

## LOK SABHA DEBATES

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### LOK SABHA

Wednesday, November 30, 1988/ Agra-  
hayana 9, 1910 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at  
Eleven of the Clock

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER: Should I start it from 12 O'clock? When you do not come, then I should start it from 12 O'clock. The quorum bell has to be rung even at 11 O'clock.

### ORAL ANSWER TO QUESTIONS

[English]

#### Rehabilitation of Bonded Labourers

\*268. SHRI AMARSINH RATHAWA†:  
SHRI LAKSHMAN MALLICK:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether in certain parts of the country the scheme for identification and rehabilitation of bonded labourers has not achieved the desired objectives;

(b) if so, the reasons therefore;

(c) whether any survey has been made of the total number of bonded labourers in the country and if so, the details thereof;

(d) the number of bonded labourers

identified, released and rehabilitated so far, State-wise;

(e) the fresh initiatives taken by Union Government for release and proper rehabilitation of the bonded labourers; and

(f) the number of prosecutions launched State-wise, against the offenders under the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI RADHA KISHAN MALAVIYA): (a) to (f). A statement is given below.

### STATEMENT

The bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976 was brought into force with effect from 25th October, 1975, as an Ordinance which was subsequently replaced by the said Act. Under the Act the State Governments are responsible for identifying persons held in bondage and to arrange for their release through the district authorities.

After promulgation of the Ordinance/ Act, all State Governments were advised to carry out surveys to locate and identify persons held in bondage. The Act empowered the district authorities in the country to carry out such identification, and take appropriate action in case bonded labour were identified. The further action was the economic and social rehabilitation of such released bonded labour. The Central Government formulated a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, under which financial assistance was made

available to the State Governments for rehabilitating such labour. To achieve the objective of economic rehabilitation of the bonded labour, it was also decided to make available the benefits under various antipoverty programmes to the identified/released bonded labour. For effective implementation of the provisions of the Act, the State Governments were also advised to constitute Vigilance Committees in all districts and subdivisions which invariably include, among others, representatives of voluntary agencies and social workers. As a result of the enforcement of the Act, only 12 States indicated the prevalence of bonded labour in their States. These States were Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana and Kerala. As on 31.3.1988, the States of Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Kerala had rehabilitated all the bonded labour identified by them till that date. In other States, the process of rehabilitation of identified bonded labour is in progress. Annexure I showing the number of bonded labour identified, released and rehabilitated as on 31.3.1988 is given below.

The process of identification and rehabilitation of bonded labour is reviewed on a continuous basis by Central Government, in consultation with the State Governments concerned and the Planning Commission. The State Labour Ministers' Conference also reviews the progress in this regard. As a result of these reviews, necessary directions are issued from time to time to the various State Governments to speed up the work, particularly that of rehabilitation of all identified bonded labour. The work of identification and rehabilitation is a continuous

process, and so is the work relating to review of the work being done in various States.

As a result of the reviews taken from time to time by the Central Government, it was decided, while formulating the 20-Point Programme in 1986, to involve voluntary agencies in the work of identification and rehabilitation of bonded labour. As a result of this decision, a new scheme was formulated and launched on 30th October 1987 for the involvement of voluntary agencies in the work of identification and rehabilitation of bonded labor. It is expected that this involvement would further help the State Government authorities to achieve the objectives of the Act and the Schemes of rehabilitation.

According to the State Governments, 12,829 cases were registered under the provisions of the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976. Annexure II showing the State-wise position of the cases registered by various State Governments is given below.

At the recently concluded 37th Session of the Labour Ministers' Conference, held on 7th November 1988, it was the unanimous conclusion that henceforth identification of bonded labour should go hand in hand with the simultaneous prosecution of those found responsible to have kept such labour in bondage as defined under the Act. It was found that in a particular State the identification figure of bonded labour shot up overnight without a commensurate increase in the prosecution figure. Only strict implementation of punitive action for the keeper of bonded labour can sound the death knell for this system of bonded labour.

**ANNEXURE—I***Number of Bonded Labour identified, released and rehabilitated (position as on 31.3.1988)*

<i>Name of the State</i>		<i>Number of Bonded Labourers</i>	
		<i>Identified &amp; Released</i>	<i>Rehabilitated</i>
1	2	3	4
1.	Andhra Pradesh	33,954	23,552
2.	Bihar	12,338	11,465
3.	Karnataka	62,689	51,222
4.	Madhya Pradesh	7,486	5,439
5.	Maharashtra	988	875
6.	Orissa	47,824	41,483
7.	Rajasthan	7,037	6,910
8.	Tamil Nadu	36,827	34,468
9.	Uttar Pradesh	25,211	25,211
10.	Gujarat	64	64
11.	Haryana	429	21
12.	Kerala	823	823
<b>Total</b>		<b>2,35,670</b>	<b>2,01,583</b>

**ANNEXURE—II**

*Number of cases registered under the provisions of the bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976*

<i>Name of the State</i>		<i>Cases registered under the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976</i>	
		<i>Name</i>	<i>As on</i>
1	2	3	4
1.	Haryana	4	30.09.88
2.	Orissa	9380	30.06.88
3.	Andhra Pradesh	273	31.03.88
4.	Bihar	260	07.06.88
5.	Gujarat	Nil	31.03.88
6.	Kerala	Nil	30.06.87
7.	Tamil Nadu	1	31.12.87
8.	Utter Pradesh	439	31.3.88
9.	Maharashtra	297	06.04.88
10.	Himachal Pradesh	79	31.12.87
11.	Karnataka	40	31.12.87
12.	Madhya Pradesh	2056	26.09.88
		12829	

[*Translation*]

big farmers?

