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Fourth Issue of the WAMA Newsletter

by Women in Action on Mining in Asia



Holiday greetings to the WAMA family! As we step into a new year, we take a look back into some of the key highlights over the year regarding our work on strengthening the rights of women affected by mining at a local, regional and international level.

LOCAL

1. Workshop with WHRDs in Karnataka on Indigenous Women and Natural Resource Rights (June 2019)

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Dhaatri in collaboration with SETU and a national indigenous network-Adivasi Ekta Parishad organised a 5-day workshop from 16th to 20th June 2019 to train WHRDs on issues of environmental justice in Tumkur and Hospete districts of Karnataka. During the workshop in Tumkur, learning sessions were conducted by Dhaatri and Setu on 'District Mineral Foundation' (or DMF i.e a benefit-sharing policy), through which information was shared on the ownership of mines, the history and importance of benefit-sharing, what DMF policy states and how it can be used as a tool for addressing the damage done by mining.



Field exposure visit was organised to Sandur iron mines in Hospete district, along with an interaction with the affected community of Devagairi village. During the interaction, the community told the participants about the plunder caused by mining. Post the ban on illegal mining in the area, most of them were left without any livelihood or source of income. When mining was recently restarted in their area, they were not provided with any jobs or any compensation for the environmental damage suffered by them. The villagers here are suffering from health problems due to inhaling this dust such as asthma, heart attack and tuberculosis. Along with the pollution of water sources, they even mentioned that there has been a decrease in rainfall due to the deforestation that occurred due to mining. These villagers have been actively raising demands for proper implementation of DMF funds in their village, for clean water supply and medical services.

2. Workshop and Study Tour on ‘Women’s Rights and Extractive Industry’ in Mongolia (July 2019)



MONES in collaboration with Dhaatri and SETU organised a training workshop and study tour for women NGOs and groups from mining areas near Ulanbataar, Baganuur and remote districts of Arkhangai and Zavkhaan provinces from July 3rd to 5th 2019. This workshop aimed to develop local strategies for protecting and promoting women’s rights in mining-affected areas and to discuss challenges and impacts faced by women due to mining.

The participants shared their findings through the Gender Impact Assessments conducted in their local areas, and on the local actions to address the reported violations. The trainers of the workshop- Bhanumathi Kalluri (Dhaatri) and Ashok Shrimali (SETU) guided the participants through cases of negative impacts of mining activities and mapping out the stakeholders behind mining companies. Information was given regarding the role of International Financial Institutions in the mining sector of Mongolia, agreements and policies signed between Mongolia and countries

complaints directly to these IFIs regarding violations by mining companies they are supporting. The local organisations took forward the learnings from the workshop through strategising future action plans and made a list of the legislations they need to review. After the workshop, a field visit was conducted to the coal mining site in Baganuur where the participants interacted with mineworkers and the affected community.

3. IWoman: Indigenous Women Mentoring Program by Lilak (July 2019)



Lilak began a mentoring programme for indigenous women leaders (young and old) among their community partners this year. Under this programme, they have worked on developing intensive learning sessions/courses on relevant concepts, laws and skills to strengthen their community struggles around mining, dams and commercial plantations.

4. International Day to End Violence Against Women Celebrations in Philippines (November 2019)



Members of Lilak participated with women from different sectors in a flash dance mob held in front of the Head Quarters of the Military, to commemorate the International Day to End Violence Against Women on November 22nd 2019 and to denounce excessive militarization and continuous state-sponsored violence against women in the Philippines. You can find the statement released on the day [here](#).

5. International Women Human Rights Day Celebrations in India (November 2019)



On November 29th, indigenous women's groups in different parts of India celebrated 'International Women Human Rights Day'. A meeting was organised in Dahod, Gujarat by WHRD Lilaben on the rights of indigenous migrant women workers, the challenges faced by them, and information was given on the relevant entitlements and schemes. In Udaipur, a meeting was organised by WHRD Sadhana Meena for mining-affected women from Udaipur and Bhilwara districts, to give them awareness on DMF. In Palghar, Maharashtra, indigenous women took out a march that spread awareness on the rights of indigenous women and addressed the issue of violence faced by indigenous women and girls. In Vishakapatnam district, Dhaatri organised a consultation with indigenous women on land rights and forest rights.

6. International Human Rights Day Celebrations in the Philippines (December 2019)



On the occasion of International Human Rights Day (December 10th 2019), various human rights and advocacy groups including the national anti-mining alliance, 'Alyansa Tigil Mina', led a march in Manila to voice out their concerns on the alarming threat against human rights defenders caused by the politics of fear perpetuated by the current administration.

REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY AND NETWORKING

1. 4th Regional WAMA Skillshare, Siem Reap, Cambodia (July 2019)



The 4th Regional WAMA skillshare was held in Siem Reap, Cambodia, facilitated by Dhaatri, NTFP-EP, Lilak and organised by Cambodia Indigenous Women Working Group (CIWWG). Participants included over 60 women from mining-affected communities of Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, Mongolia and India. The purpose of the workshop was to facilitate a space for WHRDs to share experiences about impacts from mining in their local communities and their collective actions, to provide skills knowledge and tools for grassroots advocacy and strategize on the future.

