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GOVERNMENT OF MAHARASHTRA



The Practice of Bonded Labour

(Background—Extent—Hurdles—Measures—Suggestions)

BY

TRIBAL RESEARCH & TRAINING INSTITUTE

PUNE-411 001

1979

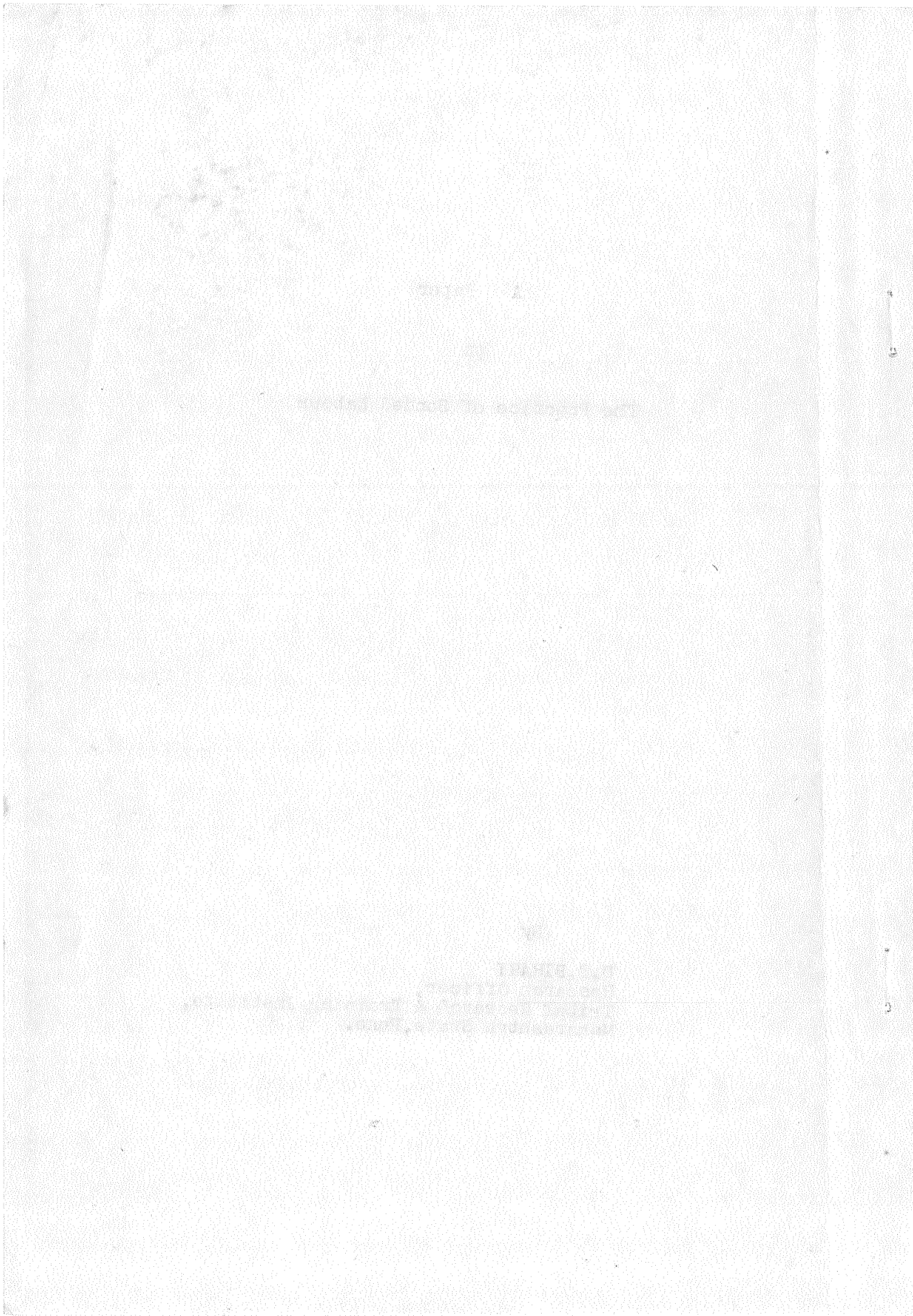
A Paper

on

The Practice of Bonded Labour

By

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FORWARD

Our Institute is mainly involved in the Studies and Research pertaining to problems of the tribals. Bonded labour system, even if it prevails in any pocket of India is a disgrace to Indian society and a challenge to the planners and administrators of the concerned State. This pernicious practice has been identified recently for its existence in many States of India.

