

NEWS AT A GLANCE



Government appoints State Level Officer for Bonded Labour

On 15 March 2017, Ms. B. Jothi Nirmalasamy, IAS, Additional Secretary to Government, Labour & Employment Department took on her new role as the 'State Level Officer for Bonded Labour' in Tamil Nadu. This is a significant step forward towards a bonded-labour free state.



All bonded labour cases with elements of human trafficking to include Section 370 of Indian Penal Code

On 21 February 2017, Mr. T. K. Rajendran, Director General of Police, Tamil Nadu, sent a circular to Police Commissioners and Superintendents directing them to review human trafficking cases involving bonded labour, in periodic crime review meetings.

A few highlights from the circular are listed below:

- *Section 370 of the Indian Penal Code to be included in the FIR for all cases of human trafficking for labour.*
- *Bonded labour system involving human trafficking to be considered as organised crime and offenders and facilitators to be arrested.*
- *Repeat offenders to be arrested under Goondas Act.*
- *Anti Human Trafficking Unit to maintain interrogation reports.*



Survivors of bonded labour express their gratitude to the former Sub Collector of Cheyyar

In a rescue led by Dr. Prabhu Shankar, former Sub Collector of Cheyyar, a family struggling with a critically ill baby was provided immediate care and medical attention. When these survivors heard that the Sub Collector was being transferred, they visited him, along with seven community leaders. The now healthy baby, Thamizha, presented the Sub Collector with a photo from the day of rescue, while one of the community leaders honoured him with a shawl. The Sub Collector assured them of his continued support even as they sustain their freedom.



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Rescued from a brick kiln in 2016, Valliappan and Lakshmi are now looking forward to a bright future as free and confident individuals.



Direct Recruit Deputy Superintendents of Police attend a two-day seminar on human trafficking.

Rehabilitation funds for released bonded labourers increased up to ₹3,00,000

Since 1978, the Centrally Sponsored Plan Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labourers has been functioning to assist the State Governments in rehabilitating released bonded labourers. To keep pace with the growing economy and support survivors more efficiently, the Government has revised the Scheme. On 18 May 2016, the 'Central Sector Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labourers, 2016' came into effect. This year, the Labour Department has sent circulars to the District Collectors directing them to implement the Scheme.

The following points capture the highlights of the Scheme:

- Every rescued bonded labourer is entitled to receive a minimum of ₹20,000 as immediate rehabilitation fund.
- The entire rehabilitation fund is ₹1,00,000 for men, ₹2,00,000 for women and children and ₹3,00,000 in extreme cases involving trans-genders or differently-abled persons or trafficking or in cases where the District Magistrate deems fit.
- A separate budget of ₹4,50,000 has been allotted per district for survey and identification of bonded labour.
- In cases of trafficked or migrant bonded labourers, it is the responsibility of the State Government or the respective District Administration to arrange for their repatriation to their native place.

Speaking on the new Scheme, Labour Minister Bandaru Dattatreya in a written reply to the Rajya Sabha said, "A perspective vision document has also been prepared for total abolition of bonded labour."

The full list of entitlements under the new Central Sector Scheme can be found in this link: http://labour.gov.in/sites/default/files/OM_CSS_Rehab_BL_2016_1.pdf

District and police officials equipped to combat bonded labour

The common belief is that bonded labour is an age old social practice and societal norm. Though the crime has been outlawed by the government in 1976, offenders have continued to walk scot-free because of the leniency with which the practice has been viewed.

Trainings on Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act enable participants to view the issue as a crime as stated by the law. In the last two years, over 1200 officials have been trained on bonded labour. After these trainings, officials have initiated over 20 cases, freeing more than 1500 people from bondage.

In May 2017, three trainings were conducted in Tamil Nadu. Over 100 officials were trained on identifying elements of bonded labour and handling common challenges. All district officials from Ponneri, 4 Probationary Deputy Collectors, 32 District Recruit Deputy Superintendents of Police, 5 Inspectors and 7 Sub Inspectors attended the trainings.

One of the sessions at the Anna Institute of Management was led by the former Sub Collector of Thiruvallur, Mr. Rahul Nadh, IAS. Trained in 2014 himself, Mr. Rahul Nadh went on to subsequently lead a massive rescue of over 300 trafficked bonded labourers in 2015. In his practical session on identifying and rescuing victims, he stressed the importance of immediately rehabilitating victims so as to prevent re-bondage. He also emphasised the importance of lodging timely complaints against offenders.

"Trainings on the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act serve as a great eye opener for officials involved in rescue. Trainees are inspired as they see evidence of the impossible being made possible. They learn many new things and eagerly look forward to applying it. In the long run, trainings will save people from bonded labour," said Dr. M.S. Anand, Programme Director from Anna Institute of Management.

PHOTO SERIES

Partner NGOs coordinate with District Officials to rescue bonded labourers

Grassroot NGOs that were trained on bonded labour are actively presenting cases to the district administration and are bringing people out of bondage. This quarter, two NGOs trained by IJM assisted the District Administration in releasing eight people from bondage.

Information passed on from CHILDLINE in Ramnad to Pudukottai Multipurpose Social Service Society (PMSSS) resulted in freedom for six individuals



A family of six including four children, all less than 12 years of age, were rescued from a wood cutting unit. After having been denied their basic rights and freedoms for two years, the family stepped out as free individuals on 13 May 2017. The Revenue Divisional Officer released six survivors with interim relief amount and Release Certificates.

Two twelve year old boys exploited as child bonded labourers rescued



On 16 May 2017, CHILDLINE's partner NGO, National Mother and Child Organisation (NAMCO) in Tiruvarur, coordinated the rescue of two 12-year old boys from a sheep grazing unit. The owner restricted the two boys from visiting even their parents. Additionally, every time a goat went missing, he added it to their debt amount. The Revenue Divisional Officer released the two boys with Release Certificates and initial rehabilitation money. The children are joyfully reunited with their parents today.