

# Sasan Ultra Mega Power Project Singrauli, Madhya Pradesh



A Brief Report



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## Overview of Singrauli Region

Singrauli is the 50th district of the state of Madhya Pradesh in India. It was granted a district status on 24th May 2008, with its headquarters at Waidhan. It has been formed after dividing it from Sidhi district. Singrauli has three tehsils namely Singrauli, Deosar and Chitrangi. It has three development blocks by the same name. Singrauli town is a Municipal Corporation with a population of about 2 lakhs (2 hundred thousand). The population of Singrauli district is about 11 lakhs (1.1 million).

The area in the eastern part of the state of Madhya Pradesh and the adjoining southern part of Sonebhadra district in the state of Uttar Pradesh is collectively known as Singrauli. Singrauli is emerging as India's Energy capital, Shringavali, as Singrauli was known earlier, was covered with dense and unnavigable forests and inhabited by wild animals is fast emerging as the energy hub of India. The total installed capacity of all thermal power plants at Singrauli is around 10% of total installed capacity of India. Locally, the place is referred to as Urjanchal (land of energy).

Some of the Upcoming Power Plants and other projects in the Region:

Name of Industry	Type of Industry	Operator	Year	State	Capacity	Remark
Singrauli Super Thermal Power Station(SSTPS)	Thermal Power (electricity)	NTPC	1977	Uttar Pradesh	5 x 200 MW + 2 x 500 MW=2000 MW	With international assistance of IDA & KFW
Vindhyaçal Thermal Power Station(VTPS)	Thermal Power (electricity)	NTPC	1982	Madhya Pradesh	1260 MW (6X210 MW) under Stage-I , 1000 MW (2X500 MW) of Stage-II and 1000 MW (2X500 MW) under Stage-III. Total=3260 and 1000MW of Stage-IV is under construction.	With international assistance of USSR-stage I, World bank under time slice loan stage II
Rihand Thermal Power Station(RTPS)	Thermal Power (electricity)	NTPC	1977	Uttar Pradesh	1000 MW (2x500 MW each) in Stage-I and 1000 MW (2x500 MW each) in Stage-II Total= 2000MW and 1000MW of stage-III is in an advance stage of construction.	With international assistance of United Kingdom
Northern Coalfields Limited (NCL)	Coal mining	Coal India Limited	1984	Madhya Pradesh	Coal supplies made it possible to produce about 13295 MW of electricity from pithead power plants of NTPC,UPRVUNL and Renupower division of M/s. Hindalco Industries	Thickest coal seam of India (Jhingurda seam)





At present, 17 Big Power Projects have already started their work of setting up big plants and Industries in various parts of Singrauli District resulting in a large scale displacement. There is no proper channel or implementing agency for resettlement & rehabilitation of these naïve locals, who would always be at a high risk of displacement wherever they would resettle.

Ultra Mega Power Plant at Sasan village	4000 MW
ISN International (An American Company) at Varihawa area of Chitrangi , 30 km from Singrauli Railway station	2000 MW
ESSAR POWER Ltd. at a village near Waidhan	2000 MW
LANCO Power Ltd. at Anpara	1000 MW
NCL Ltd. Captive	2000 MW
HINDALCO Aluminium Ltd. at Bargawa	
Jaypee Group, Majhauri	1000 MW
Jaypee Power Ventures Ltd. at Nigri	1000 MW
Reliance Airport Developers, Singrauli	
Indraprastha Coal Mines, Mada	
Sainik Mining Corporation, Gidhir	
DV Power Plant , Mahua Village	
NTPC Ash Dam, Balyari	
MP Generation Reliance, Chitrangi	3960 MW
Mahan Coal Field Ltd. Amelia- Budher	

