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Children Abandoning Education in Mica Mining Districts

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The **survey** on 'education & well-being of children in mica mining areas of Jharkhand and Bihar' has revealed that **over 5,000 children**, in the **age group of six to fourteen**, have **left schools to work as labourers** to supplement their family income.

- This survey was conducted by the **National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPDR)** from May 2018 after a report by Terre Des Hommes (an international development agency) revealed that more than 22,000 children are employed as child labourers in the mica mining areas of Jharkhand and Bihar.
- The survey was conducted in the districts of Koderma and Giridih in Jharkhand and Nawada district in Bihar.

Key Findings

- 4,545 children, in the age group of six to fourteen years, in the area of Jharkhand, were reported as not attending schools.
- 649 children were reported as not attending schools in Nawada district of Bihar.
- **Reasons:** Lack of enough opportunities, lack of interest and **mica scraps collection**.
 - Several families do not see the benefit of sending their children to school and instead prefer them working in collecting and selling mica scraps.
 - **Selling mica scraps is the main means of livelihood** for many families in these districts.
- **Malnourishment:** In case of Giridih and Koderma, the undernutrition cases reported in 14% and 19% of the habitations and villages, respectively in the survey area. In case of Nawada, 69% habitations have reported that some children are undernourished.

- **Recommendations:**

- NGOs/development agencies should work with the local and district administration as well as with the industries to chalk out a strategy to make the supply chain of mica mining, free of child labour.
- There should be a **strict action against buyers of mica scraps from children.**
- A special drive to abolish child labour in the mica mining areas of Jharkhand and Bihar should be carried out by the administration.
- **Rehabilitation centres for such children** and residential schools for girls in the areas, should be opened.
- The districts need to ensure proper implementation of child right laws.

National Commission for Protection of Child Rights

- NCPCR is a **statutory body** set up in **March 2007** under the Commissions for Protection of Child Rights (CPCR) Act, 2005.
- It is under the **administrative control of the Ministry of Women & Child Development.**
- The Commission's mandate is to ensure that all laws, policies, programmes, and administrative mechanisms are in consonance with the child rights perspective as enshrined in the Constitution of India and also the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- It inquires into **complaints** relating to child's right to free and compulsory education under the **Right to Education Act, 2009.**
- It **monitors** in the implementation of **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012.**

Source: TH