines Safety to go into the problem of disabled miners and their rehabilitation. The Study Group hopes that this committee would expedite its work and suggest appropriate measures to provide for vocational training and industrial rehabilitation of disabled coal miners. As soon as the committee's report is received, the Government should take appropriate steps to implement its recommendations speedily.

(9) While agreeing that it may be difficult for the coal industry to do away with casual labour so long as erratic and irregular supply of wagons by the Railways continues, the Study Group is of the view that the employment of such labour on other jobs of a continuing nature is not desirable and this practice should be done away with.

(10) In order to improve the efficiency of workers and create better safety consciousness among them it is essential that all of them undergo training in refresher courses as prescribed in the Mines Vocational Training Rules, 1966. In order that it may become obligatory for all workers to undergo such refresher courses, it is suggested that the operation of rule 9 of the Rules be extended to all coal mines.

(11) In order to standardise the training course and to create interest in the worker for his own training, it is necessary to bring out suitable literature in local languages and distribute it freely to those who attend such courses. The co-operation of the National Council for Safety in Mines may be sought in the matter.

(12) The provisions of the Apprentices Act to be applied to the Coal Industry should supplement what has been provided for already under the Mines Vocational Training Scheme and the trades to be designated under the Act should be selected accordingly so that there may be no duplication.

#### **Chapter IV—Safety in Mines and Conditions of Work.**

##### *Safety :*

(1) Periodical refresher courses on safety training should be organised by the Director General of Mines Safety. There should be more frequent conferences on safety in mines to facilitate exchange of views on various aspects of safety which keep on changing.

(2) Government may consider reorganisation of the Directorate General of Mines Safety in the context of its scope and functions in order to enable it to devote more attention to the technical and qualitative aspects of inspections.

(3) In order that the National Council for Safety may become a more effective instrument for creating an all-round awareness of the need for ensuring safety throughout the mining operations, the Council's working and its powers and functions as also its composition should be reviewed.

(4) The Study Group understands that the Mines Safety Equipment Advisory Board has set up a Committee on Indigenous Production of Mines Safety Equipment. This committee has compiled useful information on indigenous manufacture of equipment, present installed capacity for manufacture and anticipated production by 1970. Some information about development plans of the manufacturing units and users' requirements has also been collected. The data compiled should be immediately published and circulated widely among colliery management. The committee should review the position at least once every year and bring the information up-to-date.

(5) The above committee should make detailed assessment of import requirements for safety equipment and spare parts in the context of the availability of these from indigenous sources. For the present, urgent necessity is felt for certain basic equipment of the approved type for ensuring safety in mines, which is available only through imports, such as electric cap lamps, bulbs and spares, winding ropes.

for deep shafts, cage suspension gears, exploder spares and flame-proof equipment. Methanometers for gassy mines and several types of rescue and safety equipment also come in this category. Since the requirements of safety can be ignored only at the risk of valuable lives, Government should make necessary provision of foreign exchange for import of equipment till indigenous capacity is established and the required type and quality of equipment is actually available in the country.

(6) The I.L.O. report to the Government of India on Mines Safety had made some detailed recommendations about organisation of rescue stations and trained rescue teams. The Study Group recommends that Government may give consideration to these recommendations in the interests of the safety of workers.

*Health and Occupational Diseases*

(7) The existing arrangements for diagnosis, survey and treatment of occupational diseases like pneumoconiosis and silicosis are far from satisfactory. The Study Group recommends that Government should train competent medical officers for dealing with such occupational diseases and attach them to the Pneumoconiosis Medical Boards.

(8) The question of rehabilitation of workers disabled by occupational diseases has been dealt with in Chapter III.

(9) The Committee set up in November, 1959 to examine the problem of hazards due to dust and to suggest remedial measures is reported to have submitted its report. Prompt action on the recommendations of the committee should be taken.

(10) There should be more frequent reviews of the effect of controlled measures against various occupational diseases in coal mines. The work of the committee referred to above should be of a continuous nature and the committee should make a report every year regularly wherein further measures necessary to prevent such diseases should be suggested.