## Singrauli: An ecological disaster

With its history of unplanned and aggressive development rested primarily on exploitation of its coal reserves, Singrauli today is a recognized ecological disaster. In a study done in 1991, "Environmental degradation of the Obra-Renukoot-Singrauli Area, India, and its impact on natural and derived ecosystems", it was noted that, "Quarrying for limestone, the establishment of a cement factory, thermal power stations and the construction of the G.B. Pant Sagar reservoir have resulted in a rapid buildup of human population, the displacement of the original population, deforestation and conversion of natural forest ecosystems into savanna and marginal croplands. The converted ecosystems are under immense biotic stresses such as lopping, grazing, etc. The rainfall is meager and erratic, the soils are highly weathered and impoverished, and consequently the natural forests, as well as the derived ecosystems, are fragile. Signs of desertification are widespread. A rapid depletion in the wildlife has occurred. The establishment of thermal power stations and chemical and cement factories has also resulted in large scale gaseous air pollution, particularly of SO<sub>2</sub> and HF, pollution due to particulate matter through fly ash and cement dust, and due to liquid effluents. Surface coal mining has caused extensive damage to the natural ecosystems with growing dumps of overburden. The latter needs to be stabilized." Even after knowing the impacts of this kind of aggressive development, the decade of the 90s saw an influx of state mining and power companies in Singrauli region. Post the year 2005, there was an influx of private companies in power sector. Singrauli got more than its share of thermal-based projects and mining leases.

As a result, when the Central Pollution Control Board conducted its study 'Comprehensive environmental assessment of industrial Clusters' in 2009, Environment Ministry decided to impose a moratorium on clearances for all projects in Singrauli coalfields, as environmental pollution in these areas exceeded norms. In 2010, the ministry had announced a moratorium on environmental clearance in 43 critically polluted areas or industrial clusters as identified by the Central Pollution Control Board.

During the moratorium, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh State Pollution Control Boards and governments were asked to develop time-bound action plans for improving the environmental quality in these areas. The plans were reviewed by the Central Pollution Control Board, and once it was ascertained that steps required to address environmental quality were being implemented effectively, the moratorium on clearances in these areas was lifted. The ministry lifted the moratorium on 26 of these clusters, Singrauli being one of them, between October 2010 and July 2011.

Environmental parameters in eight clusters have either shown no improvement or have deteriorated between 2011 and 2013. In September 2013, after the Central Pollution Control Board having reassessed the environmental quality conditions in all 43 industrial clusters, the Comprehensive





Environmental Pollution Index continues to be critically high (above 80) in Singrauli along with a few other industrial regions.

The environment ministry has decided to impose a moratorium on clearances for all projects again, but the moratorium would not apply to projects of public importance or national security. The ministry has also decided to allow modernization of existing projects as long as it doesn't

increase in the cluster's pollution load. Infrastructures like highways, aerial ropeways, effluent treatment and solid waste management facilities have also been exempted.

Also, a recent study done by Centre for Science and Environment's Pollution Monitoring Laboratory conducted an extensive analysis of water and soil samples from the region, as well as biological samples such as blood, nails and hair of local people. The aim was to find out precisely what industrial pollution was doing to the district's environment, ecology and people. The results of the tests exposed a tale of terrible contamination and ill-health stalking the region.

#### Singrauli: Living with coal

One of the rehabilitation colonies named Chilika was established for people who were displaced by National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) power project. These were the same people who were once displaced when Rihand Dam was built.

Today, they again face the challenge to survive in their rehabilitation colony as the area right behind the colony, probably a little less than 500 meters away, has been allotted for dumping of overload from Khagidiya coal mines (allotted to Northern Coalfields Limited). The coal from these mines goes to feed the NTPC power plant.

The constant traffic of trucks moving with coal on the adjoining road results in coal dust pollution in the air making it very difficult for people to even breathe. There is constant blasting in the area resulting in cracks in houses. The height of the overload dump mountain is way above the acceptable height causing risk to the lives of the locals. The area has noted a huge increase in bronchial diseases, cancer (mostly in liver and kidney), skin disorders, water infections etc.

Hiralal, one of the community members says, "There is a critical need for a health study in this area or else we all will die of diseases. Water from Rihand Dam is supplied to us here even though the officials themselves say that water is not fit even for taking a bath and is highly toxic as the waste of most of the power plants in the area mixes in that water."

NTPC and NCL have budgets allotted to conduct studies on environmental impacts and health impacts caused by plants and mines. Though some of these studies are conducted these are never made available to the people for them to know the reality.