The workshop started with reporting by WHRDs on the results of the findings of the conducted Gender Impact Assessments, and the successes and challenges of the local campaigns. Presentations were given on understanding financial flows and the role of international financial institutions in the mining sector, and gender impacts of government policies on mining such as gender budgeting and benefit-sharing policies. Strategies and tools were shared to the WHRDs through specific sessions on identifying and building support systems for WHRDs at risk, and how to file petitions, Right to Information (RTI) forms etc. A panel discussion was organised on the last day on how to engage with human rights mechanisms and institutions with panellists sharing experiences on their engagement with CEDAW, ASEAN and UNBHR. Post the activities over the four days, the meeting ended with a strategy planning for WAMA in the coming months and the members voted and came up with a new name i.e 'Women in Action on Mining in Asia'. Till the next skillshare, we will be looking to release publications under WAMA, lobby with different international forums, while working towards expanding the membership base of WAMA to other countries of Asia.

You can read the summaries of the country-wise case studies presented at the meeting [here](#).

2. 2nd Resister's Dialogue (September 2019)



Resister's dialogue was held at the Klongsai community in Krabi province from 13th to 16th September 2019 with participation of around 45 women activists. This was attended by participants from India, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, Cambodia and Myanmar.

The objective of the meeting was learning about the struggles, victories and challenges faced by women human rights defenders in defending their land and identify concrete plans for collaborative advocacy and lobbying. WHRDs presented on the situation of resource conflicts in their countries, its impact on communities and women, and identified the actors involved in exploiting their resources. Sharing of the local struggles were connected to the larger regional and global forces that are driving exploitation in their countries through investments and trade agreements

threats, cyber violence.

Post the sessions and discussions, participants discussed the future plan for the network. Each country was motivated to start their own local Resister's dialogue network and organise an event on International Women Human Rights Defenders Day on 29th November 2019 in their communities. It was decided that solidarity visits would be organised in the member countries for linking and learning campaigns. Planning was also done for upcoming skill shares for sharing knowledge and skills with resisters on risk analysis and protection.

3. Linking with indigenous women groups in Nepal (September 2019)



This year, we initiated the effort towards reaching out to new groups in Asia. Dhaatri has simultaneously been working towards linking with WHRDs working on environmental justice issues in South Asia. For this purpose, a team from Dhaatri met with indigenous women's groups and leaders working in Nepal from the 26th to 30th September 2019. Environment threats in Nepal such as sand mining, brick kilns, hydropower projects and its impact on indigenous women were discussed during these meetings. Dhaatri team also conducted trainings for the local WHRDs on how to conduct gender impact assessments. These collaborations will be taken forward through a regional exchange skillshare for leadership building of WHRDs.

4. Assembly of Latin American Women Defender Network of Social and Environmental

Rights in Guatemala (November 2019)



As a follow up to our linkage with women groups working on mining in Latin America, WAMA participated in this assembly from the 14th-17th of November 2019 where around 50 women from different parts of Latin America gathered together to share their stories of struggles in the face of extractive industries encroaching their territories, violating their rights and destroying their environment. We were invited along with WOMIN from Africa to share our experiences of working with women in mining-affected communities in Asia.

During this workshop, sessions were organised around two themes- violence towards land and violence towards women's bodies. The underlying connection between the exploitation of the environment and the oppression of women was clearly emphasized from the cases presented by the women in the communities. A simulation activity was conducted in the form of a 'People's Tribunal', wherein a public trial was organised on industries that violate the rights of nature and people, with participants divided into different groups representing issues of communities affected by oil exploration, urban issues, agro-industry and mining.

Cheryl Polutan from Lilak, Philippines represented WAMA at the meeting. She gave a presentation on the origin of WAMA and our work on exposing environmental destruction and human rights violations of the mining industry as well as demanding state accountability to the rights of communities, giving case studies from the local campaigns in Philippines (Didipio and Masbate). She was also invited to give this presentation during a public forum organised by CSOs in Guatemala.

5. United Nations Business and Human Rights Forum (November 2019)



This year, members of WAMA participated in the 8th edition of the UN Forum on Business and Human Rights. The focus of this year's forum was "Time to act: Governments as catalysts for business respect for human rights".

We set up a WAMA stand at the forum, through which we showcased our case studies and communication material, and interacted with participants from different countries regarding the work done by our network. Our members actively participated in sessions by raising questions to government representatives present at the forum. Ashok Shrimali from India raised a question in the plenary session 'Voices from the Ground' on the responsibilities of international financial institutions (IFIs) in the context of human rights and environmental standards, inherent rights of indigenous communities, and violations on women and children's rights giving examples of case studies from India. He also raised questions in other sessions, on the violations of FPIC and forceful manner in which it is being conducted in India and Asia, the impact on local livelihoods due to international investments and the need for IFIs to consider the 'law of the land' in the countries they are investing in. Ariunzul Ocher from Mongolia asked a question regarding the inclusion of gender in National Action Plans on 'Business and Human Rights' giving examples of water contamination due to mining operations in Mongolia and requested them to share best practices of this being done in other countries.

PUBLICATIONS

1. [WAMA Declaration Brochure \(Presented at the Forum UNBHR 2019\)](#)
2. [Community Resource Guide for Monitoring Extractives](#)

1. [Indonesia defers contentious bills on mining and land reform](#)
2. [Arrest of Indonesian anti-mining activists](#)
3. [Mining turns Indonesian seas red](#)
4. [Demand for return of land to IPs after suspension of Oceana Gold Operations in Phillipine](#)
5. [IFC's watchdog to launch an investigation into World Bank's support for coal expansion in](#)
6. [Can a mining fund provide relief to silicosis widows of Rajasthan?](#)
7. [Amendments made to DMF in Chattisgarh, India to empower mining-affected people](#)
8. [Audit reports reveal that Coal India slipping on environmental norms](#)
9. [Follow the Money: A guide on mapping investment chains](#)
10. [Report by London Mining Network and War on Want on 'Post Extractivist Transition'](#)