

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

**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 130
TO BE ANSWERED ON 04.02.2019**

NUMBER OF SLAVES IN THE COUNTRY

130. SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI:

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

- (a) whether a survey funded by US Government has assessed the number of slaves in India between 14-18 million, the highest in the world and if so, the details thereof;**
- (b) whether this report may have an adverse impact on the image and exports from the country;**
- (c) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto;**
- (d) whether the Government has taken up the matter with ILO regarding the fact revealed in the said report; and**
- (e) if so, the details thereof and further steps taken/being taken by the Government to improve country's image vis-à-vis reducing number of slaves in the country?**

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE (IC) FOR LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT
(SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR)**

(a): No such report has been received.

(b) & (c): Does not arise.

(d): A private NGO, namely Walk Free Foundation in partnership with ILO had come out with the Report on "Global estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage, 2017". However, the report did not specifically mention any data pertaining to India. Objections to the use and definition of the term 'Modern Slavery' have been raised by India at various fora such as ILO. We have taken up this matter with ILO at the highest level and Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment has written to Director General, ILO twice on this matter.

(e): The Bonded Labour System has been abolished by law throughout the country with effect from 25th October, 1975 under the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Ordinance which was replaced by the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976. Instances of prevalence of bonded labour system are noticed now and then even after its abolition. The root of the problem lies in the social customs and economic compulsions.

Under the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976 identification, release and rehabilitation of freed bonded labour is the direct responsibility of the concerned State Government/union territory. For these functions, District Magistrates and Sub-Divisional Magistrates have been entrusted with certain duties/responsibilities.

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 has been in operation since May, 1978. The Government has revamped the Centrally Sponsored Plan Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labourers with effect from 17th May, 2016. The salient features of the 'Central Sector Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labourer, 2016' are as under:

(1) Financial assistance is provided for rehabilitation of a rescued bonded labourer at the rate of rupees one lakh for adult male beneficiary, Rs. 2 lakh for special category beneficiaries such as children including orphans or those rescued from organized & forced begging rings or other forms of forced child labour, and women and Rs. 3 lakh in cases of bonded or forced labour involving extreme cases of deprivation or marginalization such as trans-genders, or women or children rescued from ostensible sexual exploitation such as brothels, massage parlours, placement agencies etc., or trafficking, or in cases of differently abled persons, or in situations where the District Magistrate deems fit.

(2) The financial assistance for rehabilitation is 100% funded by the Central Government.

(3) The Scheme also provides for financial assistance of Rs. 4.50 lakh per district to the States for conducting survey of bonded labourers, Rs. 1.00 Lakh for evaluatory studies and Rs. 10 Lakhs per

State per annum for awareness generation. Central Government will give 50% of the amount required for conducting Survey, Awareness Generation and Evaluatory Studies in advance. A State may conduct survey once in every three years per sensitive district. A State may conduct five Evaluatory Studies per year.

(4) The release of rehabilitation assistance has been linked with conviction of the accused. However, immediate assistance upto Rs. 20,000/- may be provided to the rescued bonded labour by the District Administration irrespective of the status of conviction proceedings.

(5) The Scheme provides for creation of a Bonded Labour Rehabilitation Fund at District level by each State 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.

(6) The benefits prescribed above shall be, in addition to, other cash or non-cash benefits which a beneficiary under this scheme is entitled to, by or under any other scheme or law applicable for the time being in force.
