

# COMPENSATION PROBLEMS OF COAL MINE WORKERS OF BALUCHISTAN, PAKISTAN

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## Abstract

The average injury trend, in coal workers of province Baluchistan, Pakistan, is 25% which exceeds the injury rate in any coal mining country of the world. The death toll in Baluchistan coal fields is more than 150% as compared to U.S.A. and Australia, whereas, the compensation paid to coal workers in case of death is 50% of the compensation paid in India and China, the neighboring countries having similar working conditions. Moreover, there is no concept of compensation against the injuries occurred during mining. In comparison to India and china, the number of death occurred in Baluchistan against the coal produced in million tonnes is significantly higher. The monthly wages paid to coal workers in Baluchistan as compared to India and china are just 20%, whereas the other allied facilities like payments against complete/partial disability medical facilities, pension, commodities and education, etc., are not offered in Baluchistan as other countries of Mining world.

**Keywords:** Coal mining, Coal workers, Paid wages, Allied facilities, Compensation problems, Baluchistan.

## Introduction

In Baluchistan, underground mining is carried out which varies upto thousands of feet in depth. There are about 240 leased mines in Baluchistan and approximately 40,000 coal workers (Mine and Mineral Department, 2008). The mines have been leased out to the private firms but are abide by the Pakistan Mine Act 1923 rules and regulations. There is no specific check and balance for the implementation of working hour's rules; it's on the wish of coal workers and mine owners. Though as per mines act 1923, 8 hours in a day and 48 hours in a week should be followed but normally the average working hours ranges between 12-15 due to which the coal workers become more prone to occupational diseases and injuries. The average of monthly wages varies between Rupees (Rs) 4,000 to 8,000, which is the lowest in the world. A lump sum payment of Rs.200,000/- is paid in case of death from the mine owners in the shape of claim, which can't be the cost of a human life at all. No pension,

monetary benefits, provident fund, or gratuity system is available for the poor dependent family. Occupational disease, like, Tuberculosis, Asthma, bronchitis, pneumoconiosis, lung cancer, chest problem, etc., are neither cover under the act 1923 nor treated well in the hospitals. There is no well defined concept of injury in the coal workers of Baluchistan as in the rest of world. Occasionally in case of minor injuries, the first aid is provided but in case of major injuries the coal workers report to the public hospitals, where few hundreds of Rupees are sponsored by the mine owners whereas most of the expenditures are born by the coal worker himself. The time during which the injured miner remains away from work, is never been calculated nor its being paid which is contrary to the practice in coal producing countries. Another dilemma is the deduction made from the workers pay against those no. of days in which they remained away from duty due to injury. In case of any types of disability, the coal worker is the one who has to

suffer (Edwent, 2008). He has to bear mostly treatment expenditure. On disability, he loses the job and does not get any benefit rather he becomes the permanent burdon on his family and the society. Security use of updated mining equipment, enforcement of safety laws and effective insurance policies are the key elements of instrumental law and policy (Pandita, 2002), which are quite scarce in Baluchistan.

