CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION:

The development experience of the highly industrialised north and the slowly south, among other things, indicates the tragic fact that there has been a mismatch between the prosperity of the employer and that of the workers. With full control over the means of production, particularly in private sector, the owners have been able to take for themselves a substantial proportion of economic gains, only an insignificant proportion of the gain is passed on the working class. This type of situation is more pronounced in the mining industry and that to in the developing industries like India. One of the reasons for the situation being the unorganised and ill-organised nature of the toiling class. The workers in the mining activity continue to wriggle and struggle in the vicious circle of poverty, ill-health and socio-economic stagnation. Barring a few exceptions where the employers are benevolent, the mining workers have been living at subsistence level.

The situation in the mining is qualitatively different when we observe the problems of mining workers in the region. The district has been known in the history of the ruins of vijayanagar empire and its high quality of iron ore. The excavation of
iron ore and manganese ore in the modern sense has been taking place since the early 1950's. With over 46 years of mining history in the district, the workers engaged in the mining activity have not been experiencing any striking change in their working and living conditions except in the case of a few big mining companies where workers are also organised the workers in general are subjected to a number of socio-economic psychological stresses and strains. Their problems are likely to acquire some new dimensions with the massive investment in the iron and steel sector and its feeder industry namely, mining industry. Nearly 15 thousand crore rupees is expected to flow into the iron and steel sector of the district in 3 to 4 years from now. This massive investment will have its impact on mining activity in the district and specially on the working and living conditions of the mining workers. It is so more in the case of the mining workers working in the two mining predominant villages of Hospet taluk, R. Pampapathi mines in jambunatha halli village and R.B.Shet mines in Kariganur.

Most of the problems faced by mining workers for generations, are found in kariganur and jambunatha halli villages for diverse reasons, they have not been able to exhibit perceptible improvement in their physical quality of life as viewed in terms of nutritional level, educational level, health facilities, consumption pattern, standard of living etc. Their wages do not seem to reflect the continuously rising cost of living due to inflationary situation. Illiterate and illorganised as they are,
they have not been to articulate themselves, nor they have been able to find somebody to represent their grievances effectively. It is in their background that the study is undertaken to identify their problems and prospectus.

Statement of the problems:

Keeping in view the importance of mining labour problems and its impact on mining operations, efficiency, and productivity, an inquiry is attempted by the researcher to study the nature and extent of socio-economic problems of mining labour in Kariganur and Jambunatha Halli mining regions. The inquiry is caused into the life of the workers in relation to their family and their working conditions, the employees in the selected iron ore mines i.e., Kariganur and Jambunatha Halli. To know the workers' condition in relation to his health and education and food habits, hobbies and habits and to assess the welfare measures available to the mining workers and to suggest policy measures.

Importance of the study of mining labour problems:

The present study, as its title suggests, is a study of socio-economic problems of mining workers in Kariganur and Jambunatha Halli mines. It is an empirical inquiry into the living conditions of the mining workers. The study is confined to only two villages, namely, Kariganur and Jambunatha Halli. From these
two villages 150 workers have been selected, 80 from R.Pompapathi mines of jambunatha halli and 70 from R.B.Seth mines of Kariganur have been selected as samples.

Of the total 150, 100 workers are men and 50 workers are women. In the absence of time series data, the study does not undertake any intertemporal analysis, by and large it is a study of existing socio-economic conditions of the mining workers.

The present study claims its importance by making a substantial addition to the existing understanding of a diverse socio-economic problems of mining workers in the region. In these two villages mining workers are facing socio-economic and education and health problems.

The findings of study would be of use for policy making both as the employer level and government level in alleviating the socio-economic problems of the mining workers.
The main objectives of the study are as follows:

1) To study the social conditions of mining workers in the region.

2) To assess the economic conditions of the mining workers in the two selected villages namely Jambunatha Halli and Kariganur.

3) To identify the educational levels and health facilities available to the mining workers.

4) To analyse the labour welfare measures adapted and implemented to safeguard the interest of the employees by the employers and the government.

5) To focus on some of the issues relating to policy making.

6) To study the safety measures provided by the employers to the mining workers.
Methodology:

The present study is basically an empirical enquiry into the socio-economic problems of mining workers in the kariganur and jambunatha halli mining regions of Hospet taluk. Adequate theoretical explanation has been provided wherever it is found necessary. The entire study is based on the primary source of data. The data ascertained by administrating a detailed questionnaire to all the selected 150 respondents. The data are interpreted and evaluated keeping the principal objectives of the study at the center of the analysis. To give quantitative touch the empirical analysis a few simple statistical tools are used. Apart from that the discussion of the researcher with the management's and the officers concerned has also gone into the inquiry.

Collection of data:

The present study is basically an empirical inquiry into the socio-economic problems of mining workers in the kariganur and jambunatha halli mining regions of Hospet taluk. However, wherever necessary adequate theoretical explanation is provided. The entire study is based on the primary source of data. The data are ascertained by administrating a detailed questionnaire to all the selected 150 respondents. The data are interpreted and evaluated keeping the principal objectives of the study at the center of the analysis.
Tools of Analysis:

The data is processed and analysed with the help of such key variables such as age, education, sex, caste, occupation, emigration etc. Statistical tools like percentage and averages were used where ever and when ever necessary.

Chapter scheme:

Keeping the objectives of the study in view, the dissertation is split into 6 chapters. The first chapter being introductory in nature, statement of the problem, importance of the study of mining labour problems, with what is proposed to be done and how it is proposed to be done. The second chapter is designed to analyse the fundamental issues of mining laborers in general. The third chapter involves the review of literature. The fourth chapter presents the profile of the region. An analysis and interpretation of data is done in the fifth chapter. The last chapter presents the principal findings and policy implications which would be use full to the government and management’s in formulating and implementing labour policies.

Limitations of the study:

The study confines to a limited area of two villages from a vast mining area extended over Sandur, Bellary and Hospet taluks of Bellary district. The findings of the study may be applicable to the other mining villages of the district. However, the author can not claim the applicability of the findings of this study to the mining areas in other parts of the state and the country.