In order to acquaint those who want to know the origin, nature, extent and causes of the practice of bonded labour, so also the measures taken by Government, Shri D.T. Birari, Research Officer of this Institute has written this paper covering many aspects of the problem. Some measures to eradicate the practice are also suggested.

I hope, the paper will satisfy the curiosity of the concerned general readers.

The reading of the paper will help bring about social awareness of the problem, and therein lies the object of our publication of the paper.

June, 1979.
Pune-411001.

(Dr.G.M.GARE)
Director,
Tribal Research & Training Institute,
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SECRET

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Although the Tribal Development programmes of the State Governments are slowly changing the face of tribal areas in their economic aspect and trying hard to bring the tribal people on par with the general populace, we can hardly claim to have done much for the people and the area. Consequently, even today we can locate some pockets of tribal areas where the most sub-human system of bonded labour continues in the country.

Shri D.T.Birari, Research Officer of this Institute has written this paper on the bonded labour system covering its varied aspects. This is not a research study. He could draw upon some good sources for his information. The paper is the outcome of his reading, and so he is very much thankful to the writers and publishers of the sources of information. In particular, he is thankful to Dr. S.D.Punekar for his book with a Chapter on bonded labour and Shri Hassain Dalwai for his article "Bonded labour continues" in Economics and Political Weekly (May 28, 1977). He has also drawn on another article "Bonded labour - invisible to official eyes" published in the same Weekly (November 6, 1976), for which he is thankful to the Publisher of the Weekly.

June, 1979.
Pune.

D.T.BIRARI
Research Officer.

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During the period discussed, the Government of the United States and its agencies have been actively engaged in the study of the economic situation in the United States and the world. The results of this study are being made available to the public through the publication of reports and bulletins. The Government is also engaged in the study of the economic situation in the United States and the world, and the results of this study are being made available to the public through the publication of reports and bulletins.

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THE PRACTICE OF BONDED LABOUR

(Background - extent - hurdles - measures - suggestions)

Paper
The ~~Report~~ has been designed to deal with the problem to cover its following aspects.

- 1) Historical background in brief
- 2) Some ~~x~~ case-studies
- 3) The magnitude of the malady and diagnosis
- 4) Hurdles towards abolition
- 5) Attempts at abolition of the system
- 6) Need for social action, and steps to eradicate the system.

It is intended to sketch in outline the first three aspects while dealing in depth with the remaining important aspects.

(1) Historical background in brief

Bonded labour, briefly speaking is a phenomenon of economic servitude of one kind, which engulfs thousands of hapless ~~hopeless~~ men, women and even children and slowly ruins them under the tyranny of usurpious landlords and moneylenders especially in rural areas and hilly tracts.

Debt-slavery was known even as early as the Aryan period. During Buddhist period, "Milindpanho" gives a record of instances wherein the father gave away a child into slavery because he could not bring him up property. Kotilya framed rules to restrict the rigours of mortgaged persons. There were closed links between slavery and hierarchical caste-system. Shudras had no rights in

Chaturvarnya system. Caste-system passed on "Master-slave" relationship. This institution underwent changes in course of times. It also existed in Mughal periods as well as the Maratha periods. Emperor Akbar in 16th century had noted it and he had tried to abolish it. Many hill tribes had been bondsmen since Maratha period. The British empire saw millions suffering from the rigours of hereditary bondage. The Independent sovereign democratic India witnesses it even today in many States like Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Karnatak, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Maharashtra etc. We quote below some case-studies brought by in an Article by Husain Dalwai published in Economics and Politics Weekly of May 28, ~~1972~~ 1977.