## Sasan Ultra Mega power Project (UMPP)

Ultra Mega Power Projects (UMPPs) is a series of ambitious power projects planned by the Government of India. With India being a country of chronic power deficits, the Government of India has planned to provide "power for all" by the end of the Eleventh Five-Year Plan (2007–2012). This would entail the creation of an additional capacity of at least 100,000 MW by 2012. The Ultra Mega Power projects, each with a capacity of 4000 MW or above, are being developed with the aim of bridging this gap.

Sasan Ultra Mega Power Project (UMPP) is an under construction 3,960 MW pit-head coal-based power plant in Singrauli, Madhya Pradesh. Power Finance Corporation (PFC), the financial institution under the Ministry of Power, India, is the nodal agency for getting the basic infrastructure like land, water supply, environment clearances, etc. for UMPPs. Reliance Power Limited is responsible for executing this project.

Sasan UMPP is a pit-head power project and has been allocated three captive coal mine blocks – Moher, Moher Amlori extension and Chhatrasal – which have reserves in excess 750 million tones. The approved mine plan of all three mines put together envisages production of 25 million tonnes of coal per annum making these mines among India's largest. Sasan UMPP along with the coal mine would on completion become the largest integrated coal-cum-power plant in the country. The scale of the project can be understood from the fact that the project and coal mine together involve almost 10,000 acres of land of which almost 7,000 acres would be coal mines.

The lenders for the project are a consortium of almost 14 banks led by State Bank of India, the country's largest bank. The lending was done on a project finance basis and with an estimated project cost of



around Rs. 20,000 crores (US\$ 4 billion). The international funding institutions that have provided funds for the project are Bank of China, China Development Bank, Export-Import Bank of China, Export-Import Bank of the United States and Standard Chartered. The transmission and distribution lines for the project are being funded by the World Bank.



Power generated from the project would be sold to 14 procurers in seven states in the country (Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand) at a levelized tariff of Rs. 1.196/kwh (Kilo Watt Hour).

This project is another addition to the already long list of power projects in the area but its impact is huge as the capacity of the plant is 4000 MW (approximately) and huge amount of land has been acquired for the plant and for coal mines to feed the plant resulting in large scale displacement. Apart from that, the role of the company and government vis-à-vis land acquisition and resettlement and rehabilitation of affected people needs to be carefully looked at.

In October 2012, Reliance Power's Sasan UMPP applied for expansion of the plant and had to face hurdles as Ministry of Environment and Forests sought additional information from the company stating that the proposal in the current form is premature. Sasan Power Ltd, had approached the ministry seeking clearance for the expansion of the project by 3X660 MW. The committee finally decided that the proposal in its present form is premature for recommendation of environmental clearance and accordingly, the proposal was deferred. The committee observed that the area is not far from critically polluted Singrauli and therefore decided that the action plan for mitigation formulated for Singrauli region



needs to be seen and abundant precaution needs to be taken. Since then, they have not applied again for the expansion.

## Impact of the Project

This report gives a preliminary understanding of the issues and challenges faced by the locals and the affected community who are facing the constant onslaught of Reliance Power Limited's modus operandi, which clearly has no place for the people.

### I. Land acquisition, resettlement and rehabilitation process:

The entire process of land acquisition in the Sasan UMPP has been marred by false promises, coercion and high handedness of the company along with the local administration and authorities. Apart from that,



there has been a complete disregard for the procedures of land acquisition on the part of the company.

Destruction of community and personal property prior to land acquisition: Reliance Power Limited has shown a complete disregard to due process of land acquisition. Community's property was destroyed much before the clearances and acquisition process was complete. In spite of reluctance on the part of the affected community and without any prior information, the property of the community was demolished.

In Harrahaawa village, where partial displacement has already started as the company (Reliance Power Limited) wants to acquire land for building ashpond. Though the land acquisition work is still not complete in this area, the company has already razed the houses without

the permission of the locals and has asked people to shift to the rehabilitation colony 13 kms away from this village. The local population had to shift forcibly to the rehabilitation colony Suryavihar Basti. The villagers are predominantly farmers and their agricultural land is around Harrahaawa village, making it very difficult for them to commute between the rehabilitation colony and their village. In fact, this village was one of the fertile areas with very high agricultural productivity. The vegetable produce from this village used to go up to Benaras.

