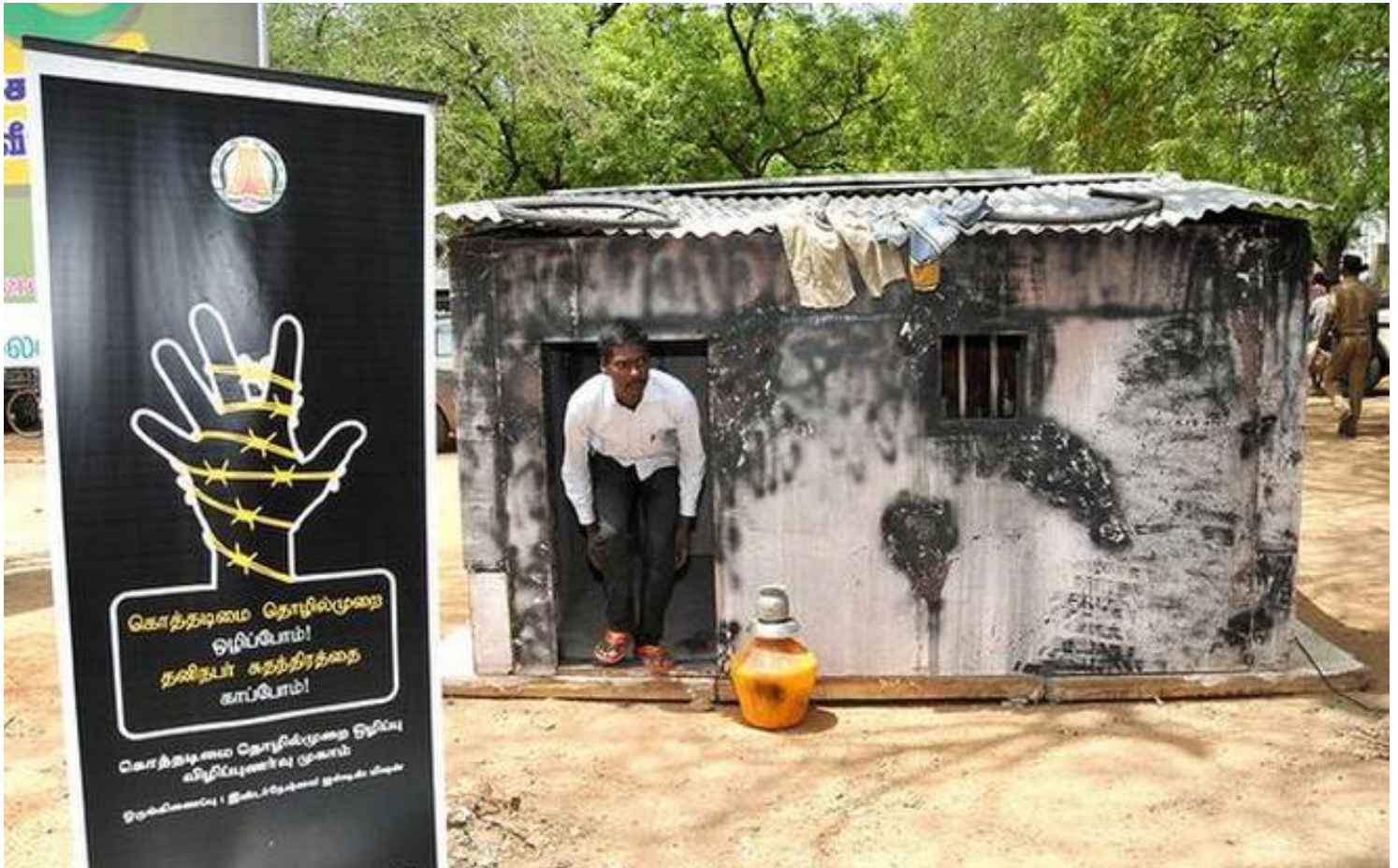


MADURAI

## Stress on rehabilitation of bonded workers



### STAFF REPORTER

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### The sensitisation programme launched in 11 districts

Senior officials in the district, including all Revenue Divisional Officers, Tahsildars, Revenue Inspectors and officials from Labour department, were sensitised to the Union government's Rehabilitation of Bonded Labour Scheme of 2016 here on Monday.

Prakash Rao, Government Relations Officer of International Justice Mission (IJM), which had launched the sensitisation programme in 11 districts in coordination with the State

government, envisaged conduct of awareness campaigns and proactive surveys to identify the presence of bonded labour in each district.

Inaugurating the programme, Collector K. Veera Raghava Rao stated that the 2016 scheme had hiked the immediate financial assistance granted to the victims from ₹20,000 to ₹1 lakh for men and ₹2 lakh for special categories, including children and women, and ₹3 lakh where extreme forms of deprivation and exploitation were involved.

A life-size shanty was also erected on the Collectorate by the IJM with the help of three workers rescued from bonded labour in a bid to show to the officials and the public how cramped was the space in which bonded labourers were forced to live and the exploitation they faced.

During the programme, B. Chinnarasu (28), a native of Vellore district, who was rescued from bonded labour in a brick kiln in Andhra Pradesh eight years back, shared the hardships he faced for nearly a decade.

“I was sent to work as a child for the money my father borrowed from the brick kiln owner. I could not attend school and toiled in the brick kiln for more than a decade before I was rescued,” he said, adding he now earned a livelihood by selling tender coconuts.

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