

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3372
ANSWERED ON:21.12.2004
REPORT OF NCW ON BONDED LABOURERS IN TAMIL NADU
Shukla Smt. Karuna

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether a large number of women and children are held as bonded labourers by the rice mills of Redhill areas of Thiruvallur district of Tamil Nadu;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Government has received the National Commission for Women's report of public hearings on the subject;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the steps taken to secure/release and the rehabilitation of the victims?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH)

(a)&(b) Yes, Sir. Some complaints in this regard were received by the Ministry of Labour and Employment during August-September, 2004.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) the details of the recommendations made by the National Commission for Women in its report are given in the Annexure.

(e) As per the information received by the Ministry of Labour and Employment from the Government of Tamil Nadu, 372 labourers were released from bondage from the district of Thiruvallur including Tiruttani and Ponneri of Redhill area from 1997 till 30th September, 2004 including 113 labourers in the current year. The State Government has also been supervising the functioning of all the ricemills in Redhill area by enforcing Factories Act etc. to ensure payment of minimum wages to the workers as well as ensuring that the factory owners do not use debt as bondage.

Annexure referred to in the reply to part 'd' of the Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No.3372 for 21.12.2004 regarding "Report of NCW on Bonded Labourers in Tamil Nadu"

Recommendations made by the National Commission for Women in its report of Public Hearing on the condition of Bonded Labourers in Rice Mills of Red Hills, Thruvallur, Tamil Nadu.

1. Immediate release of bonded labour families who have already filed complaints to the RDO and rehabilitation in a fortnight. Identification and release of other bonded labourers in the rice mills of red hills within two weeks. Rehabilitation of these other labourers within two months.

2. Identification and release of bonded labourers in rice mills throughout the State within two months. Rehabilitation of all bonded labouters within the State in three months.

3. Prosecute the employers under provisions of Bonded Labour Act, SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act, Factories Act and secure the arrears due and payable by the owners of rice mills under Minimum Wages Act along with the penalty as prescribed under the Act.

4. Take strict action against district officials who have failed to implement the Bonded Labour Act.

5. Rehabilitation of the bonded labour families through provision of housing, milch animals and agricultural land within two months.

6. To provide free and compulsory education of children labourers of rice mill workers of Redhills.

7. Strict implementation of the provisions of Factories Act, (i.e. 8 hour shift system, safety, prohibition of child labour); The Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes Prevention of Atrocities Act, Maternity Benefit Act, ESI and EPF Acts and Minimum Wage Act.

8. Prosecute the employers and their henchmen who have sexually harassed the women, beaten up the children and adult workers. The mill owners who were responsible for the unnatural death of Valli should be prosecuted under Bonded Labour Act 19 of 1976,

SC/ST Act and Minimum Wages Act, and IPC. To file necessary complaint and investigate the same relating to the worker named Balu and Mari.

9. Constitution of Vigilance Committees in Thiruvallur District including District officials, Labour Department officials representatives of Sarpam Irular Thozhilalar Sangam and the bonded labourers in rice mills for monitoring the implementation of the above as per the Bonded Labour Act.