The company also does not have any regard for the proper procedures with regards to land acquisition. Krishna Das Saha, Principal of the Government School at Harrahaawa who lives in the same village informs, "No notice was given to us before our house was broken down. At





night when we were sleeping a huge portion of our house was razed. When I opened the door of my house in morning, an entire portion of the house was demolished. We have nowhere to go except for that rehabilitation colony which has no facilities and is far away from our source of employment.”

Diversion of irrigated agricultural land for power plant, ashpond and for mining overdumping: Being the area of Vindhya ranges with abundance of water (Son and Rind rivers pass through the region), this entire region was once a fertile land and had abundance of forest cover. Most of the population in the region depends on agriculture. Still, every year this fertile land is being diverted for industrial purposes.

In Harrahaawa village, most of the agricultural land has been taken by the company to build ashpond, where ash is already being dumped. Most of the people of the village know that it is just a matter of time that the entire fertile area will be turned into a barren, toxic land once the power plant is operational to full capacity.

Destruction of public facilities:

The Ashpond is located exactly behind the Government School, which is up to class 10 and is the only school for adjoining villages as well. It is just a matter of time before the school is razed as the ashpond needs to be extended. The company has built a makeshift school as part of rehabilitation and resettlement programme at rehabilitation colony. The makeshift school has not even been able to



withstand a single rain and is not operational.  
Multiple displacements:

Another significant crisis and constant insecurity that people in the region area have to live with is that of multiple displacements. These are the same people who were once displaced in the name of development for the construction of Rihand Dam in the area, then again when NTPC (National Thermal Power Corporation) acquired land for mining and now because of the Sasan power Project. In a lifetime, how many times will the same section of people be made to live through this injustice?



Compensation for land acquisition:

Another major concern is the evaluation of compensation for the land acquired. Most of the people whose land has been acquired and who have shifted to the rehabilitation colonies set up by the company have been paid compensation at the rate of rupees one lakh thirty eight thousand per acre for the land, but have not been paid any amount for their homes. Also, the compensation that has been paid was evaluated at the prices which were applicable in the area before the arrival of the company. Ever since the company has arrived in the area, the land rates have gone up and have also resulted in an overall price rise in the area making the compensation amount in the area insignificant.

Rehabilitation planning done without any consultation with affected community with complete disregard to the socio – economic condition of affected community

#### Sasan UMPP: A story of Injustice

Navghad village near the Amroli mines (coal block allotted for mining for the Sasan Project) is a well irrigated area, through the river systems and has a highly fertile soil. Agriculture is the main occupation and the area is famous for vegetables and fruits (amrood, sharifa, mangoes, lemon, jackfruits, etc). It's mostly cash crops that are grown here. This village is self-sufficient, but is now being served notices for land acquisition as the area is going to be used for dumping overload for coal mining from Amroli mines, which is being used by Reliance for the Sasan UMPP.

Though the land acquisition process is far from over, the company has already started dumping the overload in the village. Ram ji Bhasod, one of the villagers and a strong leader who has been fighting this injustice says, "When the company started dumping the overload here, the villagers protested, but in vain. In April 2013, we all collectively protested the dumping of the overload and told them that they cannot do this as it is illegal and till the land acquisition process is complete we will not let them touch our land. Ever since that protest they have stopped dumping."

His son Suresh was working in the Sasan UMPP as a daily wager. After this protest, his son died mysteriously in the premises of the company. It was said that he suffered food poisoning. Ramji Bhasod was informed about the son's death by the doctor at the hospital where he was admitted by the company people. He went to file an FIR at the police station where he was informed that they (police) already know about it. A panchnama statement was given to him and the FIR has still not been registered.

