

**Press Information Bureau
Government of India
Ministry of Labour & Employment**

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**Rehabilitation of Bonded Labourer Scheme – 2016 to be Made Central Sector Scheme
Revised Scheme Proposes Increase in Quantum of Financial Assistance
Annual Budget Raised from Rs.5 Crore to Rs.47 Crore; Cash Assistance from Rs. 20,000 to Rs. One Lakh**

Cash Assistance may extend to Rs Two Lakh in Special Cases and to Rs.Three Lakh in Cases of Extreme Deprivation

The Government is revising the rehabilitation of bonded labour scheme and increasing the quantum of financial assistance from Rs 20 thousand to one lakh rupees. The Scheme proposes to increase the budget provision from Rs 5 crores to about Rs 47 crores per annum. This was stated by Shri Bandaru Dattatreya ,the Minister of State (IC) labour and Employment here today while announcing the proposed scheme. While the most deprived and marginalised like the disabled, female and children rescued from trafficking, sexual exploitation and transgender will get Rs 3 lakhs, the next in order is the special category comprising of females and the minors who will now get Rs 2 lakhs. A normal adult male bonded labour will get Rs. 1 lakh, the Minister added.

The Minister said under this new package the money will remain in an annuity account, controlled by the District Magistrate and a monthly earning will flow to the beneficiary account for his/her comfortable living. The corpus remains untouched until decided by the DM.

One of the special features of the new scheme is that it aims to address new forms of bondage such as organised begging rings, forced prostitution and child labour for which females, disabled and transgenders are mercilessly used by the powerful elements.

The Minister said that the rehabilitation work has been made simple for the DM/Collectors. A permanent and renewable district level rehabilitation fund of atleast Rs. 10 Lakh will be available with the DM/Collector which will be used as a stop-gap arrangement before reimbursement by Central Government through the DBT system. The DM/Collector is also empowered to provide several non-cash benefits such as land, house, ration and occupational support through State Programmes. The DMs/Collectors will also have the freedom to extend state care where bondage is not proved but the person is in distress. Minor children and women will remain in State care and educated & skilled as per their needs. Marriage of orphan girls will also be the responsibility of State Government.

Soon after revising the scheme, the 1976 Rules will be amended for effective implementation. The Government will ensure that Bonded Labour cases are tried and judgment pronounced on the same day like other summary trial cases as per Cr.PC. It will also be ensured that such cases are monitored by the Sessions Courts and the State High Courts by way of regular review as per their respective criminal manual apart from the State Home and Revenue Departments. Suitable provisions will be made in the Rules to facilitate institutional involvement of other stakeholders. With combined efforts this stigma from society will be eradicated and India be made a country of "Sabka Saath Sabka Vikaas",he said.

Bonded Labour System is a social evil which though has declined over a period, however still exists in India

despite constitutional provisions for its total eradication. The BLS(A) Act, 1976 for the last 40 years has not been able to eradicate Bonded Labour System completely. Even the Rehabilitation Scheme of 1978 have been able to free 2.82 lakh Bonded Labourers in 18 States across 172 districts in the country during the past 38 years. There is no correct estimation of the extent of bondage which has also transformed its form under the compulsions of transitional economy.

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