*Working Hours, Rest and Holidays :*

(11) The workers' representatives have urged that working hours in mines should be reduced to 7 hours a shift, or 5 days a week without any reduction in their emoluments. In support of this, examples of other industries in the country and of the mining industry in other countries have been cited. The employers' representatives, however, feel

this to be impracticable in the present conditions of the coal industry, particularly in the context of productivity. In the circumstances, the Study Group suggests that the problem be examined in all its aspects by a body of experts.

(12) In regard to the factor of fatigue which should justify lesser hours of work in mines, no view can be expressed unless the experts' opinion is available. The Study Group would suggest that the committee set up for this purpose in 1959 should expedite its report and Government may take appropriate measures to see that the said report is not delayed.

(13) In modern times, method study in the industries has made a notable contribution towards bringing about the safest and most effective use of men, machines and materials. Such studies conducted by the Central Mining Research Station, Dhanbad, in several coal mines are a step in the right direction. The Study Group recommends that managements organise such studies more frequently with the help of the C.M.R.S. Workers' co-operation should be sought by the method study team fully discussing with them in advance the plan of the study.

#### **Chapter V—Living Conditions and Amenities for Workers in the Coal Mining Industry**

(1) The Study Group wishes to draw the attention of the authorities concerned to this inadequate implementation of provisions relating to such essential amenities as canteens, pit-head baths, creches, and sanitary latrines and emphasises that effective measures be taken to implement them.

(2) As recommended by the Advisory Committee on Coal Mines Welfare in 1962, the Government should consider the question of increasing the labour welfare cess to Re. 1/- per tonne as the cost on implementation of various measures under the Welfare Fund has increased considerably.

(3) The Study Group recommends that the Welfare Organisation should pay more attention to the health problems of colliery workers and make efforts to provide for coal mine workers adequate medical facilities, including special facilities for T.B. patients, leprosy patients and those suffering from occupational diseases.

(4) Some States levy an educational cess on coal. They should provide adequate facilities for the education of workers and their families.

(5) Special efforts should be made to promote co-operative movement in the coal mining areas, so that the maximum number of colliery workers may be served by Co-operative Societies and Co-operative Stores. For this purpose, it is necessary that the civil supply authorities give preferential treatment to Co-operative Stores in the matter of allotment of supplies of controlled commodities.

(6) Because of the hardship caused to colliery workers in the matter of food supplies, the Study Group recommends that steps should be taken to ensure them on a preferential basis, minimum quota of rice and wheat equivalent to what is provided to heavy manual workers under the statutory rationing schemes. The colliery co-operatives can be utilised for this purpose by Government.

(7) Arrangements should be made to simplify the procedure for grant of loans to the colliery co-operatives.

(8) The Co-operative Departments of the State Governments should see that the statutory requirements in such matters as auditing of accounts and periodical inspections are strictly followed.

(9) (a) An urgent enquiry should be made into the slow progress of water supply schemes. The Study Group feels that supply of clean drinking water is a minimum facility that must be provided and any bottlenecks in the introduction and implementation of these schemes should be expeditiously removed, specially in areas which have not been covered by existing water supply schemes. Because of the slow progress of these schemes, it is recommended that the Central Government must now take a hand in this matter and draw up and implement a scheme of phased development of water supply schemes in the coalfields. It also suggests expeditious completion of the work in the first area under the Integrated Water Supply Scheme of Raniganj.

(b) The Study Group suggests that, to the extent possible, water pumped out of the pits may be utilised for drinking purposes after necessary treatment. The Coal Mines Welfare Fund should subsidise such schemes.

(10) More attention needs to be given to the housing schemes, as there is considerable shortfall in the targets of construction of houses. The Study Group expresses its concern over the very slow progress in the construction of houses. Two factors, among others, responsible for this slow progress are the involved procedure about acquisition of land and

payment of subsidy. The inadequacy of subsidy is another factor. The Study Group recommends that the whole question should be gone into and appropriate measures taken to simplify the procedures and to expedite the system of payment, and where necessary, a system of advance payment may be introduced to facilitate quick construction of houses.