(2) Some case studies

(1) Jethya Ragho Vanaga - a Warli from Gowade village of Palghar tahsil in Thane district of Maharashtra. He and his wife are working with the moneylender for the last 12 years for a loan (whose exact figure they do not know) taken to purchase cloth in their marriage. Today it is a loan of Rs. 700/- at current prices in return for which two persons have mortgaged their human services for 12 years so far, and still the loan is unpaid.

(2) Govind Mahadeo Page was working from his childhood with one moneylender in Dahanu taluka in return for a small amount of loan for marriage. Soon after marriage, the moneylender possessed forcibly Page's wife to which act Page tried to react. He began beating his

wife. In response, the money-lender gave him good beating. He fled away. Soon he got frustrated and came back and began working again with the moneylender ungrudgingly.

(3) Ramesh Babu Bhoir of Vishrampur village took a loan of Rs. 111.75 from a moneylender. In exchange he and his sister have been working as labour with the landlord. On some festival, Ramesh remained absent for work for which crime, he and his father got merciless beating from the landlord. Ramesh ran away. His father paid Rs. 300/- in cash and 3 mounds of paddy and still the moneylender claims Rs. 1200/- as balance. Ramash made an application on November 15, 1976 to Tahsildar, but still his case might be untouched. To protect himself, he has not still touched the boundary of his village.

We again quote below two cases from Madhya Pradesh brought out in an article "Bonded Labour - invisible to official eyes" published in Economics & Politics Weekly of November 6, ~~xxxxx~~ 1976.

1) Mehtab Singh:- A hali (bonded labour) of Ratanpal had taken Rs. 300/- as loan. One day he struck work. Ratanlal's sons beat him. He fled to Ratlam, (M.P.) and filed petition to the Chief Minister. He did not return to his village. Meanwhile his wife has been forced to share Ratanlal's bed.

2) Chunilal - a chamar in Delanpur village in Ratlam tahsil (M.P.) is a hali who had taken Rs. 700/- at 24% interest two years before. Today his loan stands at Rs. 1500/-. He repays Rs. 90/- p.m. He is now landless.

Gold ornaments are mortgaged. His loan lingers and grows. Had he heard of debt redemption? Yes. The committee had gone to Dalanpur. But Giridhari - a sarpanch from whom he had taken the loan is on the panel of implementation. So Chunilal is still in debt. No land has been allotted to him. When asked if he would like to stop serving as Hali, he only smiled nervously. The sarpanch himself told the committee for him : "What can be do, poor fellow. He would otherwise starve. Halis have been here and will always be here. His father was also a hali". Chunilal shook his head in approval.

Thus these are the sample grief-stricken stories of Jethya and Ramesh in Palghar (Maharashtra) and Mehtab Singh and Chunilal in Ratlam (M.P.).

(3) The magnitude of malady and diagnosis

Bonded labour is existing in many states though it is known by different names, as Malia Muliyas/Nagmuliyas in Orissa, Nit majdoors in Bengal, Harwais, Baramasiyas in North Bihar, Kamais in South Bihar, Hali in Madhya Pradesh, Sevaks and Haris in Uttar Pradesh, Adiammaras in Travancore, Holyas in South Kanara, Pannyals in Tamil Nadu, Sagris in Rajasthan, Jeethas in Mysore and Sanjis in Panjab etc.

The magnitude of this malady is highlighted in the periodic reports of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes explaining how members of backward classes have been exploited and oppressed. A study was conducted by Agro-Economic Research Centre, Vishva Bharati in 1956-58 and 1961-63. They revealed that of the total number of agricultural workers in a selected

villages in Bihar, 33.8% were working almost as serfs. In West Bengal it is 27.8%, in Orissa it is 22.44%. In one village of Bihar, 89.58% of agricultural workers were found working on the "tie-in-allotment" basis.

The Zonal Director, Backward Classes Welfare, South Zone, Madras revealed the existence of S.C.bonded labour in Mysore, Hassan district of Karnatak mainly because of poverty.