SHRI AMARSINH RATHWA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is unfortunate that we still have bonded labourers in our country. In Gandhiji's words the bonded labourers is unto the last person. I am not satisfied with this reply. What effective steps the Government is going to take to free these bonded labourers from the clutches of the rich and

SHRI RADHA KISHAN MALAVIYA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we totally depend on the state Governments to get the person held in bondage released. From time to time the State Governments carry out surveys to locate and get them released.

SHRI AMARSINH RATHWA: Sir, many

schemes have been formulated to get the bonded labourers released, but they have to wander here and there for their livelihood. What schemes the Government is going to start to provide them with the means of livelihood locally?

**THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI BINDESWARI DUBEY):** Mr. Speaker, Sir, in order to rehabilitate the bonded labourers, the Central Government has prepared a scheme under which Rs. 6250 are given to them for rehabilitation soon after their identification. A sum of Rs. 500 is given to them there and then and the rest amount is given for rehabilitation. Besides, the State Governments have been advised to extend to them those facilities which are available under the anti-poverty programmes so that they can rise above the poverty line.

[English]

**SHRI LAKSHMAN MALLICK:** Mr. Speaker Sir, I have gone through the statement of the hon. Minister and in the statement it is said that while formulating the 20 Point Programme, a new scheme was prepared for the involvement of voluntary organisations in the work of identification and rehabilitation of bonded labour. May I know from the hon. Minister the detailed procedure adopted for the identification and selection of voluntary agencies in this work? May I also know from the hon. Minister whether there are any complaints of corruption that the money is misutilised and that the rehabilitation work is not satisfactory? May I know from the hon. Minister whether such complaints of corruption have been received by the Government and if so what action has been taken in this regard?

**SHRI BINDESWARI DUBEY:** Sir, the new 20 Point Programme stipulated that voluntary organisations should be associated in the identification, release and rehabilitation of bonded labour. Accordingly, in

1987. the Government prepared a scheme. The details of the scheme are that if a voluntary organisation comes forward, such a voluntary organisation is immediately given Rs. 5000 as seed money and thereafter, after the identification of 20 bonded labour, the voluntary agency is paid Rs. 100 for each identification. For rehabilitation purposes, a centrally sponsored scheme is already in operation since 1978-1979, under which Rs. 6250 is given. The entire cost is borne by the Central and State Governments on 50 : 50 basis. As I have said earlier, along with these, the benefits of anti-poverty programmes are also extended to them. Recently in 1986 the State Governments have been advised to give preference to bonded labour in the allotment of Indira Awas and also in giving them loans under the IRDP.

**SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE:** In the statement I, it is said that there number of identified bonded labour upto now is 2,35,670. Out of that, 2,01,583 have been rehabilitated. I have some doubts on two points and I want an answer from the Minister.

Firstly, in Gujarat, even the original identification was only 54 and later on, the was no identification. But everybody knows that the situation in Gujarat is quite different. I want to know from the hon. Minister as to what attempts were made by the Central Government all these days to pursue these identifications because this is a long-term programme?

Secondly, is it a fact that those who have been released—it is said that they are rehabilitated—even a part of them are again falling back as bonded labourers and new bonded labourers are also coming up? If that is so, what are your arrangements to check it up and follow it up?

**SHRI BINDESWARI DUBEY:** The first question which the lady Member asked

is about the State of Gujarat the number of bonded labourers who were identified were 64 and all of them had been rehabilitated. Since, then the Government of Gujarat have reported that there are no more bonded labourers in that State. Our officers have also gone there to verify this report. They have again and again reiterated that there is no question of the existence of bonded labourers at present. I cannot say about the future..

**SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE:** Are you convinced yourself that there are no bonded labourers in Gujarat?

**SHRI BINDESHWARI DUBEY:** This is what the State Government of Gujarat have reported to us.

As you know under the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, the responsibility for identification, release and rehabilitation rests with the State Government. The State Government of Gujarat have reported to us that there are no bonded labourers in the State of Gujarat.

Regarding irregularities, as you have pointed out that certain bonded labourers were identified, released and became bonded labourers again, I think it is not a fact. Whenever a bonded labourer is identified, immediately he is released. It is the responsibility of the District to get the bonded labourer released immediately. We pay Rs. 500 to him for going back to his home. He is being sent to his home with an escort by the State Government authorities and thereafter he is immediately given some employment under the Anti-Poverty Programme and the full package of rehabilitation is made available. So, there is no question of released bonded labourers getting back to bondage again.

**SHRI K. RAMAMURTHY:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, the identification and abolition of the

bonded labour system and also rehabilitating them in the normal course of their livelihood is not at all a satisfactory action as far taken by the various State Governments and also the Central Government. The prime importance which our hon. Labour Minister put forth here is the involvement of the voluntary agencies or the voluntary organisations. This is a matter of which is connected with labour.

May I know whether it is a fact that the trade movement itself is not accommodated in the definition of the voluntary agencies or the voluntary organisations? If that is so, where is the question of availability of the voluntary agencies or voluntary organisations to identify the bonded labourers? If that is true may I know whether the Labour Minister will include the trade unions also in the category of the voluntary agencies or the voluntary organisations?

**SHRI BINDESHWARI DUBEY:** Normally the trade union organisations in agricultural labour are very few. But we have been able to trace out voluntary organisations through the Council for Advancement of People Action in Rural Technology.

**SHRI K. RAMAMURTHY:** My question is very simple. Will the trade union organisations be categorised under the voluntary organisations or not?

**SHRI BINDESHWARI DUBEY:** The trade union organisations can also be considered as voluntary organisations if they come forward and fulfil the conditions, for voluntary organisation required for this purpose.

**Shifting of State forest service College, Dehradun**

\*269. **SHRI KAMAL NATH†:**  
**SHRI V. TULSIRAM:**