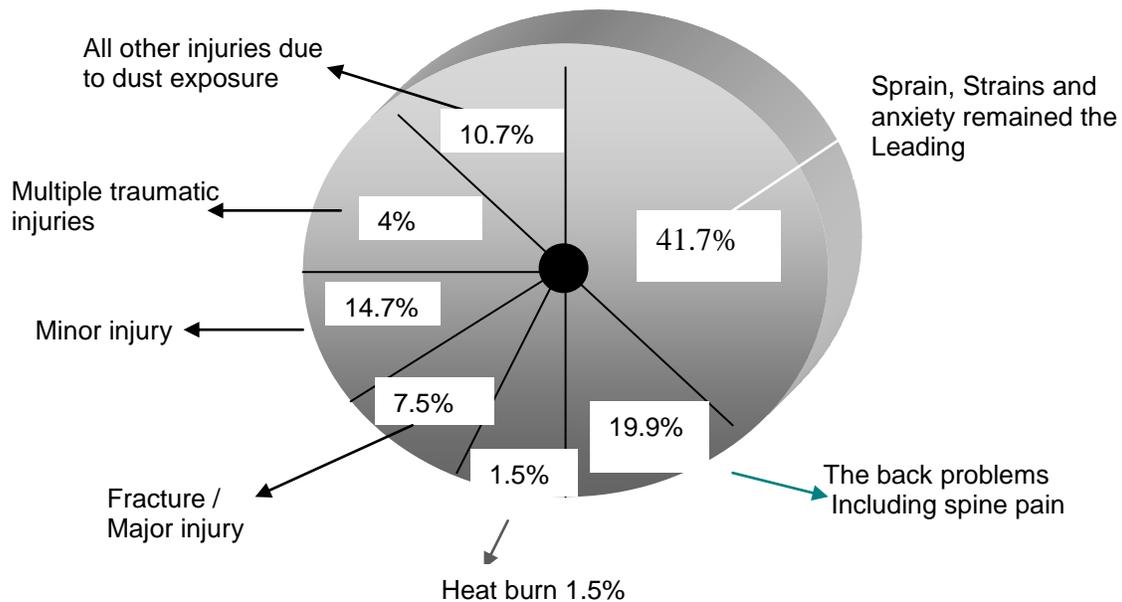
**Description of the Study Area**

The prospective study was conducted on Coal mine workers of Baluchistan from May 2008 to April 2009. Two types of data were collected. Primary data was obtained through topographic survey and questionnaire while Secondary data about the Compensation Problems (death/injuries rate, pension, wages, medical facilities, compensation and other allied facilities) of coal mine workers of Baluchistan were collected from Mine and Mineral Department of Quetta, Labours Welfare Compensation Board, Quetta, hospitals and medical facilities in coal mine field areas and Insurance companies. A total of three minefields were selected depending upon Geographical location, types of mining carried out and type of

coal extracted. For the simplicity and to be more specific in results, the selected coal mine fields Mach, So-range-Degari, and Chamalong coal fields were further subdivided as M1, M2, and M3 at Mach coal field, SD1, SD2 and SD3 at So-range-Degari and C1, C2 and C3 at Chamalong coal field.

**Results and Discussions**

**Nature of injuries/disabilities:** During the study, it was noticed that no injury/disability record of coal workers is being maintained at any level, like, at coal fields, by the coal mine owners, or in the hospitals or Governmental Agencies, like, mine and mineral department of Baluchistan, etc. The Survey of medical facilities where the coal workers used to get treatment says that coal workers mostly suffer the diseases as shown in Fig. 1. Its quite evident that most frequently occurring injuries are due to strain/stress, and back problems due to working position in the coal mine. The main reasons are inadequate working facilities, non-availability of modern mining techniques and allied facilities at site (Edwards, 2000). This injury trend can be compared with a developed country, like, U.S.A. (see Table 1).



**Fig. 1. Types of injuries coal workers suffer.**

**Table 1. Comparison of injuries due to occupation in Baluchistan vs. U.S.A.**

Sr.No.	Nature of Occupation	Percentage of Injury	
		Baluchistan (Pakistan)	U.S.A
1.	Continuous Mine Operator	45.7	29.6
2.	Mine Helper	44.9	32.7
3.	Loader / (labour)	46.2	45.4
4.	Shuttle Car operator (Belt conveyer)	27.5	38.1
5.	Load haul dump (Truck Loader)	34.5	26.5

If we see the statistics as shown in Table 1, we can easily make out that the Baluchistan is leading in all steps of mining and this is just because of negligence from all stake-holders, No one is ever bother to force the mine owners to import the new mining and mine safety equipment, adaptation of new mining techniques installation of coal dust and gases control devices or just to ensure the safety measures. If only pay and other allied benefits are increased then the working hours of coal workers will automatically be reduced and resultantly the injury trend will decline (James, 2005); for better comprehension the comparison can be represented graphically (Fig. 2).

**Age contribution in injury:** Another important factor which can lead us to evaluate the reason of high fatalities rate in Baluchistan coal field is the age factor of coal worker. This indicates at what age the coal workers are more prone to injury/disability (Joef, 2005). A comparison between the

Baluchistan and U.S.A. has been shown below in Table 2.

Table 2 shows that the injury trends, in old age coal workers of Baluchistan, are more pronounce especially in 45 and above age workers. The reason is quite obvious that coal mining upto 45 years of age is more than enough. up to this age the coal workers remained exposed to coal dust, coal gases, coal effluents for longer duration and they develop multiple diseases, moreover working under similar conditions/ positions make them prone to different types of stress and strain and at time they are unable to handle the equipment (Kathleen, 2002). Their perception/reaction becomes so poor that they are unable to respond (Rather, 2006); inadequate medical facilities and their financial position force them working without treatment. So, limited weekly and monthly hours and certain age can save their lives to maximum extend (Emrick, 2007). The results can be represented graphically (see Fig. 3).