As many as 1,25,767 bonded labour were identified by 31-10-76/9 State governments, as their Secretaires reported at the Conference in New Delhi. The other States reported non-existence of problem. This account was unbelievable as the figures were gross underestimated being based on inadequate survey, and political reasons. For example, Maharashtra Government that time claimed no problem, while bonded labour existed in Wada, Dahanu and Palghat tahsils of Thane. The State Government of Panjab, West Bengal claimed no problem, although voluntary organisations found bonded labour in them in the name of Sanjis and Nit Majdoors respectively. The number of total bonded labour in India may figure in some millions. No scientific data is yet available.

It is Mr. Mohan Kumarmangalam, the then Union Cabinet Minister who had to curb the pernicious system in 1973 when it was found that officials of Coalmines Recruiting Organisation (C.R.O.) had an arrangement to provide steady supply of captive illiterate workers from the backward districts of eastern Uttar Pradesh. The captives were huddled up together, ten or more in a small ill-ventilated room. They were escorted to work and marched back to their cells,

by their supervisors after work was over. The labourers lived like prisoners and were not allowed to mix with local labour. After day's hard w labour in mines, the labour were often compelled to work in the palatial houses of C.R.O. ~~officials~~ officials.

In Maharashtra, Mrs. Godavari Parulekar, C.P.I.(M) Worker ~~x~~ and her husband Mr. Shamrao Parulekar located this system in Warlis (an Adivasi ^{tribe} ~~tribe~~ ~~xxxx~~) in Thane district. Later on Bhumi Sena found them in Palghar tahsil and conducted a survey between August and October, 1976. Sena went through ~~20~~ 20 villages for survey. Of the 261 cases, they could interview 100. They have given the following classification (Husain Dalwai's article).

(A) Classification of Bonded Labour

Loan Amount: in Rupees	Years: upto 3 years	3-6	6 - 9	9-12	12-15	15-18	18- 21	Tot: al	Cu- mu- la- ti- ve
0 - 300	-	2	4	-	1	1	2	10	10
300-600	5	6	8	8	8	2	3	40	50
600-900	2	10	6	6	2	-	1	27	77
900-1200	1	105	3	4	1	1	2	17	94
1200-1500	-	52	2	1	1	-	-	6	100
Total	8	225	23	19	13	4	8	100	
Cumulative	8	33	56	75	88	92	100		

(B) Items borrowed by a bonded labour (100 cases)

Items	Quantity	At price at that time Rs.	At current price Rs.
Paddy & (Mounds)	10	150	500
Dhoti	1	10	20
Kurta	1	7	15
Sari	3	45	75
Cloth for blouse pieces	3	9	15
Cash		12	12 12
Total		223	637

Analysis : ~~1~~ 50% bonded labour are bonded for less than Rs. 600/-.

50% bonded labour are bonded for Rs. 600-1500.

Only 33% are bonded for less than 6 years.

67% are bonded for more than 6 years, with maximum bondage period upto 21 years.

All are bonded as a result of loans taken for marriages. 35% did not remember their amount of the ~~exit~~ original loan. 87% did not know the present balance. 70% did not know the interest charged.

Two get Rs. 2/- per day. 97 are paid in the form of paddy. 71 get one payali (600 grams) per day. 26 get 20 payali per month, and 20 payali as additional wages, or vahi which is adjusted towards interest.

21 of them are bonded for 11 hours toiling in a day, since their childhood. 79% became bonded after marriage.

Aryans were familiar with the institution of debt-slavery which was mainly the outcome of defeat in gambling. Buddhist period saw some people mortgaging themselves to a physician as slaves if he could cure them. Poor parents mortgaged children whom they could not bring up. (Koutilya had to curtail the rights of masters who had possessed mortgaged women. Even to-day, the landless workers depend on agriculture for livelihood, but their income is grossly insufficient for their needs. During illness or at the time of marriage or a festival, they need some money and they take loans from landlords and or moneylenders, by which they become prey to rapacious exploiters. Since, they have no security to offer in the form of land, ornaments or other property, they have but to pledge themselves or their wives or children. Thus borrowing is resorted at the risk of "workpledge" for practically unlimited period in many cases. The moneylenders have taken undue advantage of the helplessness and ignorance of their debtors and entered into inequitable contacts with them. The wages fixed are so low that there is hardly a possibility of redeeming a loan. With years rolling on, a big amount which in some cases even generations of debtor's families cannot repay. During times of famines, whatever meagre lands belonging to Adivasis and Scheduled Castes are there, they are passed into the hands of moneylenders for trifling amounts. Many Warlis in Dahanu were at one time landowning tribe. But to-day they work as hereditary serfs in hands of upper-class persons. They are bonded labour. Zamindars treat bonded girls as their property.

