

## Matrix Four Anti Slavery International

Irish Aid Reference Number: <b>HR/04/51 &amp; HR/05/75</b>		People Met: Principal contact: Mr Kiran Kamal Prasad – Coordinator JEEVIKA & NABol (National Alliance on Bonded Labour) Umesh, State representative, Cultural & District Co-Ordinator, Malligamma Kohala. JEEVIKA, State Union President, Sunanda H Matarere, JEEVIKA, Hobli Union President,, Shirvarna Elamatheu, JEEVIKA, Hobli Union Vice President Mahandeva Hosabtalalu, JEEVIKA, Hobli Union President, Mahadeva Nanjaiahracolonly JEEVIKA, Hobli Union Vice President Chiceeliddaiah Kalegowdanhally JEEVIKA, Hobli Union Secretary Dasaiah JEEVIKA, Hobli Union President Siddaiah Heggadapiora, JEEVIKA,, Hobli ; Chandra Narasiowra, JEEVIKA Hobli Secretary, Ningariah, Dadadahally,JEEVIKA,, Hobli President, Raju C Noorlakappe,JEEVIKA Hobli Secretary, Shivannegowda Hanipapwra,, JEEVIKA,Hobli Cashier, Somanna Kohala, JEEVIKA, Hobli President, Parvathamma Chikkanandi, JEEVIKA, Hobli President Sanningamma Antharasanthe, JEEVIKA, Hobli Vice President, Shivaraju Hasaba, JEEVIKA, Hobli Co-ordinator, Venkatesh Hatharasanthe, JEEVIKACo-ordinatorChandrashebaronnulthy , JEEVIKA, Taluk woman Basavaraju, JEEVIKA, Taluk woman	
Name of the Organisation: <b>Anti Slavery International</b>			
Name of the project: Promoting and Protecting the rights of bonded labourers in south Asia			
Sector: Human Rights			
Country: India			
Location: <b>Visiting Karnataka State, India- JEEVIKA partner. Site visit: HD Kotte, Mysore District, Karnataka state.</b>			
Civil Society Fund Objective: Obj. 5: Support communities to realise their human rights, especially those of women and children.			
Date of Monitoring visit	From: 5 <sup>th</sup> November 2008	To: 6 <sup>th</sup> November 2008	
Annual Reports Received:	Dates: March 2006	Final Report Received	Date:31 <sup>st</sup> May 2007

### Financial Data

Irish Aid Funding	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
DCI Human Rights & Democratisation scheme	117,174						
DCI Human Rights & Democratisation scheme		129,141					
CSF035-0801					€45,000	€24,000	€24,000
CSF064-0803					€154,000		
<b>Total €</b>	<b>117,174</b>	<b>129,141</b>			<b>199,000</b>	<b>24,000</b>	<b>24,000</b>

### 1. Project Summary

This Human Rights and Democratisation Scheme (HRD) programme addresses the human rights violations suffered by bonded labourers in three states in India: Punjab (implementing partner VSJ), Chhattisgarh (partner JJK) and Karnataka (partner Jeevika). The latter was the subject of the monitor ring mission

Bonded labour or debt bondage is probably the least known form of slavery today, and yet it is the most widely used method of enslaving people. A person becomes a bonded labourer

when his or her labour is demanded as a means of repayment for a loan. The person is then tricked or trapped into working for very little or no pay, often for seven days a week. The value of their work is invariably greater than the original sum of money borrowed. Millions of people are held in bonded labour around the world.

Bonded labour has existed for thousands of years. In South Asia it took root in the caste system and continues to flourish. Bonded labour was also used as a method of colonial labour recruitment for plantations in Africa, the Caribbean and South East Asia. Bonded labourers are routinely threatened with and subjected to physical and sexual violence. They are kept under various forms of surveillance, in some cases by armed guards. There are very few cases where chains are actually used (although it does occur) but these constraints on the bonded labourers are every bit as real and as restricting.

All partners have former bonded labourers (BLs) participating in their leadership, management and direction of the organisations. BL is outlawed under the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act 1975. Government funded transition grants for ex-bonded labourers are available but are difficult to access and rarely implemented. Labourers are often unaware of, or unable to, realise their rights. BLs who take steps to free themselves face overwhelming pressure and harassment from “masters” and are regularly subjected to ill treatment. The specific objectives of this project are:

The sustained release of 900 men, women and children BLs across three states, with BLs accessing government rehabilitation grants or temporary partner support and assistance to find new employment. To train former BLs to help release those still enslaved, helping them to assert their freedom and to free others.

Partners and other BL civil society organisations successfully engage state government, national government and international human rights mechanisms to advocate for BLs rights and better implementation of the legislation.

