

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1370

ANSWERED ON:07.12.2015

Bonded Labour

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Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether forced and bonded labour system continues to persist both in the urban/backward and rural areas despite its abolition in the country and if so, the details thereof along with the reasons therefor;
- (b) the number of cases reported under the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976 during each of the last three years and the current year, year-wise and State/ UT-wise along with the action taken by the Government against the guilty during the said period;
- (c) the number of bonded labourers including men, women and child bonded labourers identified, released and rehabilitated along with the funds provided to the States under the Bonded Labourers Rehabilitation scheme during the said period, State/UT-wise; and
- (d) the corrective steps taken by the Government to completely abolish bonded labour system in the country?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (IC) FOR LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT
(SHRI BANDARU DATTATREYA)

(a): Instances of prevalence of forced and bonded labour system are noticed now and then even after its abolition by law with effect from 25th October, 1975. The reasons are spelt out exhaustively at Section 2(g) of The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976. The root of the problem lies in the social customs and economic compulsions and they are yet to change in the desired direction.
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(b): Action against the guilty under the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976 is taken by the respective State/UT Governments. Under the Act, the District Magistrate has been conferred with the powers of Judicial Magistrate of first class for convicting the perpetrators of bonded labour system. The Act provides for punishment of imprisonment for a term upto three years and fine upto Rupees Two thousand for extracting bonded labour. The Central Government does not maintain records in respect of the number of cases reported under the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976 and the action taken by the State/UT Government against the guilty.

(c): The number of Bonded Labourers including men, women and child bonded labourers identified, released and rehabilitated and the assistance towards Central share released to the State/UT Governments under the Bonded Labourers Rehabilitation scheme during the last three years and the current year is annexed.

(d): The Constitution of India vide Art.23 prohibits forced labour following which the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976 has been enacted. The Act empowers Executive Magistrates to exercise powers of Judicial Magistrate of first or second class for trial of offences. The Act provides for Vigilance Committees at District and Sub-divisional levels to identify and rehabilitate bonded labourers. In order to assist the State/UT Governments in the task of rehabilitation of identified and released bonded labourers, a Centrally Sponsored Plan Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labour is under operation since 1978. Under the scheme, rehabilitation assistance @ Rs. 20,000/- per bonded labourer released is provided which is equally shared by the Central and the State/UT Government. In the case of North Eastern States, the entire financial assistance is borne by the Central Government.

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