The consumption expenditure of the weaker section of the rural population is always higher than their income. The result is that it compels them to take consumption loans with its inevitable risk of debt-bondage. The uneconomic land holdings of the marginal farmers who are mostly from backward classes keep them in perpetual deficit. The landlord in turn gets the benefit of cheap and assured labour. Another distressing feature of the appalling condition of a bonded labour is that his wage-earnings are always far less than the earnings of the free agricultural labour.

(4) ~~XXXX~~ Hurdle towards identifying bonded labour

The bonded labour system is revealed by a survey conducted by Bhumi Sena between August and October, 1976. In 20 villages in Palghat tahsil, they located 261 cases and interviewed 100 cases. The system is also there in other States like Gujrat, Panjab, Haryana, ~~XXXX~~ West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Jammu and Kashmir, Tripura, Meghalaya etc. Any claims of non-existence of bonded labour have certainly less validity. Such claims are more likely to be political-oriented rather than based on empirical studies. The words of voluntary agencies working for the welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the concerned areas should be welcome and acceptable.

There are two main hurdles in this issue of bonded labour before the states can embark on the programmes for abolition of the system. They are:-

(i) Real sincerity/integrity of State Governments to take programmes of rehabilitation of bonded labour.

(ii) Obstacles in identifying bonded labour.

(iii) ^{Unfavourable} ~~Favourable~~ attitude of Government machinery at lower level.

Some State Governments have shown their quickness in passing their own legislation to abolish the system. This is commendable. However, what is lamentable is their lack of sufficient ~~to~~ will to act upon it in right earnest within ~~their~~ their capacities. They need to have an independent administrative machinery to act upon it. Careful detailed survey of the magnitude of bonded labour, its nature, planning for their rehabilitation, setting ^{up} institutions - financial and others, follow-up etc., is absolutely necessary. Governments need to devote their time, energy, resources for this and should seek all kind of cooperation from various voluntary and other associations. But unless they have will to do this, they cannot do much. It may not be out of context, if we dare say that some State Governments are apprehensive of harming the powerful vested interests, if ~~they~~ they show their will to act to abolish bonded labour. Hence, they may not like to offend the influential lobby of vested interests who ~~is~~ seeks permanent cheap labour through the continuance of bonded labour. Only handful States with clear left leaning may dare. Others may falter at implementation even if they come out to do something.

Secondly the difficulty is in identifying bonded labour. There are psychological, economic and procedural obstacles in the process of identification.

The psychology of bonded labour himself is the obstacle. The law has declared him free from bondage and free from debts. We may tell him that he is a free citizen ~~xxx~~ with a changed social and economic status. But he himself should psychologically accept this new status. The difficulty is that he always feels that ~~ixxix~~ he is morally bound to serve his master and should really redeem his debt. Through years of servitude the impression is deeply ingrained on his mind that he is born to be a slave and would die as slave as did his father. And unless this psychology is changed, the bonded labour would not come forth to tell to ~~the~~ any vigilance committee going to villages to identify him, that he is a bonded labour and wishes to be free. So, although we may presume that bonded labour have heard of the legislation for him, he would not come forth for identification unless his psychology is changed.

State Government's rehabilitative attempts need to reach the bonded labour. Moreover the programme to rehabilitate him should be appropriate and suited to each individual case. Further it should come to him as a package and not as piecemeal. Only if he is convinced that the measures Government is undertaking are effective to

break his old shackle to the extent to enable him to be independent for ever and that he would never have to go to his master, he could come forward to be identified.

