TELANGANA STATE LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY, HYDERABAD.

BONDED LABOUR IS PROHIBITED

Know Your Rights Break the Chains Seek Legal Help

What is Bonded Labour?

Bonded labour is a system in which a person is forced to work because of a debt, advance, loan or other obligation, or is otherwise compelled to provide labour or service under conditions that take away their freedom.

A person cannot be forced to work merely because they or their family have taken a loan or received an advance. Human freedom cannot be treated as security for a debt.

Bonded Labour is Illegal

The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976 abolishes the bonded labour system and prohibits the practice of extracting bonded labour.

The Constitution of India also protects persons against forced labour:

- **Article 21:** Protection of life and personal liberty.
- **Article 23:** Prohibits trafficking in human beings and forced labour.
- **Article 24:** Prohibits employment of children below 14 years in factories, mines and hazardous employment.

Who may be a Bonded Labourer?

A person may be a victim of bonded labour where they are:

- Forced to work to repay a loan, advance or debt.
- Prevented from leaving employment because of a debt or advance.
- Paid little or no wages because of an alleged debt.
- Forced to work excessive hours or under oppressive conditions.
- Threatened, intimidated or physically restrained from leaving.
- Made to work to repay a debt allegedly incurred by a family member.
- Forced to surrender wages or earnings towards an unlawful debt.

- Subjected to restrictions on movement, identity documents or communication.

Children and women may be particularly vulnerable and require immediate protection and assistance.

RIGHTS OF BONDED LABOURERS

Every rescued bonded labourer has the right to:

1. Freedom from Bonded Labour

No person can be compelled to continue bonded labour. The bonded labour system has been abolished by law.

2. Freedom from Unlawful Debt

The bonded debt is legally extinguished in accordance with the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976. A bonded labourer cannot be compelled to repay an extinguished bonded debt.

3. Release and Protection

A person identified as a bonded labourer must be protected and relieved from the exploitative situation.

4. Restoration of Property

Where applicable, property or possession connected with bonded labour may be restored in accordance with law.

5. Rehabilitation

A rescued bonded labourer is entitled to assistance under the applicable Central and State rehabilitation schemes and other welfare measures, subject to eligibility and the applicable rules.

Rehabilitation may include assistance for:

- Immediate relief and support.
- Housing and basic amenities.
- Livelihood and employment.
- Skill development.
- Education of children.
- Access to social-security schemes.
- Health care and other welfare services.
- Financial assistance as prescribed under the applicable rehabilitation scheme.

6. Legal Aid

A rescued bonded labourer is entitled to free legal services, including legal advice and representation, subject to the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 and applicable legal-aid rules.

7. Protection from Retaliation

Victims and witnesses should be protected from threats, intimidation, harassment and further exploitation.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER RESCUE?

IDENTIFICATION → RESCUE → RELEASE → PROTECTION → LEGAL ACTION → REHABILITATION → REINTEGRATION

1. Identification:

Information regarding suspected bonded labour is received by the competent authorities.

2. Rescue and Release:

The concerned authorities take steps to rescue and release the person from bonded labour.

3. Immediate Protection:

The rescued person is provided necessary safety, food, shelter, medical attention and other immediate assistance as required.

4. Legal Action:

Appropriate legal proceedings may be initiated against persons responsible for employing or exploiting bonded labour, wherever offences are made out.

5. Rehabilitation:

The rescued person is connected with the applicable rehabilitation scheme and Government welfare programmes.

6. Long-Term Reintegration:

Authorities should facilitate livelihood, education, housing, social-security benefits and other measures necessary to prevent re-exploitation.

HOW CAN YOU REPORT BONDED LABOUR?

If you see a person being forced to work because of a debt, advance, threat or coercion:

DO NOT IGNORE IT. REPORT IT.

Information may be given to:

- District Magistrate / District Administration
- Revenue authorities
- Labour Department
- Police
- Child protection authorities, where children are involved
- District Legal Services Authority (DLSA)
- Taluk Legal Services Committee (TLSC)
- Para Legal Volunteers (PLVs)
- Any other competent Government authority

You can seek help even if you are unable to produce documents or evidence yourself.

LEGAL AID THROUGH LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITIES

The Telangana State Legal Services Authority (TSLSA) and the District Legal Services Authorities provide legal services to eligible persons, including persons belonging to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

Legal Services Authorities can assist with:

✓ Legal advice and counselling

✓ Free legal representation, wherever eligible

✓ Assistance in accessing compensation and rehabilitation

✓ Assistance in approaching competent authorities

✓ Legal awareness and preventive intervention

✓ Coordination with Government departments and other stakeholders

PARA LEGAL VOLUNTEERS (PLVs)

PLVs can help identify vulnerable persons, spread awareness about bonded labour, facilitate access to legal services and connect victims with the appropriate authorities and rehabilitation mechanisms.

REMEMBER

A DEBT CAN NEVER JUSTIFY SLAVERY.

NO PERSON CAN BE FORCED TO WORK AGAINST THEIR WILL.

BONDED LABOUR IS ILLEGAL.

EVERY RESCUED PERSON DESERVES DIGNITY, JUSTICE AND REHABILITATION.

If you or someone you know is trapped in bonded labour, seek help immediately from the nearest District Legal Services Authority, Legal Services Committee, Police, Labour Department or District Administration.

BREAK THE CHAINS PROTECT HUMAN DIGNITY ENSURE ACCESS TO JUSTICE

"Justice for All – Legal Aid for the Vulnerable"

NALSA TOLL FREE HELP LINE NO: 15100.
CHILD HELPLINE : 1098. CYBER CRIME HELPLINE : 1930.

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