

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1836
ANSWERED ON:16.12.2013
ABOLITION OF SLAVERY
Tagore Shri Manicka

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

- (a) whether India tops the list for nationwide figures with almost 14 million people trapped in different forms of slavery;
- (b) whether India is also home to half of the world's slave population and ranks 4th in slavery;
- (c) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto; and
- (d) the action taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to abolish slavery in the country?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH)

(a) to (c): As per Article 23 of the Constitution, traffic in human beings and beggar and other similar forms of forced labour are prohibited and any contravention of this provision shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law. However, nothing shall prevent the State from imposing compulsory service for public purpose, and in imposing such service the State shall not make any discrimination on grounds only of religion, race, caste or class or any of them.

(d): The Government has taken a series of initiatives to identify, release and rehabilitate bonded labourers in the country. A Centrally Sponsored Plan Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labourer has been under implementation since 1978 for their rehabilitation. Under the scheme, rehabilitation assistance of Rs.20,000 for freed bonded labourer is provided and is shared by the Central and State Governments on 50:50 basis. In the case of North-Eastern States, 100% Central assistance is provided on the condition that they are unable to provide their share of assistance. In addition to this, the following activities are financed under the scheme:

Rs.2.00 lakh per District is provided to the concerned State Government to conduct survey for identification of bonded labourers once in three years.

Rs.5.00 lakh per year is sanctioned to every State Government to study the impact of existing land debt related issues, the impact of poverty alleviation programme and other welfare schemes on reduction of vulnerability to bondage.

Central assistance of Rs.10.00 lakh every year is provided to every State Government to undertake awareness generation activities on bonded labour system.

An integrated convergence-based approach is adopted in a number of States to prevent and reduce vulnerability to bondage by converging schemes like National Employment Guarantee Programme, Primary Healthcare, Food rations, etc. at the District/Block level. Vigilance Committees at District and Sub-divisional levels have been activated to identify and rehabilitate bonded labourers.