

Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976
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Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Rules, 1976

Objective: The object of the Act is to provide for the abolition of bonded labour system with a view to preventing the economic and physical exploitation of the weaker sections of the people and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

System of Bonded Labour and its forms: It is outcome of customary obligations, forced labour, beggar or indebtedness under which a debtor agrees to render service. In different parts of the country, it was known by the different names such as Adiyamar, baramasia, basahya, bethu, bhagela, cherumar, garru-galu hari, harwai, holya, jana jeetha, kamiya, khundit-mundit, kuthia, lakhari, munjhi, mat, munish system, nit-majdoor, paleru, paduyal, pannayilal, sagri, sanji, sanjawat, sewak, sewakia, seri, vetti.

Who is bonded Labour: According to the definition given in section 2(g) of the Act, bonded labour means service arising out of loan/debt/advance. It represents the relationship between a creditor and a debtor wherein the debtor undertakes to mortgage his services or the services of any of his family members to the creditor for a specified or unspecified period with or without wages accompanied by denial of choice of alternative avenues of employment, or to deny him freedom of movements, then the person would normally be covered under the definition of a bonded labour.

Whom to approach in case of bondage: The aggrieved person or any person on his behalf can approach to the District Magistrate who is chairman of the Vigilance Committee constitute under the Act and has been entrusted with certain duties and responsibilities for implementing the provisions of the Act. Matter can also be brought to the notice of the Sub Divisional Magistrate of the area or any other person who is a member of the Vigilance Committee of District or Sub-division.

Relief available to the victim: The bonded labour is to immediately released from the bondage. His liability to repay bonded debt is deemed to have been extinguished. Freed bonded labour shall not be evicted from his homesteads or other residential premises which he was occupying as part of consideration for the bonded labour. A rehabilitation grant of Rs. ¹20,000/- to each of the bonded labour is to be granted and assistance for his rehabilitation provided.

Penalties: The offence under the Act is cognizable and bailable Any person who is contravenes provisions of the act is punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years and also with a fine which may extend to two thousand rupees.

¹ W.e.f. 1.5.2000 (Rs. 4000/- from 1978, Rs. 6250/- w.e.f. 1.2.86 & Rs. 10,000/- w.e.f. 1.4.95)