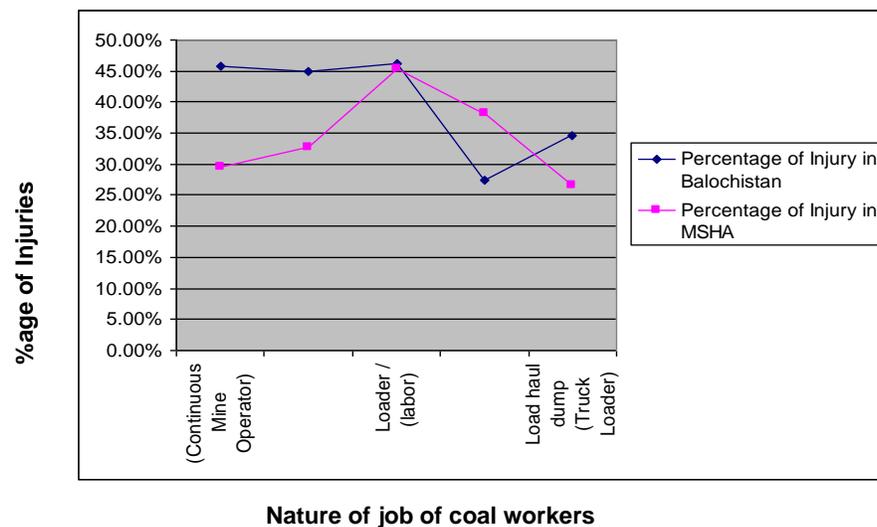
**Fig. 2. Comparison of occupational injuries in coal workers of Baluchistan vs. U.S.A.**

Table 2. Contribution of age factor in injury/disability trends in coal workers of Baluchistan vs. U.S.A.

Sr.No.	Nature of occupation	Total %age of coal workers with respect to occupation in Baluchistan	%age of injury/disability amongst various age group in Baluchistan out of total %age			Total %age of coal workers with respect to occupation in U.S.A	%age of injury/disability amongst various age group in U.S.A. out of total %age		
			18-34	35-44	45 and above		18-34	35-44	45 and above
1.	Continuous Miner	45.7	4.7	12.5	28.5	29.6	6	7.4	16
2.	Mine Helper	44.9	3.9	11.2	29.8	32.7	7	10.9	11.9
3.	Mine (Loader)	46.2	7.5	13.2	25.5	45.4	8.10	16	21.3
4.	Shuttle Car Operator (Belt conveyor)	27.5	5.2	8.9	13.4	38.1	7.13	11.2	19.77
5.	Dump Truck loader	34.5	2.7	14.9	16.9	26.5	3.9	8.2	14.4

Source: USA and data collected during research work.

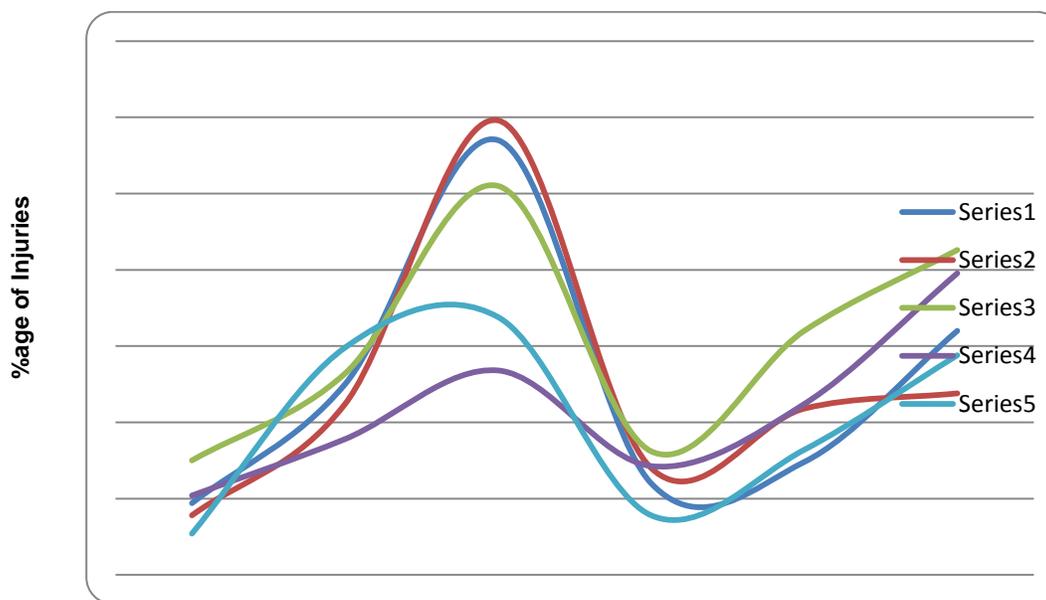


Fig. 3. Comparisons of rising trends in injuries/disability in coal workers of Baluchistan and USA

**Payment of compensation:** In coal mining industry all over the world as per labours law, compensation is offered in case of death (Anjan, 1998). A five year comparison has been shown in Table 3 between different coal producing countries for the payment of compensation in case of death.