The aim of the project and the ongoing work of the partner is to help to unionise bonded labourers to strengthen their collective political voice, and support collaborative working with trade union federations in pressing for minimum labour standards. It undertakes court actions against bonded labour employers, and supports constructive engagement with governments to ensure effective implementation of existing laws against bonded labour and to combat discrimination in the delivery of services that could keep people out of debt bondage, whilst achieving progress towards law reform. The project meets incremental goals concerning unionisation, campaigning and advocacy as part of a wider programme, alongside other education and research projects which will build the momentum of a new movement against bonded labour. The project strengthens the voice of civil society organisations active on bonded labour issues, supports excluded communities to participate in development and helps them realise their human rights. It enables bonded labourers to assert their rights through unionised activity, whilst partner organisations build their capacity, experience, contacts and profile through a comprehensive advocacy campaign, with expert input from Anti-Slavery International. Building up the capacity, experience and networks of bonded labourer unions and NGOs will help strengthen their integration into civil society, whilst pushing bonded labour issues up civil society and political agendas.

## **2. Summary of Conclusions of Monitoring Visit**

The team consider that this partner is engaged in extremely worthwhile work in a much neglected area of bonded labourers and agricultural workers, and related issues of discrimination against this section of the population. This element of this three-state project appears to have achieved some notable success in the identification, release and rehabilitation of bonded labourers in the 25 out of 150 taluks (sub districts) of Karnataka State where it operates and in empowering the local communities to advocate for the improvement of services. It has promoted

effective leadership among freed bonded labourers and agricultural workers and the partner organisation has continued to build on the achievements of the HRD funded project. This programme is in line with the objectives of the CSF funded

The monitoring team would welcome comments as to whether Anti Slavery International as the intermediary organisation has found that ASI's name has any negative impact on the ability of ASI or its partners to advocate on behalf of the agency, eg in dealing with government organisations.

*ASI has not found that our name has had any impact on our ability of its partners to advocacy on behalf of the agency. This might have been the case in other, regions where we work against slavery, like in the Middle East. But in South Asia in general, and India in particular, the fact that an international organisation was linked to local partners in this project has actually facilitated access to authorities, who are in general very sensitive to international scrutiny.*

### **3. Local Context**

The local partner JEEVIKA (Vimukti Trust) is one of only 7 ngos in all of India working on the issue of bonded labour which is closely linked to the caste system. The target group is among the most marginalised section of Indian society, principally dalits and landless agricultural workers. Typically a person might obtain a loan (to buy food, or for weddings etc) of 50K rupees (€700 euro) leading to 12 years of bonded labour. Debts may be passed on to other "masters" and from one family member to another. The partner uses a rights based approach and seeks to implement the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act 1975 by court action and by lobbying and advocacy work. The local communities are mobilised through activists who register as societies and through the formation of a union of bonded labourers and agricultural workers. These groups form part of the network which is JEEVIKA. One legal case is currently pending on behalf of 800 labourers. If successful compensation of 20k rupees (€300) and a house to the value of 40k rupees will be paid to each bonded labourer, by the Central Government and local government equally.

### **4. Project**

#### **4.1 Project design**

The monitoring team agree that the project design is appropriate. There is clear evidence of empowerment of local communities who have suffered under bonded labour. While legislation does exist to outlaw the practice of BL, the law is not being implemented properly for a number of reasons including the influential positions held by "masters". The approach taken in addressing awareness raising and training at village level, with local authorities and at State and national level together with activities to identify, rescue and release BLs is appropriate to achieving the project objectives.

#### **4.2 Project Implementation**

The monitoring team first visited JEEVIKA's offices in Bangalore and joined a regular monthly meeting of union leaders, women and men. The team then drove to a rural area in Mysore District to meet with the local community group of labourers and agricultural workers in the evening and saw a street theatre performance on bonded labour. The following morning the team attended a meeting of union and community leaders held at the premises of the National Folklore Support Centre, at which issues such as securing ration cards for people below the poverty line, caste discrimination by local businesses, caste discrimination at water points and campaigning for local services are discussed. As the project increases its success in obtaining reparations for former bonded labourers and is increasing its advocacy role increased incidents of harassment are occurring against the members and these incidents and possible solutions are also discussed.

The funding provided builds on and contributes to previous and on-going work of this organisation over the past 10 years. There is clear evidence of a very positive impact on the beneficiaries – women, children and men. Awareness raising through campaigning material in local languages and street theatre was evidenced. A training manual on the concept and identification of bonded labourers has been produced in English and the local language, Kannada. Gender equity was demonstrated at local community meetings and at state level with the election of a woman as state president for the union. The intervention has supported BLs in becoming unionised and in leading demands for BL rights, in identifying other BLs and engaging appropriate government machinery for release of, and rehabilitation grants for, BLs. It has also given people a forum to network and share experiences through self help groups and is building effective leadership among women and men.