The rehabilitation colonies that have been made by the company have no value for people. Mostly these colonies have one room sets which are extremely small for a rural household where a minimum number of family members would be 6-7. Also, most of the rehabilitation colonies are built on barren lands far from the forest which



makes it very difficult for communities to survive the heat. The material used is not conducive to the weather in the region. And, most importantly, basic facilities like hand pumps, operational schools, dispensaries and public mode of commuting is not available; making these colonies inhabitable.

Located about 8 kms away from the Moher–Amroli extension coal mines Krishna Vihar Rehabilitation Colony is a rehabilitation colony for the Baiga tribe people who have been displaced from the forest adjoining the mines. The rehabilitation colony has mostly small one room kitchen bathroom homes insufficient for the huge families of 6-7 people (which, most of them are). The colony is located on a barren piece of land with no arrangement for even drinking water, let alone for any other purpose. There is one primary health centre where even the basic medicines are not available and on most of the days is without a doctor. For any ailment, it is the same medicine being prescribed to everyone.

The families living there are facing multiple challenges. They are still not being able to adjust to their changed barren environment away from the forest ecosystem which they understood and lived comfortably with. Shivnath Baiga, one of the village elders' wife died due to a snake bite at the rehabilitation colony, where no facility was available at the PHC. He says, "Had we been living in the forest, I would have not lost my wife, forest has so many herbs. Anytime anyone had snakebite in the forest, we would use the medicinal plant that is easily available in the forest and save the life. Here we are doomed to die."



## II. Employment for people who have lost their livelihood: a tale of false promises

One of the main concerns of the affected community is that of employment as mostly they were agriculturists or agricultural labourers or forest dwelling communities who, today are left to the mercy of the company to provide them livelihood as they have lost their land. From agriculturists to landless labour trying to look for some manual labour work to survive, people have been reduced to a life of misery and poverty. The company had taken their agricultural land under the pretext that they will be provided with employment at the Power Plant. Now that the local people have been evicted from their land, not even labour work at the plant is being provided to them. Most of the labour at the power plant is migrant labour from Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Orissa.

Sant Prasad Soni, one of the affected persons from Siddhi Khurd Village (one of the villages where land has been acquired for the construction of the plant), says, "I have invested all my savings in constructing my house and there is no way that I will shift to the rehabilitation colony which has no facilities. Even the land acquisition process is not over and still we are being pressurized everyday by the company officials and government officials to leave our land. I know in some time I will have to give up because they (company) have dug up all the land around my house for making ashpond. All I want now is at least a permanent job to support my family."

Panmati Panka and Shyamkali Sahu, two women from Harrahaawa village, where land is being acquired by the company for ashpond, said that the officials from the company (Mr. Sandeep Pandey) used to come everyday to their village and try to convince them that if they shifted to the rehabilitation colony they would be provided with good jobs at the Power plant. Since then they have left their homes and shifted to the rehabilitation colony, they have never seen him again. Today, they are in a position where their agricultural lands have been converted into ashponds, their houses have been razed and they have no jobs or any other source of income left with them.

In 1960, when the Rihand was constructed, Ram Narayan, secretary of the Gramin Kalyan Sangarsh Samiti, recalled Jawaharlal Nehru saying that the Rihand belt would be the Switzerland of India.

Source: *Refugees in their own land* by Usha Rai  
<http://tinyurl.com/njxueq8>

III. Labour Rights concerns in the area:

Ashokji, who is the leader of the labour union at Northern Coalfields Limited at Singrauli and is also an

A chilling case of this trauma is that of the displaced of Singrauli who are part of the over 2 lakh people first displaced by the Rihand dam in 1964. "Tens of thousands" says Smitu Kothari, "who in the absence of any resettlement programs, settled on the banks of reservoir, cultivating the land which is exposed when the reservoir recedes in the summer season. They were subsequently displaced by Thermal Power plants, Coal mines, Railways, Industries and urbanisation and now face displacement for an incomprehensible fifth time in a single generation as their temporary settlements are to be evicted to make way for urban, road and rail transport and afforestation projects."

