

The human rights situation in Indian quarries

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A large, dark blue, diagonal shape that starts from the bottom left and extends towards the top right, covering the lower half of the slide.

Overview

1. Mining: A mega business
2. Legal foundations in India
3. Previous findings of NGOs
4. Own field expeditions
5. Situation under Covid-19

Mining: A mega business in India

World's top 5 granite producing countries: China, Brazil, India, Saudi Arabia and Italy

With over 200 shades, India accounts for over 20% of the world granite resources

Valued over \$40 bn, Indian natural stone Industry employs over 1 million people

Most mines are located in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Rajasthan

Granite Industry supports rural economy (Migrant Labour) of states like Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha and North-Eastern States

Source: Indian Bureau of Mines 2018

Legal foundations in India



The Mines Act, 1952

makes provisions on health and safety in all mines, including:

- access to drinking water and medical equipment
- provision of latrines and urinals
- prohibits the presence of persons below 18 years of age in mines
- excludes women from working in mines below ground
- specifies the oversight mechanism including power to investigate accidents
- grants extra wages for overtime

Working hours:

- are limited to a maximum of 48 hours a week and 9 hours daily
- when Chief Inspector agrees, they can be extended to 12 hours daily with no more than 5 hours without a break

“Where the owner, agent or manager of a mine fails to comply (...), the Chief Inspector (...) may (...) prohibit the employment in or about the mine.”

22 1(A) of the Mines Act

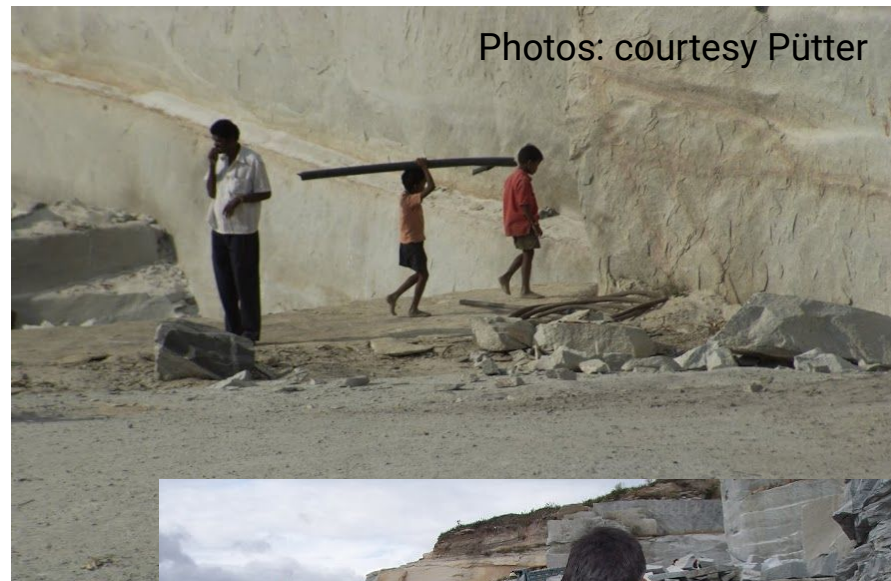
The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986

- prohibits “the engagement of children [under 14] in all occupations and of adolescents [under 18] in hazardous occupations and processes”
- hazardous occupations include “stone breaking and stone crushing”
- “All young persons in employment (...) shall produce a certificate of age from the appropriate medical authority, whenever required to do so by an Inspector”
- imposes fines

Previous findings of NGOs

Researcher Benjamin Pütter for Misereor & Sternsinger

- claims having found examples of child labour in South India, especially Tamil Nadu, during several expeditions between 2003 and 2015
- documented child labour in India in 2017: “Kleine Hände, großer Profit”
- the book estimated: 150,000 children working in Indian quarries



Our own field expeditions



Rajasthan, 2017

- Indo-German media team researching on silicosis exposure in mines of Rajasthan (S. Kumar, P. Sorge & J. Wadhawan)
- ~ 2 million miners in Rajasthan

THE HINDU

There's death in the air here: in a village in Rajasthan, silicosis caused by sandstone mining has reached epidemic-like levels

BBC

Asia | China | India

'I wish they could be saved': The victims of India's poisonous dust

By Sunaina Kumar
Rajasthan

© 8 October 2017

Deutschlandfunk Kultur

WELTZEIT / ARCHIV | Beitrag vom 11.01.2018

Steinabbau in Indien

Die Witwen von Budhpura

Von Julia Wadhawan

DER SPIEGEL

Tödlicher Staub

Natursteine aus Indien sind auch in Deutschland beliebt. Dass ihre Förderung viele Arbeiter umbringt, scheint Hersteller und Importeure nicht zu interessieren.

