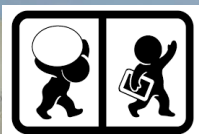


STATUS OF CHILD RIGHTS AND EDUCATION IN BALLIKURAVA MANDAL, ANDHRA PRADESH



Summary BASELINE REPORT, JANUARY 2018

SUBMITTED TO ARTE



MV FOUNDATION



GLOCAL RESEARCH

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The issue of child labour and other labour rights violations in the natural stone industry in India have received considerable attention in recent years. India is one of the top five producers of natural stone worldwide. Half of the total world exports of granite comes from India, making India by far the largest global exporter of granite. The production and processing of granite is concentrated in South India, particularly in the state of Andhra Pradesh. In Andhra Pradesh, the granite production is largely concentrated in Prakasam district where the baseline survey is conducted.

The recent study published by the India Committee of Netherlands (ICN) in 2017 on child labour and working conditions of the labourers in granite quarries in South India shows that despite some improvements, the issue of child labour still remains an issue of concern in granite quarries and the areas situated close to granite quarries (processing units). Granite quarrying and processing have direct and indirect impacts on the situation of child labour on the areas where they are located.

In January 2017 Arte, her natural stone supplier, ICN and MVF (Mamidipudi Venkatarangaiya Foundation) met in Hyderabad to discuss on the need and possibilities to address child labour in Ballikurava Mandal in Prakasam District of Andhra Pradesh where Arte sources the granite variety 'Steel Grey'. After this meeting Arte, her natural stone supplier, ICN and MVF jointly visited Ballikurava. Based on this initial visit, the experiences of ICN and MVF in eradicating child labour in natural stone quarry areas, and the knowledge and experiences of Arte and the natural stone supplier in the granite industry, a detailed proposal for the 'Child Labour Fund' of the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO) aiming at the eradication of child labour and its underlying causes in Ballikurava, is developed. In June 2017 the proposal is approved by the RVO.

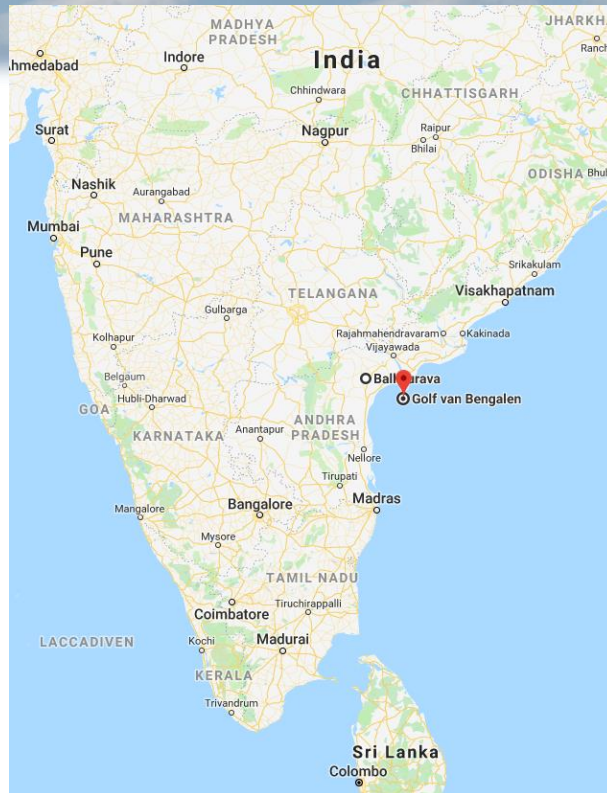
BASELINE STUDY

After the approval of the RVO, a baseline study was conducted. The main objective of the baseline study was to get a detailed understanding of child labour and the child rights situation in Ballikurava area. The analyses formed the basis for the feasibility of implementing a Child Labour Free Zone (CLFZ) project in Ballikurava.

An eight member research team from Glocal Research and MVF conducted the baseline study with the help of 10 local volunteers.

The team examined the nature and magnitude of child labour and its underlying causes in Ballikurava. A detailed survey was carried out in eight sample villages, which are directly impacted by quarry activities, covering 1560 households and 2152 children. The most important findings from the survey are summarised and presented below.





SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS OF THE BASELINE

- There are about 25 companies involved in granite quarrying operations in the Ballikurava mandal. In addition to granite quarrying, 30 granite processing units are also located in this area. Granite quarrying and processing provides an important source of livelihood for the people in the sample villages. It also provides employment to migrant workers coming from other states like Odisha, Bihar, Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh.
- A substantial portion of the workforce in granite quarries in Ballikurava are seasonal migrants. The granite quarries are providing employment to nearly 1500 people, out of which 65-70% are migrants. Much of the stone produced here is being exported to different countries including EU, UK, China and USA.
- There are 1560 households in the eight sample villages having one or more children under the age of 18 years. The total number of children below 18 years in the sample villages is 2152.
- There is access to primary education (up to 5th class) in all the villages, however access to high school education is a point of concern in several villages. To access high school education children have to travel 8 to 10 kms from some villages. Also, the quality of teaching and infrastructure are issues in government schools.