According to W. Fernandes, "many Rihand dam oustees of Madhya Pradesh in the early 1960s have been displaced four times in the last 30 years. The Soliga tribals in Karnataka displaced by the Kabini dam in the 1970s are threatened with displacement a second time by the Rajiv Gandhi National Park. Many fishing families displaced by the Mangalore Port in the 1960s and resettled as agriculturists were displaced again by the Konkan Railway in the 1980s, after they had adapted themselves to farming. Many more such cases are to be found all over".

Source: *Development Induced Displacement in India* by Parshuram Ray <http://tinyurl.com/pwl5ofu>





active member of Hindu Mazdoor Sabha and has been fighting for the rights of labour in the area says, "The situation of labour has changed over the decades, earlier there were only government concerns who were involved in construction of power plants and industries. It was easier to negotiate with them. We were able to form Unions within these plants. Now with the private players coming in the situation has completely changed. The

labour has lost all negotiating power. These private companies literally own the government officials and local establishment. They operate like a mafia. These companies work on fear psychosis; they use government establishment, like police, local officials to coerce the public into agreeing to the demands of the companies."

He further added that, "Another factor that has changed with private companies is that they do not allow labour unions. Even if we try to intervene, the people working there feel scared and threatened to form unions thus leaving the labour in no position to ask for any rights. Even minimum wages are not given to the workers. Also, they do not prefer to employ local labour and mostly have migrant labour from Orissa, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh which means in case of any mishap they do not have any accountability. Even minimum wages are not given to the labour in these plants and coal mines."

He explained that this development has resulted in making all agriculturists into labour. For people who have lost their land, life has become meaningless. They are living a life in hell. Malnutrition and alcoholism have become rampant. Indigenous communities living in the forests have suffered the most.

There is almost 7 lakh labour in the entire area of which only 25,000 are permanent labour, who get minimum wages, rest are working in inhuman conditions and without being in any position to even assert for their human rights.

There are a number of accidents that happen, some even resulting in the death of the labour working in these power plants but mostly none of this ever







comes out in the open as the workers are mostly migrant workers. These workers don't have their families there to find out about their whereabouts. According to locals, there are more than 500 accidents of the laborers that have taken place in Sasan UMPP alone. The company people in order to avoid any liability don't even recognize or agree to any such events.

A number of laborers have died while working at the plant and the information does not go out. Since most of the labourers working there are migrant workers, there is no one out there to even try to find about their whereabouts. He has also made failed attempts to form a labour union in the company as it is vehemently against the formation of any union that attempts to negotiate for any kind of worker's rights.

#### IV. High handedness of the company and local administration:

The modus operandi of the company much resembles that of mafia which resolves any incident of dissent, non agreement with abductions, coercion, pressure from local government, and police.

In one of the incidents Sudarshan (it's been three years since he has disappeared), who opposed the land acquisition and the compensation amount, disappeared one night while he was sleeping, after he publically protested land acquisition. His land was located where now the chimney of the power plant stands. Today, his family had to start life again and construct a new house. They still struggle to make ends meet. The compensation cheque that was given for their land has still not been encashed as it was in Sudershan's name.

## Highhandedness of the Company and the local administration

Sati Prasad was working at the Sasan UMPP as a contract labour along with many from the village, who also happened to be the project affected community. Recently, all local labour has been removed from their daily wage labour work at the Sasan UMPP and labour from other states has been brought for the same work. Sati Prasad along with other project affected people had been demanding for permanent jobs at the Project but instead of providing them with permanent jobs, they had been snatched of their daily wage contractual jobs as well. Sati Prasad, who belongs to village Siddhi Khurdh along with other two affected people from the village Siddhi Khala, had been raising voice against this and had been planning a protest.

•In the past also, Sati Prasad has repeatedly raised the voice against the high handedness of plant officials and had submitted a letter to District Magistrate on 12/09/2013 stating that a mass protest against the management of Sasan UMPP will be carried out on 19/09/2013, if their demands will not be fulfilled. Their primary demands include:

- All the project affected people should be given identity cards for which the Reliance Company had completed the work of taking photographs and details back in 2010.
- Secondly, that all affected people who had been working at contractual posts should be provided permanent jobs and that even if the contractual job is over, the onus of providing jobs to affected people should be on the company.
- Thirdly, the boundary wall of the Sasan project is being built around the road built under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, and till the people are not adequately compensated for the road, the boundary wall should not be constructed.
- Lastly, the affected people who were working as contractual labour have been paid less wages and as their services had been terminated in 2010, their entire amount due should be paid to them.