There are bound to be some formalities in legal ~~formalities~~ measures to help him. If he is expected to comply with elaborate procedural requirements to rehabilitate himself, he would prefer to put up with his position of servitude. If he is convinced that government measures do mean a definite change for him in the form of opportunity to raise his social and economic status, he would come forward for identification.

(iii) The third obstacle besides lack of will at higher levels of policy-making, is the unfavourable attitude of the Government officials at the lower levels. The Tahsildar, Aval Karkun, the Talathi and the village Police Constable are important personnel to speed up wheels of rehabilitation of bonded labour. So far, there are instances wherein we find that if bonded labour runs away from the village, the local police not only bring him back to his village but subject him to severe beatings and torture. Evidently, whatever the law, some villagers consider it one of their duties to look after the interests of the landlords. We cannot afford to forget the role of local police in conniving at the atrocities committed by influential caste Hindus on Harijans. The police may try to be in the good books of powerful quarters in the village. The same is said to be true in case of Talathi and Tahsildar, some of whom can be tried to be pocketed by these quarters. Stringent

measures against such erring personnel alone can do away with this obstacle. The bonded labour could be emboldened only if these officers come to their aid positively.

(5) Attempts at abolition of bonded labour:- The practice needs to be done away with. Before Britishers, we hear of Emperor Akbar who despised slavery and so he tried to abolish slavery in his empire by a decree. The decree was well-intentioned only and it was not implemented effectively. The then Travancore State saw slavery and in 1812, Rani Laxmibai issued a proclamation banning the practice of slavery.

During British times, we witnessed a large-scale conversion of down-trodden into Christians. One of the reasons to hasten the pace of conversion is despair of the social outcasts who were groaning under this pernicious system. Were there earnest positive efforts to relieve the outcasts from their bondage, hundreds of cases of change of religion would not have taken place.

In the year 1833, the English Parliament enacted to abolish slavery throughout the British Empire. The law was not welcome in India which had princely States. The rulers in India including the high caste gentry looked at it with suspicion. It is worth noting the reaction of Maharaja of Udaipur. He said "The rules and customs of the Raj have existed from time ~~xxxx~~ immemorial and from the days of Shri Ram, slaves and slave-girls existed here". In the Princely State of Mewar some people assaulted the Political Agent which shows people's unfavourable reaction to the enactment.

The Hyderabad Government promulgated an order which sought to liquidate the past debts of one aboriginal. The order also required a fresh agreement to be stamped and registered providing for proper credit towards liquidation.

The Indian Constitution solemnly banned any traffic in human beings or any form of forced labour, making the crime punishable. Some State Governments followed the constitutional provision by passing laws banning bonded labour. But it is only true that law remains unnoticed if public opinion does not favour it. This is what happened to Untouchability (Offences) Act of 1955.

So despite the above historical attempts, the system continued mainly because of lack of will of the authorities to act in faith and also because of the vested interest of powerful sections of the society to reap benefits of the system. The evil system brought forth the riots of the tribals in Maharashtra. The Warlis serged with dissatisfaction and they rose in arms in Dahanu taluka. The Police and the military, no doubt suppressed the revolt. The malais continued, as the root cause was there. That is why we witnessed another revolt by the hill tribes in Shrikakulam district in Andhra Pradesh in the year 1959. The tribes people demanded a rise in wages. But the land-lord and moneylenders who had political backing were unmoved for sometime. They did not ever bother to return the mortgaged lands even after the expiry of the mortgage. However, the pressure of the agitation which was much peaceful gathered and in the end, it secured increase in wages of farm labour and ensured two-thirds of produce to the cultivator. The leaders of the agitation wrested nearly

2000 acres of mortgaged land from moneylenders. They also succeeded in securing 5000 acres of waste land for the tribals, ~~xxxxxxx~~ free from restrictions imposed by forest officers. Loans amounting to about Rs. 3 lakhs were annulled.

Similar struggles were carried out by the political extremists. The Naxalite movement is the outcome of this exploitation, oppression of the hapless.