(11) Workers' representatives should be given an opportunity to inspect statutory welfare measures—but the spirit of these inspections should be not just to level criticism but to make constructive suggestions for improvement.

### Chapter VI—Industrial Relations.

(1) Expeditious settlement of workers' legitimate claims goes a long way in improving industrial relations. The procedure involved in Payment of Wages Act and settlement of Provident Fund dues should be reviewed immediately and a working arrangement evolved so that the payment of workers' dues is effected promptly and cumbersome procedures that cause delay are eliminated.

(2) The Code of Discipline and the Model Grievance Procedure evolved under the Code have not so far become active instruments of maintaining industrial peace. They should be so modified as to bring essential ingredients like recognition of trade unions, implementation of awards, and setting up of grievance machinery under relevant statutory provisions—and only the operational details may be left to mutual agreement.

(3) The conciliation machinery of the Government of India needs to be considerably strengthened, both in its character and in its composition, in order that it may serve as an effective instrument of resolving industrial disputes.

(4) The time has come when industrial disputes should be settled by greater recourse to bi-partite negotiations and voluntary arbitration rather than to adjudication and invocation of statutory provision.

(5) The machinery for joint consultation in the coal industry needs to be activated. Works Committees, Joint Management Councils and Production Committees, with representatives of managements and workers, should be formed where they do not exist and they should be made active and effective instruments of ensuring industrial peace.

(6) In order that collective bargaining may replace recourse to third parties for settlement of issues and, in the interest of promoting good industrial relations, it is necessary that the sole bargaining agent should be the recognised union with a representative character. In regard to the procedure for determining the representative character of a trade union for purposes of recognition, widely divergent views are held by representatives of workers and employers. This is a wider issue which can be decided only at the national level. The Study Group feels that it may be considered by the National Commission on Labour, which may evolve a workable formula in this regard.

#### **Chapter VII—Incentives and Productivity.**

(1) The Study Group recommends that steps should be taken to evolve productivity agreements between management and workers. In its very nature such an agreement cannot be a general one applicable to all units in the industry, but it should be tailored to the individual circumstances of particular units and take account of such aspects as geological features, working practices, levels of pay and other criteria suggested above. The scheme should apply both to direct and indirect or productive or non-productive workers, as workers in administration and sales and other direct activities have an important role in promoting productivity. The Expert Committee set up by the Coal Development Council may take initiative in this matter.

(2) As a first step in formulation of such schemes, method studies may be conducted in regard to specific operations with the assistance of the C.M.R.S. and, where possible, individual or group incentives introduced to eliminate factors that cause waste of time.

#### **Chapter VIII—Social Security.**

(1) It is desirable that all investible surpluses of Provident Fund are invested in securities guaranteed by Central Government earning the best rate of interest. The relevant rules laying down the pattern of investment should be amended accordingly.

(2) The administration of the C.M.P.F. Scheme should be streamlined in order to ensure timely recovery of contributions and prompt payment to the beneficiaries. One of the methods of streamlining the procedure may be to introduce

a system of Pass Book for each worker in which the credits should be posted regularly by the office of C.M.P.F. Commissioner.

(3) The scheme of gratuity for coal mine workers recommended by the Central Wage Board on Coal Mining Industry should be implemented early. This should be financed by the levy of a cess similar to that recommended by the Wage Board.

(4) After the gratuity scheme has been introduced, a comprehensive Social Insurance Scheme should be drawn up which may be financed by pooling together the gratuity fund, provident fund and any other benefit fund in existence. The scheme should cover pension, life insurance and accident benefits.

(5) The handing over of Social Security Scheme to trade unions would be a welcome feature, but it is not immediately possible due to multiplicity of unions. However, workers' unions should be increasingly associated with the working of Social Security Schemes.

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