

Summary of Interview

Name: Gouri Sankar Kashape

Place of Work: Sarsataly Coal Mines Project, ICML

Post: Dumper Operator

Immediate employer: GS Atwal, responsible for the total production process

Place of interview: interviewee's home

Language: Bengali

Date: 05/11/2004

His father died when he was a small child. The family was rooming here and there. Now as an employee of Atwai he gets around 3000 Rs. Per month. Now there is not much problem. In 1947-48 they came here at Ranigange Coal-belt from Panjab at the time of Pakistan Riot. The owners of the collieries were the people of their same village. After that they never went back to their village because they did not know the route of their village through which they made their journey holding their father's hand. One of the major owners is the family of Chopra. Around five to seven family within the same relative group worked in the colliery of Chopra. After nationalisation all were dispersed. When his father was working then he was ten years old. The financial position of the 4 members family was not good at that time because his father did not get the wage regularly at the end of a week. Till today same conditions are going on. His father was a supervisor of the loading work. His father was a patient of throat cancer. At the time of his father's death he was engaged in the work of peon at Rs. 1.50 at colliery. After a few years he learned driving. Then he started to drive truck of bricks and sand from 1962 and the wage was 125 to 150 Rs. In the work of driving he was roaming from Delhi to Rajasthan, Goa. After that he was engaged in the work of Ramnagar colliery (captive mines of TISCO) under the contractor Atwai. Then he went to Chashnala to transport coal. After three to four months the employer made payments. Once he entered in the office for placing his problems then the employer insulted him for not taking permission. He left that job and joined in a work of Agra with 4000 salary and free food and accommodation. After completion of contract within 2 to 3 years he came back to Asansol. Then he became a worker of M/S G.S. Atwai & Co, owned by the brother of previous Atwai. First he was posted in Ramnagar Colliery and then in present place from the starting of this colliery. Now earning per month is Rs. 3800 with increment RS. 200 per year according to the agreement.

Salary of the government employee is around 6000 Rs. Government takeover would be marginally better, but this is also running more or less same way. He does not know about the privatisation process of nationalized collieries. But the land of his colliery is leased out to Goenka from Government. Then Goenka also gave it to contractors. He knows that nearby Bengal EMTA company is run by Upadhya and other partners, the son of Jyoti Babu. Also he does not know that ECL is starting coal production engaging

private contractors from some of the coal bearing patches. But he informed about the one of the contractors, Balaram Dey is working in an OCP of Bankola area, as he was a resident of that area. Previously they lived in Punjabi Danga of Bankola area where the big Sonapur Bajari Project has been started. So they were replaced from there and rehabilitated in the Gobindanagar Colony, where his interview has been recorded. He married a tribal woman of the nearest village. To run his family he is compelled to borrow money from shop instead of taking money from money lenders. Both he and his wife participate in the festivals of tribal society and also both go to Gurudwara.

He is not connected with any union because all leaders have some sort of interest like theft of coal from siding, extraction of coal from illegal mining etc. but the main reason is the fear of losing the jobs. His opinion about the future is that there is no possibility of better condition. So he wants to do his work in peace in whatever way work is available.