Bonded labour is essentially a phenomenon of agricultural economy in which we find a close link between the availability of land for cultivation and the surplus manpower to till it. During 1961-71, the number of landless increased from 27 million to 47 million. In the same period, we find that the number of landholders decreased from 98 million to 78 million. The bonded labour practice is thus a phenomenon of the growing dependence of the vast bulk of the poorest landless and poor marginal farmers on the landlords and moneylenders. Marginal farmers went on leasing out their lands for small consumption loans in general which resulted in debt-bondage. The uneconomic holdings always kept the marginal farmers in perpetual deficits which invited the landlords to engulf them in bondage. The rich got the benefits of cheap and assured labour. Where is the social and economic equality to the poor?

Then came the ~~xxxx~~ the Emergency, declared on 25th June, 1975. The then Prime Minister described the practice of bonded labour as barbarous and expressed her fervant desire to abolish it. Following the declaration of 20-point programme, the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act of 1976 was passed.

The Act sought to abolish and prevent the economic and physical exploitation of the weaker sections. Several States have also enacted legislation to achieve this purpose.

The following reliefs were sanctioned to bonded labour by law:-

1) Bonded labour is illegal. Such labourer is freed from his bond. Those of them who are detained in civil prisons shall be released forthwith.

2) He shall not be evicted from his homestead which he had possessed.

3) Any violation of the provisions of the Act shall be a cognizable offence punishable with imprisonment which may extend to 3 years or fine upto Rs. 2000/- or both.

4) No suit shall lie in any civil court or before any authority for recovery ~~of bonded labour~~ ^{from} bonded labour.

5) Any custom or tradition or contract by any member of a family of such person shall be deemed void and ~~effective~~ ineffective.

6) Vigilance committees at the district and sub divisional levels will be set up to advise the implementing ^{authorities} on all matters relating to the enforcement of the legal provisions of the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976.

Thus this feudal practice stands abolished through legislation. It amounts to legal emancipation.

(6) Need for social action and necessary steps to eradicate the system

Here we shall first note in brief what is the progress of the implementation of the legislation and then deal with any need for social action vis-a-vis other measures to eradicate the evil practice.

The all-India picture of the progress in the implementation of the legislation was available as follows. It was reported to Government of India by the States to show position as on 31-10-1976.

Statewise progress of implementation of legislation relating to bonded labour as on 31-10-1976

State	No. of bonded labour identified	No. of bonded labour freed
Andhra Pradesh	931	931
Bihar	1534	1534
Karnatak	51988	51709
Kerala	42759	156
Madhya Pradesh	1238	1238
Orissa	285	143
Rajasthan	5384	5384
Tamil Nadu	2416	2416
Uttar Pradesh	19232	19188
Total	125767	82699

The States like Assam, Gujrat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Maharashtra, Manipur, Nagaland and Meghalaya, Punjab, West Bengal and Tripura claimed that there is no problem with them. This claim was untenable in many cases.

Social action vis-avis other measures

What is social action? It is a collective action undertaken by the people to resolve their problems. It refers to those organised and planned activities which attempt to influence the social distribution of status, power and resources. It starts to redefine social justice. It is one of the strategies of social change.

Now, the point is - Is social action the proper strategy of change at present to attain the eradication of bonded labour system? Our answer to this is "YES". Some awakening in voluntary agencies for "helping cause" has begun to take roots recently on all-India basis. The State Government machinery has got alerted to do something.

Social action moves through successive stages like - crusading, popular, ^{managerial} and bureaucratic. Taking this into account social action for eradication of bonded labour has not touched even the crusading stages if India is taken as a whole. Any direct action strategy ^{may} fail owing to lack of sufficient awareness in the minds of people at large about the evil practice. The effectiveness of the social action strategy is doubtful so long as other measures like beneficial socio-economic ^{measures} for the proper rehabilitation of the bonded labour are ^{not} strictly implemented.

