



RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
RAJYA SABHA

Member of Standing Committee on Defence
Member of Consultative Committee on Finance
Member of Central Advisory Committee for the National Cadet Corps
Co-Chairman, District Development Coordination & Monitoring Committee, Bengaluru Urban District

January 07, 2019

Dear Kumaraswamy Avare,

Sub: - End the rampant exploitation and appalling abuse of members from the Scheduled Castes (Dalits) and Schedule Tribes in Karnataka.

I am writing to you about the appalling inhuman treatment of 52 people, including 16 women and 4 children from the Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribe communities that endured three years of slavery in Hassan district until the police rescued them on 16 December 2018.

It's a disgrace that despite laws like the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act 1976 and the Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities Act), 1989 the rescued victims were forced to work 19 hours a day without wages and any protest or disobedience resulted in brutal whipping and sexual abuse of the women. It is shocking and disturbing that a crime of this magnitude would go unnoticed by the police and government agencies for three long years.

What is far more appalling is the manner used by the captors to enslave the victims. Unlike bonded labourers who are forced to work in guise of repaying a debt, media reports have stated that the victims were enslaved after being waylaid at bus and railways stations with the promise of jobs as labourers.

While the victims have been rescued and investigations have begun, the Government must take cognisance that this is not a single incident but a trend that has grown across the state. It must be noted that enslavement and exploitation of people from the most deprived strata is rampant in Karnataka and action must be taken at once to prevent further exploitation.



Investigate and end the exploitation of SC/ST people in Karnataka

A study conducted by an NGO and the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department (report enclosed) **estimated 5,58,334 or 33.4% of the 16,70,734 labourers live in bondage and slave like conditions across Bengaluru Urban, Bengaluru Rural and Ramanagara districts.** Plus, over 92 % of labourers in the three districts belong to the SC/ST communities, which proves that almost all bonded labourers are SC/STs.

These facts and examples proves that the Government of Karnataka's role in preventing atrocities and exploitation of SC/ST in the state is almost negligible. The improper implementation of laws also proves that the Government of Karnataka has failed to protect the fundamental rights of some of our state's poorest and disadvantaged groups.

The Government must at once act and initiate investigation across the state and liberate, rehabilitate and more importantly prosecute violators who exploit the poor through inhuman means.

It is time the State Government prioritises protecting basic constitutional rights of its poorest citizens and prevent further exploitation. I urge you to act immediately and address this issue to the fullest. The Government must consider constituting a Task Force, with a mandate to conduct raids on farms, factories and any properties known to harbour bonded workers.

Awaiting your action and response.

RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR

Encl: As stated above

Shri H. D. Kumaraswamy

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Karnataka
Vidhana Soudha, Bengaluru

CC:

Dr. G Parameshwara

Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister &
Bengaluru Development Minister
Vidhana Soudha. Bengaluru