



Bonded Labor

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What is Bonded Labor?

- Also known as “debt bondage” or indentured servitude”
- One form of force or coercion in the use of a bond or debt
- Prohibited under U.S. law by its Spanish name *peonage*
- Traffickers or recruiters unlawfully exploit an initial debt the worker assumed as part of the terms of employment

Is Bonded Labor New?

- Has existed for hundreds of years
- In South Asia it is rooted in the caste system
- Debt bondage was also used as a means of trapping indentured laborers into working on plantations in Africa, the Caribbean and South-East Asia, following the abolition of the slave trade.



215 Million

Estimated number of child workers

9.3 Million

Estimated number of people in forced labor in the Asian-Pacific region, majority are in debt bondage

Who are the Bonded Laborers?

- Entire families kept like cattle on farms in India, Pakistan and Nepal; migrant agricultural workers forced to remain on ranches in Brazil; and the organized export of women into domestic and sexual slavery in Europe.
- Bonded labor is expanding due to poverty and the global demand for sources of cheap, expendable labor.



What is Modern Day Slavery?

A slave is someone who is:

- Forced to work
- Owned or controlled by an employer
- Dehumanized, treated as a commodity, bought and sold like property
- Physically constrained or restrictions on freedom of movement

Why Does Slavery Exist?

- Poverty
- Lack of education
- Lack of law enforcement

Direct vs. Intergenerational Bonded Labor

Direct:

- Child’s labor is directly pledged as a security for a loan

Intergenerational:

- Transmitted after death of a parent

Indications of Bonded Labor

- Child is in custody of a non-family member
- Child performs work that financially benefits someone outside the child’s family
- No option of leaving



Strategies to Combat Bonded Labor

A multidimensional approach is needed:

- Eliminate starting from grassroots
- More action from government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
- Education and vocational training
- Provide poor families with alternative sources for small consumption loans