

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government has emphasised upon the States/UTs to be more stringent/strict in implementing this Act, in view of the fact that bonded labour has not been completely eradicated; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) The Government is aware of the low conviction rate under the Bonded Labour (Abolition) Act, 1976.

(b) Possible reasons for low conviction, as discussed in different forums are as under:-

(i) General social bias

(ii) Nature of bonded labour being migrants, absentism of Witnesses due to their migratory nature

(iii) DM/SDM Courts not as proficient in trial as judicial Courts.

(c) and (d) The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act 1976 is being implemented by the concerned State Govts./UTs. The Act provides for an institutional mechanism at the district level in the form of Vigilance Committees. For the purpose of implementing the provisions of this Act, the State Governments/UTs may confer, on an Executive Magistrate, the powers of a Judicial Magistrate of the first class or second class for trial of offences under this Act. Government of India has introduced a revamped Central Sector Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labourers- 2016, under which financial assistance to the tune of ₹1.00 (one) lakh, ₹2.00 (two) lakhs & ₹ 3.00 (three) lakhs are provided to released bonded labourers based on their category and level of exploitation along with other non-cash assistance for their livelihood.

#### **Benchmark for minimum wages in the country**

2805. SHRI BHUBANESWAR KALITA: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Code on Wages Bill, 2017 was referred to Standing Committee and if so, whether Government has received recommendation from the Committee;

(b) whether the Bill would enable the Central Government to set benchmark for the minimum wages for different regions in the country;

(c) whether the States will not be able to dilute the minimum wages below the benchmark set by the Central Government; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and time by when legislation is expected to be made?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) to (d) The Code on Wages Bill, 2017 was introduced in Lok Sabha on 10.08.2017 and subsequently, referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour which presented its Report to the Lok Sabha on 18th December, 2018. However, with dissolution of the 16th Lok Sabha, the Code on Wages Bill, 2017 lapsed. Subsequently, The Code on Wages Bill, 2019, has been prepared after considering the recommendations of Parliamentary Standing Committee. The Code on Wages Bill, 2019, addresses the issue of fixing of "floor wage" and related aspects. The Code is at pre- legislative stage .

#### **New Labour legislation**

2806. SHRI D. KUPENDRA REDDY: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government plans for a new labour legislation;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(c) to what extent this will help improvements in the labour related issues in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) to (c) The Ministry has taken steps for drafting four Labour Codes namely The Code on Wages, The Code on Industrial Relations, The Code on Social Security & Welfare, and The Code on Occupation Safety, Health and Working Conditions by simplifying, amalgamating and rationalizing the relevant provisions of the existing Central Labour Laws. As far as workers are concerned, the Labour Codes envisage extension of minimum wages and timely payment of wages to all 50 Crore workers, provision of appointment letter, provision for annual medical check-up, extension of safety and other welfare provisions to all workers working in an establishment of 10 or more (in case of mines and docks, the provisions apply without any threshold) etc.