On 19th of September, in the morning police, led by Sub Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Shri. Nandlal Samrath), barricaded the main plant gate of Sasan UMPP, as an agitated group of villagers marched towards the main gate. He urged the villagers to return back as they could be arrested under section 144 of Indian Penal Code. Section 144 of the Indian Penal Code states, "Whoever, being armed with any deadly weapon, or with anything which, used as a weapon of offence, is likely to cause death, is a member of an unlawful assembly, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years, or with fine, or with both." None of the villagers possessed any weapon and even if Section 144 of the Indian Penal Code was imposed, no such prior announcement was made. On 19th two other people who had been vocal against the atrocities of the company and were a part of the union and instrumental in getting people together for the protest march were arrested. After their arrests they were abused, humiliated and beaten up at the police station.

Since then, Sati Prasad has been released and his services at the Sasan UMPP have been terminated. He has also not been been his wages fully. He was only paid Rs. 3,700 for 3 years work. His gate pass has also been taken away. He is still fighting to get his job back.

Jeet Lal Baiga, one of the Baiga community elders who has been displaced due to overburden dumping from coal mines and now lives in the rehabilitation colony says, "We have become beggars here, and there is no work and no forest, where should we get food from. I and my wife go to the town to beg for food alternately. We survive on whatever little people give." His wife Dulesari says, "Forest was our permanent ration store, it has been stolen from us. If the government is ready to eat mud and survive with it we will too, if not then they should provide us some source of income, it is they who have snatched our home, our forest. They should provide us some pension, at least to the senior citizens. Otherwise, how will we fend for ourselves?"



#### V. No consideration for Indigenous peoples Rights:

The Baiga tribe of central India is one of the scheduled tribes of Madhya Pradesh. The Baiga tribes practice shifting cultivation in forest areas. They are totally dependent on the forest. They have been worst hit by the development in the region. Thrown away from the forests due to expansion of coal mining in the region, they have been exploited and marginalized with no specific plan for their rehabilitation.

The village Tierra in Singrauli, is a rehabilitation colony for the people who had been displaced for the construction of residential area for the Reliance officers and staff. The displaced community is mostly 'The Baiga tribal community'. In the village Tierra about 100 households from the Baiga community were living. They have been displaced from their land which after years of effort they had converted into fertile land and were practicing agriculture there. Ever since their displacement, they have been shifted to the area across the road which is rocky and not at all suitable for agriculture. Since agriculture was their primary occupation, now they are left with no work and struggle to make ends meet.

Sant Lal Baiga, says, "It's been six years since we were displaced and we are still struggling to find work. They (company) could have built their homes anywhere, why did they take our fertile land and throw us on these rocks where we can do no work. This has been a calamity for us; we have no food, no water and no work. We don't even have wells here; we had so many from where we were displaced. There's only one hand pump here, even this was not made by the company but has been here long before we came."



Most of the people from the community now are always in search of some manual labour work for income. Some Reliance contractor has given them works to break and load stones in the nearby area. For every one truck of stones (which means to dig the stone, break them and load them in the truck) they are paid a meager amount of rupees nine hundred total. They are made to work in inhuman conditions for almost 18 hours a day. Some women have started working as domestic labour. The people who have been displaced were promised an allowance for food until they were provided with some job. First month they got a cheque for rupees one thousand as food allowance of which they got only 500 rupees in hand as the other five hundred was used in opening the account at the bank. And now the company has conveniently stopped giving the allowance. With no work or any employment, on the pretext of which they were displaced by the company and the government officials, people are now forced into living a life of starvation.

Most of the displaced people of the Baiga community living in the forest were either shown as landless and paid meager amount for their homes, while the others were forced into selling their lands. Also, some were promised permanent jobs, which of course no one got. Since most of the displaced people were living in the forest, they had no patta (title) to the land. In this particular area Forest Rights Act is not applicable as the forest had been categorized under urban forest. So, most of the people who lost their land did not get any compensation.

