

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT
RAJYA SABHA**

**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 347
TO BE ANSWERED ON 20.07.2016**

RISING NUMBER OF BONDED LABOURERS

†347. SHRI LAL SINH VADODIA:

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

- (a) whether it is a fact that the number of bonded labourers in the country is constantly on the rise;**
- (b) if so, whether Government proposes to take any steps to check this; and**
- (c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?**

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.

As per the information received from the States, the number of bonded labourers released and rehabilitated as on 31.03.2016 is as under:

Contd..2/-

Name of the State	Released and Rehabilitated
Andhra Pradesh	31,687
Arunachal Pradesh	2992
Bihar	14,577
Chhattisgarh	2215
Gujarat	64
Haryana	92
Jharkhand	196
Karnataka	58,348
Kerala	710
Madhya Pradesh	12,392
Maharashtra	1,325
Odisha	47,313
Punjab	252
Rajasthan	6556
Tamil Nadu	65,573
Uttar Pradesh	37,788
Uttaranchal	5
West Bengal	344
TOTAL	2,82,429

(b) & (c): Under the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976, it is the responsibility of State governments to identify, released and rehabilitate the bonded labour. In order to assist the State Governments in the task of rehabilitation of identified and released bonded labourers, a Centrally Sponsored Plan Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labour was in operation since May, 1978. Under the Scheme, rehabilitation assistance @ Rs. 20,000 per bonded labour was provided which was equally borne by the Central and State Governments.

The Government has revamped the Centrally Sponsored Plan Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labourers with effect from 17th May, 2016. The revamped scheme is known as 'Central Sector Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labourer, 2016'. The salient features of the Scheme are as under:

Contd..3/-

- (1) The revised scheme is a Central Sector Scheme. The State Government is not required to pay any matching contribution for the purpose of cash rehabilitation assistance.**
- (2) Financial assistance has been increased from Rs. 20,000/- to one lakh per adult male beneficiary, Rs. 2 lakh for child labour & women and Rs. 3 lakh to trans-genders, or woman or children rescued from ostensible sexual exploitation.**
- (3) The above cash benefit is additional to other land and housing elements etc.**
- (4) The amount of assistance for survey of bonded labourers is Rs. 4.50 lakh per district.**
- (5) The release of rehabilitation assistance has been linked with conviction of the accused.**
- (6) Scheme provides for creation of District Bonded Labour Rehabilitation Fund with a permanent corpus of at least Rs. 10 lakh at the disposal of the District Magistrate for extending immediate help to the released bonded labourers.**
- (7) The fund is released by the Ministry under the Scheme directly to the District National Child Labour Project Society and the District Project Society in turn releases the fund to the implementing agencies including district administration for the purpose of the Bonded Labourer Rehabilitation Scheme forthwith.**
- (8) Transfer of benefits to beneficiary account is on DBT (Direct Benefit Transfer) mode from District National Child Labour Project Society for cutting delay.**
- (9) Special care is made available by the State for addressing the needs of the disabled persons, female freed bonded labourers and bonded child labour by providing safe and secure environment for the capacity building of child bonded labourers, facilities for ensuring their proper education, short stay home till education upto class 12th, Skill development, marriage assistance etc.**

Apart from the Scheme, a perspective vision document has also been prepared for total abolition of Bonded Labour. A copy thereof is annexed.

Preparation of Fifteen – Year Vision Document (2030), Seven Year Strategy Document (2017-18 to 2023-24) and Three-Year Action Plan (2017-18 to 2019-20) of the Ministry of Labour & Employment on Total Abolition of Bonded Labour

Perspective (15 years)

- (i) To identify, release and rehabilitate an estimated 1.84 crore Bonded Labourers
- (ii) To strengthen the prosecution machinery and reaching 100% conviction rate for preventing creation of new bondages
- (iii) To deal with the altered forms of bondage such as organized begging, forced prostitution, commercial sexual exploitation, forced marriage, forced recruitment for insurgency activities, domestic service, etc. under the BLS (A) Act.
- (iv) To pay special attention to the needs of child, women, transgender, disabled and vulnerable people rescued from aggravated conditions of servitude
- (v) To adopt convergence approach at district level for complete rehabilitation and state care including vocational training, general education, marriage, etc.
- (vi) To provide a sustainable monthly earning system for preventing return to bondage

Strategy (07 years)

- (i) To bring down the number of bonded labourers to 50% of the present estimate
- (ii) To augment the annual budget to cater to the needs of at least 12 lakh bonded labourers
- (iii) To strengthen the labour enforcement machinery so as to provide due and admissible relief under the provisions of Contract Labour Act 1970, ISMW Act 1979, BOCW Act 1996, Maternity Benefit Act and Minimum Wages Act
- (iv) To amend the labour laws relating to organized sector to widen the ambit of coverage of the vulnerable workers including released bonded labourers within their fold

Action Plan (03 Years)

- (i) To monitor bonded labour cases through the regular criminal justice system
- (ii) To release the rehabilitation grants to the district national child labour project society for speedy assistance through DBT mechanism
- (iii) To have a district level Rehabilitation Fund with a minimum corpus of Rs.10 lakh at the disposal of District Magistrate for immediate cash assistance
- (iv) Awareness Generation programmes in 18 states (one in each State per year)
- (v) Reconnaissance Survey of bonded labour system in 18 states @ two per State per annum
- (vi) Evaluatory studies in 18 states (one in each state per year)