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Livelihood Challenges of Brakchakhan Community of District Shigar Gilgit Baltistan

Abstract: *The research was conducted to study the livelihood challenges faced by Brak chakhan (stone crushers) community in district Shigar. The study aimed to inquire the challenges face by this community. The nature of the study was descriptive. The methods used in the research were in –depth interview, case study and observation. The research was conducted from an Anthropological perspective. The paper highlights the challenges faced by this community for sustainable livelihood. Purposive sampling was used to gather data from 65 respondents. The findings of the study reflect that the miners lack education; both formal and informal. Lack of safety measures, lag in technological advancement in mineral excavation and tedious manual labor in 21st century is yet an eye opener for the policy makers of the country.*

Key Words: Challenges, Mining, Livelihood, Small Scale Miner, Anthropological, Sustainable, Life, Stone Crushers

Introduction

Natural resources are present in different parts of Shigar valley. Shigar is one of the most beautiful places of Baltistan. It is the homeland of many historical heritage and mountain ranges. Primary livelihood of the inhabitants was agricultural but some people of the community were also interested in minerals excavation or small-scale mining. 'Gemstone present in the mountains of Shigar are berly, tourmaline, garnet, apatite, topaz, fluorite, clinozoisite, and axinite, almost all occurring gemstones are present in complex or zoned and metamorphic rock.' (Dars, 2013).

Mining is one of the most popular strategies to extract minerals from different place. Mining can be underground and also on the surface. According to Barclys 'extraction and development of sub surface solid resources are called mining' (Barclys, 2015). Miners extract minerals at small scale or large scale. People find minerals in formal way or informal way. Mining has opportunity to contribute sustainable development. Mining Industry associated with sustainability of the society. Sustainability is one of the most powerful principles of modern life.

No doubt Gilgit Baltistan is rich in mineral resources and gemstones. To get benefits from these resources people of Gilgit Baltistan doing mining in many places and in many mountains. Small scale mining is source of poverty elimination and many people brought it in utilized. In many places of Baltistan mining took places, like in Rondo, shigar, Nalajat and kachura. Gilgit-Baltistan region which is part of Pakistan surrounded by the three-world famous mountain ranges The Himalayas, Karakoram and Hindu Kush.

According to Buxton '20 to 30 million of people of the world are depend on small scale mining in which mostly people belongs to developing countries' (Buxton, 2013) . Hentschel, Hruschka and Priester stated that, there are about 13 million people of the world work as small miners, mostly small-scale miners are residence of developing countries (Hentschel, Hruschka, & Priester, 2003).

Review of Literature

Mostly informal mining carried out by local people, farmer and peasants. Artisanal mining is unorganized local informal mining with a low level of mechanization and mostly carried out by local people. Gemstone mining is also small-scale mining. Mining must generate income but it cannot replace agricultures' (Chowdhury & Lahiri-Dutt, Agrarian distress and gemstone mining in India the political economy of survival, 2018). It plays an

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important role in poverty driven and rural development. This sector is better known about high environmental cost poor health and other risk involve in safety'.

Generally informal labor, worker or employments are common in developing countries. The workers who are not covered by social protection who has no any social security and who has no any fixed or regular job are considered as informal labor in the light of this definition we can say that the who are self –employed are informal miners. (Arias, Artuc, L ederman, & Rojas, 2018). It has a negative impact on health, environment and safety of the people. Extraction of minerals in small scale mining provided economic security and helped to reduce poverty in many developing countries. It also provides foreign exchange earnings for developing countries. Small scale mining activities mostly carried out in Africa, Latin America and Asia. Mostly precious metal occurs within unconsolidated rock. Precious metal and gemstones are economically important minerals' (Hilson, Small-scale mining and its socio-economic impact in developing countries, 2002).

Small scale gemstone miners are a worker who has highly health risk. Tools and extraction method use by small scale miners are very basic. The rudimentary technology employed result low rate of income due to this, their earning capacity is poor. Blasting, crushing, drilling and grinding are the main reason of produce dust. Exposure of dust is dangerous for health it causes lung disease. The mining equipment which uses by miner is introduced in such a way that there is no any protective gear. The miners are suffering in different types of diseases like typhoid, malaria, hepatitis and other sexually transmit diseases (Malisa & Kinabo, 2005). Since the beginning of 2000s, the world mining industry has boomed. Since mid of 2000s the price of minerals increased significantly onward. Due to a high growth rate of price mining activities also increased. The development of economic activity is an important way of providing socioeconomic benefit to the region. The advancement of mining ventures, reducing the need for local labor, becomes more capital-intensive. Mining ventures had lots of impact on the regional development process directly or indirectly (Söderholm & Svahn, Mining, regional development and benefit-sharing in developed countries, 2015).