In Table 3, we see maximum deaths in China because maximum coal is produced in China, whose 75-80% of economy depends on energy produced by coal (Xion, 2006). Whereas in

Baluchistan, we do not produce compatible coal, moreover our economy does not depend on energy produced by coal, but the rise in death as compared to U.S.A. and Australia is quite high which is just because of non provision of safety equipment, obsolete methods of mining and non-adherence to safety measures. Similarly, we can compare the compensation paid against fatal injuries with Asian countries where maximum coal is produced.

**Table 3. Comparison of annual Death of Coal Workers in Baluchistan (Pakistan), U.S.A, Australia and China for last five years.**

Sr.No.	Country	Death cases				
		2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
1.	Australia	8	7	2	4	5
2.	U.S.A	4	12	26	15	14
3.	Pakistan (in Baluchistan)	77	246	180	345	78
4.	China	3938	3306	4746	3712	3302

Source: Occupational injuries in Australia, USA and Baluchistan (Pakistan).

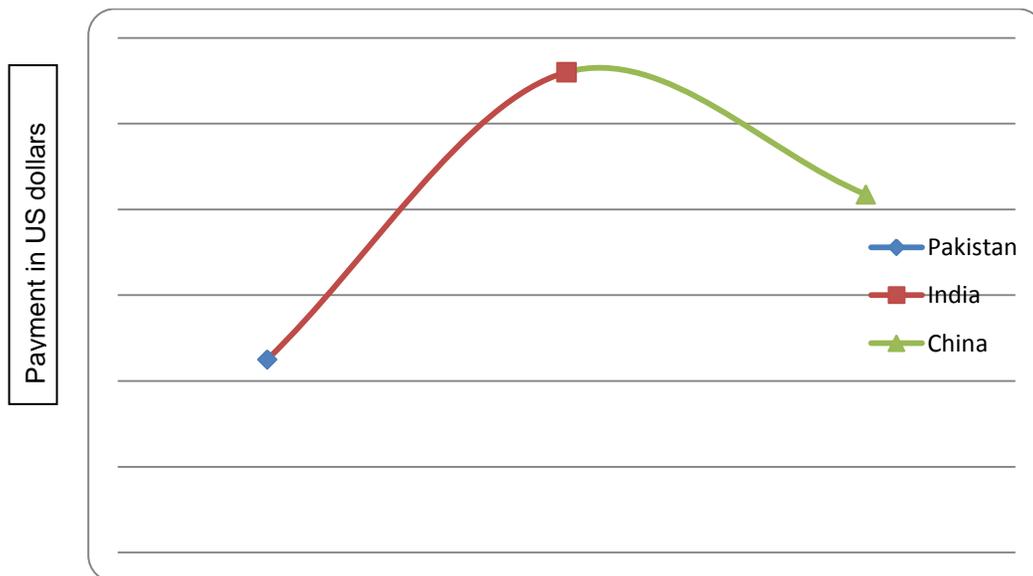
Table 4 shows the lot of difference in monthly wages or compensation paid to coal workers of Baluchistan as compared to other countries of the same region. The obvious reasons to work on such a poor package are poverty, joblessness, illiteracy and family pressure. The necessity to revise the compensation amount is not felt by the Government even if at the devaluation of Rupee and price hike for each commodity. It is pertinent to point out here that in Baluchistan, there is no concept of payment against partial/complete disability, work time lost due to injury/illness or casual/sick leave. If a coal worker faces some problems as mentioned above,

he has to suffer himself. The results can be represented graphically in Fig. 4).

**Table 4. Comparison of Workers Compensation paid against fatal injury/death.**

Sr. No.	Country	Payments Made against Fatal injury in \$
1	Pakistan (in Baluchistan)	2250
2	India	5600
3	China	4175

Source. Amrc 2008 and data collected from different department of Baluchistan (Pakistan).



**Fig. 4. Comparison of compensation paid to coal workers in case of fatal injury.**

**Conclusion:** Though many researches are being conducted all over the coal mining countries for

the improvement in coal extraction techniques, to overcome the emission rate of methane and

carbon and thus to reduce the death and injury rate and environmental degradation. Efforts have also been made to overcome and reduce the toxicity of coal effluents on the health of the coal workers. The wages, compensation, disability rate, pension, insurance policies and other allied facilities have also been reviewed with the passage of time to uplift the quality of life of coal workers and their families all over the world, but in Pakistan especially in Baluchistan, no such measures have been taken by the Government and mine owners. The monthly wages, disability benefit, handsome compensation and other allied facilities are not available to the coal workers of Baluchistan. The mitigation measures as adopted in the rest of the mining world in the shape of new mining techniques, methodology to reduce the emission of gases and other coal effluents, use of personnel and mine safety equipment, disposal techniques of coal effluents, revision of wages, disability benefits, compensation and other allied facilities have neither been adopted by the Government of Baluchistan nor appreciated by the coal mine owners.

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