Then what are the other measures which can be tackled to eradicate the practice? Government may be successful in identifying bonded labour and declaring them free citizens. It is not enough. Government may wipe out past debts. But if they want to rehabilitate them on a permanent footing with a precaution to see that no more labour become any more bonded labour, they should supplement debt relief measures with other suitable arrangements, which can be listed as follows:-

- 1) Distribution of surplus lands to freed labour should be done on priority and compulsory basis to rehabilitate freed labour.
- 2) Distribution of house sites and sanction of financial assistance for construction of houses.
- 3) Strict implementation of minimum wages legislation in all the States. This alone would ensure increase in the earnings of farm labours benefiting the marginal farmers who easily are susceptible to become bonded labour. The Centre needs to chase State Governments for the proper steps and achievements within a given time schedule.
- 4) Employment Guarantee Scheme : The lead of Maharashtra in implementing this scheme should be followed by other States so that the potential of bonded labour in the form of landless labour, marginal farmers etc. do get employment in off-season at nearby places which would ward them off the danger of becoming bonded labour. There should be programme to provide employment in jobs like soil conservation, minor irrigation, market roads, parcolation tanks, forest development, rural housing etc. Government

should give preference to freed labour for employment on all government works.

(5) Subsidiary occupations:- The incomes of the freed labour must be supplemented through giving them subsidiary occupations. The existing agencies of Marginal farmers and agricultural labourers can be asked to provide them.

- Improved breed of she-buffaloes and cows may be supplied. The Central Cooperative Bank can provide 2/3 loan and MFAL can provide 1/3 as subsidy.

- Similarly, on the same basis loan-cum-subsidy can be provided to them for poultry development for rearing of sheep.

(6) Cheap Credit:- Once bonded labour is freed from the clutches of landlords, it is essential to assure them credit for production, land development and also for consumption purposes through Adivasi Cooperative Societies. Similarly bank finance of the Public Sector Banks should flow not only to small and marginal farmers but also to ~~the~~ freed bonded labour. This needs reorientation in these bank's lending policies. Here we have to bring the Credit Guarantee Scheme into picture. We have got a Credit Guarantee Corporation of India. In order to facilitate the Public Sector Banks to finance freed bonded labour, the credit guarantee scheme should be made applicable to all loans given by these banks for free labour.

(7) Farm equipment and inputs:- S.D.F. and MFAL Agencies should also provide farm equipments and inputs to the freed bonded labour.

(8) Sales Purchase Organisations:- Tribal Development Corporation has opened the sales and purchase units for the good of tribals. On the same lines, the Adivasi Cooperative Societies recently organised should be asked to expand their sales/purchase units in rural areas to buy up all the products at a fair price and in turn sell their daily consumption items to the freed labour throughout the year. So, this arrangement may go to provide security to them in lean period of the year.

(9) Identification work and propaganda of measures:- All the personnel working under the C.D.Blocks provides us with the ready machinery which can be utilised for identification of bonded labour and helping them to be free and helping them to take benefit of the various rehabilitation measures. By personal approach and through constant propaganda, they can change their psychology and motivate them for self-improvement. This machinery should also recommend cases to a suitable department to provide legal aid and legal ~~aid~~ advice to freed labour.

(10) Vigilance Committees:- The Government of Madhya Pradesh had set up vigilance committees at different levels throughout the State to survey, the position to investigate the cases and to act as liaison between the freed labour and the Government and voluntary agencies working for the rehabilitation of freed labour.

Other States should be asked to emulate this example.

The above measures are suggested and they need to be taken up as a comprehensive programme. It needs to be frankly admitted that the problem can not to be easily solved. Their rehabilitation depends on the conviction of the devoted district administration for ~~xx~~ implementing the programmes in a coordinated way, as only legislation can not solve the problem. Eradication of bonded labour is vitally linked with rural indebtedness and hence it should be tackled alongwith rural indebtedness. The existing agencies of SDF and MFAL, the C.D.Blocks, the Cooperative and Public Secor Banks need to be utilized in implementing the various schemes suggested above. Law should be ^{publicised} widely. Central Government should review the progress in the performances of the States regularly and give all kinds of guidance and financial and technical assistance to the States. Voluntary Agencies should be involved in survey, identification propaganda and relief measures.

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