

Principal Secretary to Government.

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON BONDED LABOUR BY THE HON'BLE
SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR, NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION AT
11.00 A.M. ON 17.03.2000.**

The Following Officers are present:

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| 1. Sri K.R. Venugopal, I.A.S. (Retd.) | Special Rapporteur, NHRC |
| 2. Sri A.K. Tigidi, I.A.S., | Commissioner of Social Welfare |
| 3. Prof. Vithal, | N.G.O. |
| 4. Sri E. Venkateswarlu | Addl. Director (SW). |

At the outset the Commissioner of Social Welfare had explained about the successful implementation of the innovative programme 'Back to School' taken up by the State Government during the years 1997, 1998 and 1999 for about 3,48,123 children during the summer vacation from 14th April to 14th June with the participation of N.G.O.s Mahila Mandals, M. V. Foundation etc. It was informed that the programme has been organised in the Welfare Hostels by providing board, lodge, books, slates, medical facilities etc. to the children during the preparatory training. The coaching was given by the unemployeed Graduates especially women selected from the same villages and' from the same community who evinced very much interest and worked with commitment. In these centres, the Teachers adopted the teaching by playing method which was found to be more effective and useful. The children were identified and brought to the centres by a team of officials and N.G.Os after giving wide publicity. It was also informed that about 40% of the children and girls. The Commissioner of Social Welfare has also informed that since the girls hostels are less in number in some districts, the District Collectors have been authorised to convert some of the boys hostels into girls hostels in order to improve the female literacy rate among Scheduled Castes. The Commissioner of Social Welfare informed that about 2,51,886 children were retained in the schools and about 1,25,555 children were admitted in hostels also on regular basis during 1998 and 1999. Sri K. R. Venugopal, Special Rapporteur, NHRC., enquired about the reasons. For cutting down the number of children to be admitted in 'Back to School' programme from 2.00 lakhs to 1.00 lakh during 2000-2001. The Commissioner. of Social Welfare has explained that for more efficient delivery of inputs and supervision, for maintaining quality, the manageable level of number has been fixed to admit genuine children only by a stricter way of selection. The Hon'ble Chairman, NHRC, observed that in 8 districts the prevalence of child labour is very high. Therefore, the ground level staff can be increased with an objective of total coverage as early as possible so that education should not be denied to these disadvantaged children for a longer time.

Sri K.R. Venugopal enquired about the reasons for dropout in 10th class results during the last 3 years among Scheduled Caste Students. The Commissioner of Social Welfare has explained that the results in Social Welfare Residential Schools are very encouraging which are more than 75%. The results in S. W. Hostels though encouraging during 1997 and 1998, there was little drop to 49% during 1999. The reason was, because of jumbling system introduced, the students could not face well as they were sent to other schools for writing the examinations in an entirely new environment. The Hon'ble Chairman has enquired about the programmes being

organised for the 20% full time child labourers. The Commissioner of Social Welfare has informed that most of these children are admitted in the centres established under National Child labour Project. Sri K.R. Venugopal has requested to furnish the district-wise number of child labour. The Hon'ble Chairman instructed that the identification of child bonded labourers should be taken up in association with the Non-Governmental Organisations.

Sri K.R. Venugopal has requested the Commissioner of Social Welfare to inform about the action taken on the Minutes of the last meeting held on 17.06.1999 in the Chambers of the Chief Secretary to Government. The Commissioner of Social Welfare has explained that the District Collectors have constituted the Divisional level and District level Vigilance Committees. The District Collectors, Ranga Reddy, Warangal, Mahabubnagar have taken up the re-survey of bonded labours. The District Collector, Mahabubnagar has also taken steps to form (4) Co-operative Societies for the rehabilitation of bonded labourers at Mandipally of Kothur (M), Venkateswaria Bavi of Amarabad (M) Pedakarpamula of Pedakothapally (M) and at Bejinepally (V). The District Collector, Nizamabad informed that it has been proposed to form (12) Co-operative societies at Varni, Dichpally, Sadasivnagar, Banswada, Bhiknoor, Bodhan, Gandhari, Nabipet, Bhirkur, Nagireddypet, Machareddy and Nizamsagar Mandai headquarters. The reports from other District Collectors are awaited. Sri K.R. Venugopal has observed that there was not much progress from the last meeting in conducting survey, in identification of bonded labourers and child bonded labourers and their rehabilitation and in formation of Co-Operative Societies.

The Hon'ble Chairman observed that the survey work should be completed by the end of June 2000 and an action plan has to be prepared for the rehabilitation of the identified bonded labourers in co-ordination with the N.G.Os. It is also important to verify that whether the rehabilitated bonded labourers were again relapsed or leading independent life. Sri K.R. Venugopal has enquired about the rehabilitation of the remaining 388 bonded labourers identified earlier. The Commissioner of Social Welfare has provided the District-wise breakup for these 388 bonded labourers and informed that the Collector, Medak has rehabilitated about 106 during this year.

Prof. Vithal informed that in Mahabubnagar district, out of 34.00 lakh population, 12.00 lakhs people belong to weaker sections and out of them 90% are labourers. The incidence of bonded labour is very high in this district especially in Bijinepally Vanaparthi and Gopalpet Mandals of Vanaparthi Revenue Division. He has also informed that all the Mandals in Mahabubnagar district have been declared by the Government as drought effected mandals. A clear strategy should be worked out for formation of Co-operative Societies in the district to give sufficient work to the released bonded labourers.

The Hon'ble Chairman instructed that the survey and identification of bonded labourers should be completed in the following districts by the end of June 2000. (1) Nalgonda, (2) Mahabubnagar, (3) Warangal, (4) Nizamabad, (5) Medak, (6) Ranga Reddy, (7) Anantapur: He has informed that he will visit two districts every month from July 2000 onwards to interact with the rehabilitated bonded labourers and grass root level workers: He has instructed that a clear cut strategy should be worked out for rehabilitation of the Bonded labourers and for formation of Co-Operative Societies by giving economic package.

Sri K.R. Venugopal has informed that Workshops should be conducted for sensitizing the Officials and N.G.Os regarding definition and identification of bonded labourers and good lawyers should be included in the team for identification of bonded labourers. He has requested the Commissioner of Social Welfare to organise such