- 6-18 years children are grouped into two broad categories- a) school going and b) non- school going. In the non-school going category there are two sub categories - a) children not going to school and b) children going quite irregular to school, occasionally working and being at risk of dropping out from school.
- The survey identified a total of 241 non-school going children in the age group of 6-18 years. The school dropout rate is higher among the 15- 18 year age group.
- It is estimated that around 14% of the school going children, especially in the government schools, face the risk of dropping out from school as they are going to school irregular .
- Put together, the non-school going and potential school dropout children account for 26% of the total children in the 6-18 year age group. This number does not include the seasonal child migrant workers who come from other states to work in granite quarries. All of them are boys and school dropouts. Their number is estimated at 120 and if we include this number to the total of non-school going and potential school dropout children, their percentage in the total 6-18 year age group increases to 31%.
- Barring few cases of physically and mentally challenged children, all the non-school going children and potential dropout children in the survey villages are actively involved in some work or the other.
- The share of child labour for specific activities including all forms of child labour (non-school going including local as well as child migrant workers and children going irregular to school and potential dropouts) indicates that a substantial portion of the working children is engaged in agricultural work as primary activity. Cotton and chilli are important crops in this area and involvement of children is mostly observed in harvesting operations of these crops. It is reported that several children skip school during the cotton and chilli harvesting period (December to February) to work on the fields.
- Next to agriculture, granite processing is the main activity children are engaged in. All children working in processing units are boys. They are involved in stone drilling and cutting (jockey operators), clearing the waste stone, vehicle cleaning and polishing work.
- Other important paid activity of the children, mainly boys, is in construction work. Most of the children in quarry and construction work are in the age group of 15-18 years.

- Domestic work including sibling care in the own families is an important activity where children, mostly girls, are engaged in. They are involved in domestic works such as cooking, sweeping, cleaning, fetching water, caring for animals and sibling care.
- There are many factors contributing for children to drop out from school and to join the workforce in the study area. These factors include the social acceptance and market demand for child labour, poverty and illiteracy of parents, social and cultural practices like child marriages, poor access and quality of education in government schools, seasonal migration of families for wage work and lack of enforcement of laws protecting the child rights.
- The interactions with different stakeholders like community leaders, teachers, government officials, parents and employers clearly indicates that there is a social acceptance and tolerance towards child labour in the community. Child labour is seen as a `necessary evil or harsh reality` and it is justified on the ground that the children of the poor families need to work to support the maintenance of their families. Poverty and economic compulsions of the families of children is an important factor, but it is not the only factor contributing to child labour in the study area.

RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON THE BASELINE STUDY

- Education is a key to prevent child labour and has been one of the most successful methods to reduce child workers in India. The project, in collaboration with other stakeholders, particularly the government who has the responsibility to ensure free and compulsory education to children up to 14 years, should take up activities ensuring children's access to schooling, improving the quality and relevance of education, child friendly teaching methods, providing relevant vocational training and using existing systems to ensure child workers to return to school.
- For a long term sustainable solution to the problem of child labour, the project should adopt an area-based approach towards the creation of a Child Labour Free Zone (CLFZ). In a CLFZ, all children in a targeted area are systematically being taken away from labour and (re)integrated into formal, full-time schools. No distinction is made between different forms of child labour, because every child has the right to education. The area based approach towards a CLFZ involves all stakeholders including teachers, parents, children, unions, community groups, local authorities and employers.

- A large portion of children working in granite processing units are seasonal migrants from other states. Most of them are in the age group of 15-17 years. These children stay around 7-8 months in the area. Almost all of them are migrated individually without their families. All the seasonal child migrant workers are school dropouts and are into fulltime work. Among all child workers they are the most neglected and vulnerable group. For the project this will be the most challenging group to tackle. Special attention and strategies are required to address this group.
- Active engagement with granite quarry and processing unit owners and labour contractors supplying migrant children is required to tackle the issue of child migrant workers. The owners of granite quarry and processing units should be encouraged to develop child labour policies and age verification systems to make sure that they do not recruit workers under the age of 18 years.
- There is an issue of out-migration as well. Seasonal migration of families for wage work was reported as an important reason for children to drop out from school in some villages. The project could look for possibilities of keeping the children in the villages instead of migrating with the parents so that they can continue their education.
- The estimates of the number of school going and working children mentioned in the baseline study are indicative. To arrive at the exact numbers of children in school and out of school in the age group of 6-18 years in the project area, it is recommended that a fresh survey should be conducted as part of the project involving local youth and community.