About 60 youth were provided with ITI (Industrial Training Institute) apprenticeship and were promised a permanent job after six months by the company. But they have not been made permanent and their apprenticeship is extended every three months. Even after three years they are still getting the stipend of Rs 100/day. This meager amount is hardly enough for the survival of entire family.

#### VI. Impact of coal mining from the blocks allotted to Reliance Power Limited, on people: Hazards of overburden dump from the mountaintop coal mining

Not only does the overburden dumping of coal mining result in acquiring of land, but also poses serious danger to the health and safety of community as well as their cattle and ecology. Moher-Amroli extension coal mines forest area in the Vindhya mountain ranges has abundant coal reserves and has been acquired by the company for coal mining. The coal from these plants is being used for the power plants being constructed by the Reliance Group, namely Sasan UMPP and Chitrangi power plant, both with the approximate capacity of 4000MW.

This area was home to the Baiga tribe and there were approximately 100 families living in that area. For the last 4-5 years, ever since the coal mining for the Reliance project started, most of the families have been displaced and are now living in Krishna Vihar Rehabilitation colony, which is located about 8 Kms away from the forest on a barren land. Now only 3-4 families reside there and are still fighting the company.

The forest has only one patch of green left, from two sides one can only see the mountains of overburden dump from the mountaintop coal mining. The legally accepted height of overburden about 90 meters, but here the height of the overburden dump goes much beyond that, thus risking the lives of the community. Massive rocks are dumped along with overburden resulting in these rocks falling down, which have caused death of the cattle and also pose potential threat to the lives of people living apart from the health risks from this hazardous waste.

Raj Kumar Baiga, his is one of the few families who are still refusing to leave their land and are protesting against the company says, "With only 4-5 of us living here, we fear our survival. We know that like cattle, we will also be dumped one day under the overburden from coal mines." He further stated that the

company officials along with the local government officials used to come here everyday to lure us into giving up their lands and they promised to give all of them jobs, which no one has got. Since, Raj Kumar's family was one of the few who had some land (2 ½ acres) he just got compensation for the land. Most of the families did not own any land and were living in the forest are now living in a pathetic condition in the rehabilitation colony.

Ayodhya Prasad Pal from one of the families who have not left says, "They have already started dumping in our grazing grounds. Our cattle have been crushed to death and soon we too will be. We do not want to be displaced from our land and we refuse to settle in those rehabilitation plots which are so small and where there is no place for our cattle. The tehsildar (revenue administrative officer at block level) Mr. Vikas Singh and the company officials earlier used to come here to convince us to give up our lands and used to make lucrative offers of getting us permanent jobs. Now that most of the people have been displaced, they have neither jobs nor any other source of income. The tesildar is the biggest fraud and we cannot trust him at all." He further said, "We know we will have to move to the rehabilitation colony or else we will have to get dumped, we just hope we are given time enough so that we can harvest our crop." The corn fields are still standing tall, have a few more weeks before they can be harvested.

#### VII. Change in usage and purpose of Rihand Dam.

Rihand dam was constructed in 1962, with the purpose of generating hydro electricity and for irrigation purpose. Today, mostly the water feeds the innumerable thermal power projects which require huge amounts of water as coolant. Apart from that the water from ashpond and other toxic material also are disposed in the reservoir water. The NTPC power plant ashpond clearly exposes the disposal of the wastes from the ashpond directly into the reservoir water of the Rihand dam. Especially, during the rains ashpond is flooded and the toxic water mixes with the dam water. Also, through the industrial water pipe, water from the ashpond is being disposed into the dam water. Around the ashpond, one could clearly see the Vindhya ranges with only a few patches of green and mostly it was mountains overload dumping from the coal mines that was visible. Along with that, a skyline with only power plants was visible. With this as the condition, it will not be far that the Rihand dam would soon be called the dam for toxic water. Locals complain of deaths of cattle that wander off or drink water from the area.