Silicosis lung disease

- a dust-borne disease that causes irreversible and fatal changes to the lung tissue
- in random samples of the Indian Council for Medicine Research, around 16-57 % of miners had silicosis, which means that 800,000 in Rajasthan are endangered
- only 5-10 silicosis cases annually are recognized
- dramatic death rates in so-called “widow villages”



All photos: Ashish
Sharma

Urmila
Yadav, 19
years,
Budhpura
village,
diagnosed with
silicosis at
age 17,



Khemchand
Yadav, 70,
shows his
silicosis lung





Biru Lal, 14, and
Ranjit Singh, 12
(not in the
picture): “We had
no choice, we had
to drop out of
school, because
we didn’t have
enough money at
home.”



Dust
development
in a
sandstone
mine without
wet drilling



All
photos:
Ashish
Sharma



“The Dark Sites of Granite”, 2017

Report by the India Committee of the Netherlands (ICN, now ARISA), with Glocal Research in India

Researchers visited 22 quarries in the South Indian states Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka

- although they observed “a significant reduction [of child labour] in recent years”, they still found **13 underage workers in 7 of the quarries**
- none had an “active” trade union or complete protective equipment
- 9 had a prevalence of debt bondage

“The Dark Sites of Granite”, 2017

This ICN report was put in doubt by Indian government authorities

- Dec 2017 & May 2018: National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) commissioned two reports on the status of child labour in the granite industry to UNICEF
- states of Telengana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka supported the research



STATUS OF CHILD LABOUR IN THE GRANITE INDUSTRY

A Fact Finding Report by the
National Commission for Protection
of Child Rights (NCPCR), the Andhra
Pradesh State Commission for
Protection of Child Rights (APSCPCR)
& UNICEF India –
Phase 1: Andhra Pradesh & Telengana

DECEMBER, 2017



STATUS OF CHILD LABOUR IN THE GRANITE INDUSTRY

A Fact Finding Report by the National
Commission for Protection of Child Rights
(NCPCR), the Karnataka State Commission for
Protection of Child Rights (KSCPCR), Tamil Nadu
State Commission for Protection of Child Rights
(TNSCPCR) & UNICEF India – Phase 2: Karnataka &
Tamil Nadu

May, 2018

“The granite industry is completely mechanized. This means that all processes are mechanized and there is no scope for manual labour especially any scope for child labour.”

“There is no scope for child labour; however some children (13+ age) are not regularly attending the schools.”

Report on Granite Industry, Phase 2

Research in Andhra Pradesh & Telengana

- Popular export mining region of Ballikuruva
- Extremely well surveyed and difficult to secretly penetrate
- Several cases of underage workers / adolescents found in granite polishing units
- “Questionable” cases inside the mines where the exact age could not be determined
- Non-compliance with work safety standards in the mines
- Inappropriate equipment, lack of PPE



Kalicharan, 17, and Rachid, 16, in “Virat Industries polishing unit”



No proper PPE, adolescent is just wearing sandals





Boy in a migrant labour colony in the mining area of Chimakurthy, Andhra Pradesh



Sri Balaji
Granites,
municipal
quarry in
Nagulamalyala,
Kerimnagar



Suraj, quarry worker
for Imperial Granite,
Karimnagar,
Telengana

Our field team research in the region



REPORTAGE / LABOUR

How industry bodies are using the NCPCR and UNICEF to whitewash accusations of child labour

BHAVYA DORE, ANKUSH KUMAR, SADAF AMAN AND PETRA SORGE

31 January 2020

SPIEGEL Wirtschaft

Minderjährige im Steinbruch

Wie ausgerechnet Unicef half, Kinderarbeit zu verharmlosen

Die Kinderrechtsorganisation der Uno bescheinigt der indischen Granitindustrie, dass dort keine Minderjährigen ausgebeutet werden. Recherchen des SPIEGEL beweisen das Gegenteil.

Von Ankush Kumar, Ajachi Chakrabarti, Bhavya Dore und Petra Sorge
31.01.2020, 18.00 Uhr



Deutschlandfunk Kultur

Kinderarbeit in Indien

Unicef soll bei Vertuschung geholfen haben

Von Bhavya Dore, Ankush Kumar, Ajachi Chakrabarti und Petra Sorge

Impact of Corona and Change in Regulation

- More than 4,7 million Covid-19 cases
- Several harsh lockdowns but only insufficient relief packages
- Some Indian states have suspended most labor laws and increased daily working hours from 8 to 12
- This raises serious questions on workers rights to minimum wage and safe working conditions
- almost 250 million children dropped out school

Thank You!