In Nigeria more than 44 types of minerals play important role in the economic development of the country. It's created job opportunities and become as an economy driven. Gemstones small scale miners in Nigeria face many challenges in the mining and marketing of the stone. There is a large number of gemstones deposit in Nigeria. The underdevelopment of gemstone mining process, poor policies, health hazards ineffective environmental policies all effect the lead to the inability of the sector to fulfill quotes which affect the economy of developing countries' (Adesugba, Phenomenological Study of the challenges of gemstones artisanal and small-scale mining in Nigeria, 2018)

Discussion

In this era and technological world's livelihood became challenge for every society and every community. In this challenging environment, everyone is busy in a struggle for survival. Everyone wants that, they can survive in a better way. They want that they spend their life with quietly and in peace. Every community wants to fulfill need of them and their family and to provide all facilities of live.

For this purpose, every community does struggle and hard work. Some people or community finds their sustenance in the land, some in water, some in the mountains and some in the desert. Like other communities the Brakchakkhan community also tried for their livelihood and sustenance. They found their sustenance in the mountains of Karakorum Range and in the skirt of the world second heights mountain K2.

Mountains are their source of survival and origin of income. To generate income from the mountains is not an easy task, for that people the community sacrifices their lives, health and wealth. In the war of survival today every society faces challenges and problems. 'To break mountains were compulsion for miners because it overcome their livelihood challenges and provide them sustainable life for the whole family. Small scale mining is important of the sustainable life for a billion of people. (Marquis, Baldassarri, Hofer, Romeo, & Wolter, 2012) Small scale mining is present in the developing world. In Sub-Saharan Africa, small scale mining provides direct employment tens of millions of people which include women and children also.

The informal activities that have lots of environmental, social and health effect, including poor health and infectious diseases, etc. sub-Saharan Africa is mainly agricultural land but they are small scale miners also. Detailed study proves that both agricultural and mining are useful, but small-scale mining is primary source of income for sub-Saharan African people' (GAVIN & HILSON, 2016).

Brakchakkhan community faces lots of educational problems. Only one primary school was present in the village. There was one high school in dasu which that "children have no interest in education. They are become habitual of mining and other agricultural work; therefore, the boys took an interest in mining and agricultural

work and girls in household work. They had a lack of awareness regards educations. The thought of *Brakchakkhan* community is that after inter or bachelor the student should become an officer. If did not so and he does work like other than to get an education is time and resources wasting work.

The total literacy rate of Hyderabad village was 13 presents. There was only one primary school. After primary passed the students of Hyderabad goes to Dasu. Women play vital role in every field of life, in the house or out of house, with her male or without them everywhere and in every form, women play their role. In small scale mining women contribute her share in the form of cook, helper, or as house wife. Traditionally mining works are for man its physically dominancy work. But 30% of world small scale miners are women.

Women participate in mining in mostly Asian countries particularly in Laos, Indonesia, India, and many other under develop countries.

Due to lack of formal and informal trainings women face difficulties to obtain financial support from commercial institutions. They have no voice in decision making. Women are less paid than men. Another significant labor in mining industries is child labor. As compare to women and child labor, men do hardest work. Men are always front liner and pamugwal. Mostly women do pick collecting or bagging.

Male child does mostly all work those who are brave do work like men. In Hyderabad mostly women were house wives. They worked in their land, and look after their children and animals. But the young girls were doing some handicrafts work and some doing work in field with their mother and aunts.

Women participate in mining from three ways, firstly they do work like men second they do light work than men, third one is they serve as a food suppliers'[Huesca, 2013]. Women are the most important and powerful member of the society. Without women may be any society completed. And women play the vital role in her society. She takes lots of responsibilities as a mother, sister, wife and daughter. Not only in these four forms but in ever forms and relations women paid her responsibilities. Some male of the *Brakchakkhan* community had to say that their women did more work than male they pay more responsibilities than male.

The women of the *Brakchakkhan* community wake up in early morning. Ready their breakfast, look after their cattle's, clean houses, and then they went into the fields. From the fields they brought grass for cattle's and they come back in noon. They control whole house hold and look after their children. When their male needs to go anywhere they ready all things for them. Go for *groha bengma*. They did lots of care of their male. When a male is not present at home, they faced no security risk.

Conclusion

In order to find the livelihood challenges of *Brakchakkhan* community in District Shigar, the researcher found that Mining is important for them. It provides sustainable life for many people but they had lack of education, poor education and health system. Their infrastructure was not developed. They had lack of education regards technology and uses of technology in this field.

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