#### 4.3 Project Results and Impact

As the team monitored one of three partners for this tri state intervention projects results and impact refer only to this monitored element. However the second year of the project (HR/05/75) built on previous work in this area and there is evidence that this work has led to a significant reduction (up to 50%) in numbers of bonded labourers in the target taluks although this may not necessarily be attributable entirely to this initiative. The unionisation of ex BLs and agricultural workers was seen to result in the emergence of effective lobby groups. Similarly empowerment of the local communities has led to successful advocacy for services such as the provision of a school bus service and bicycles for girls attending secondary. The partner is also working to secure ration cards for people below the poverty line and on issues arising from caste discrimination, landlessness, and state pensions. There was a noticeable involvement of women (married and widowed) in the activities. The partner organisation has published authentic findings and a body of research on the issue of bonded labour in India. Paradoxically as BLs are more successful in addressing their human rights issues, harassment of individuals involved has been increasing. Recent incidents have led to a combined response from the unions and a meeting was scheduled with the Deputy Police Commissioner to discuss these issues shortly after the monitoring team's visit.

#### 4.4. Contribution to CSF Objectives

Principally objective no.5: Support communities to realise their human rights; also number 1 and 3: Strengthening the voice of civil society organisations; Support communities to gain access to resources for local development and the improvement of essential services. These objectives are being achieved by bringing solidarity to the affected communities and empowering them to advocate for rights and services. ASI has considerable expertise and an international reputation in the area of debt bondage and other forms of slavery. ASI has carried out research and advocacy at national and international levels.

#### 4.5. CSF Approaches and Strategies

ASI has been involved with the local partner since 1997. ASI has provided capacity building in planning the project. The local partner has been engaged at all levels of consultation; the partner has received a small development grant for capacity building to restructure and redefine the way they work. In designing the overall project the local partner proposed that instead of focusing only on legal action that the focus was broadened to support BL beyond court cases with assistance in the use of rehabilitation grants towards alternative livelihoods and/or securing land. This was incorporated into the project design.

#### 4.6 Participation

The focus of this intervention is on human rights for marginalised people. At grassroots level the issue for each case came from the people. Women participate on an equal footing and are empowered to make representations directly to local officials on community issues.

#### 4.7 Mainstreaming

Irish Aid's four mainstreaming themes were not developed at the time this project(s) was approved for funding. However human rights is the specific focus of the project, the partner

organisation and of Anti Slavery International.  
Subsequent applications from anti slavery international illustrate ASI's commitment to mainstreaming gender, HIV/AIDS, governance and environmental issues.

#### *4.8 Gender Mainstreaming*

In 2003 the Indian Government estimated that there were less than 20,000 BLs in the country. Evidence from individual states suggests that actual figures are more likely to be significantly higher and possibly millions of men women and children are involved in BL. The majority of BLs are men between 18 and 45 years old. In one state BLs are mostly male heads of families and boys while in the other two the entire family is often involved. Gender disaggregated figures are not available however the intervention provides for equal participation of women in all its activities. The monitoring team saw evidence of gender equity in terms of decision making and representation and would recommend that ASI disaggregates figures to illustrate the programme targets both men and women.

### **5. Organisational Development**

Not applicable.

### **6. Key Observations and Actions Recommended**

The local organisation is led by Mr Kiran Kamal Prasad, who is a member of UNESCO's International Scientific Committee and a published anthropologist. Mr Prasad has considerable knowledge and expertise in this area and has worked with the State Government to develop an action plan to tackle bonded labour in Karnataka.

The monitoring team consider that this is an **extremely worthwhile area of work in which only seven NGOs are currently operating in all of India**. The organisation appears to have achieved some notable success. Bonded labour occurs in different forms, eg child labour; trafficking; modern slavery. The work of ASI and Jeevika is leading the way in this area and is a model for replication.

Irish Aid monitoring team members: Caroline Whelan, Civil Society Section; Tom Hennessy, Evaluation and Audit Unit; Anand David, Embassy New Delhi.  
Date: 03/12/08

### **7. Organisation's Management Response**

Thank you very much for the matrix. We are glad that the monitoring visit went well for you. Please find attached the Matrix, we don't have any major comment, just a reply to your request of Clarification in one point (which we have included in blue).

Enrique Restoy Programme and Advocacy, Team Manager, 17/12/08