

**Global Slavery Index Report 2013**

1504. SHRI AVINASH PANDE : Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state :

- (a) whether Government is aware of the Global Slavery Index Report 2013;
- (b) if so, whether it is a fact that out of the 30 million modern day slaves in the world, nearly half of them reside in India; and
- (c) if so, whether Government proposes to take any steps to improve this situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH) : (a) to (c) As per Article 23 of the Constitution, traffic in human beings and beggary 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.

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.

#### **Low wages for tea garden workers**

1505. SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE : Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state :

- (a) the State-wise number of closed tea gardens in the country;
- (b) whether Government is aware that tea garden workers get very low wages and are deprived of social securities; and
- (c) the action being taken by Government to take remedial measures?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH) : (a) and (b) As per the information furnished by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, which is the Administrative Ministry for Plantation Sector, nine (09) tea gardens remain closed as on 12.12.2013. The details of the tea gardens closed, State-wise, is given in Statement (*See below*).

The wages of tea garden workers are fixed through negotiations between the Employer Association and the Workers' Unions and an Agreement is reached which is valid for three years. The Agreement is renewed every three years after the revision of the wages. Welfare measures of the tea garden workers are governed by the provisions of the Plantations Act, 1951 which mandates the employers to provide the workers with housing, medical facilities, water supply, education of the wards of workers and other forms of social security measures. The Plantations Labour Act, 1951 is implemented by the State Governments. The Tea Board also extends support towards welfare measures covering health, hygiene and training/ education of workers and their children.