

Examples of forced & bonded labour of Dalit women

Forced prostitution

Thousands of Dalit girls are also *forced into prostitution* every year. The link between caste and forced prostitution is apparent in the Devadasi and Jogini systems practiced in India. 93% of Devadasi are from Scheduled Castes (Dalits) and 7% are from Scheduled Tribes (indigenous) in India. In Nepal, many Badi women (Dalit sub-caste) are forced into prostitution and trafficking.

CRC, CEDAW, CESC, CERD and the Special Rapporteur on Racism have all expressed concern over these caste-based systems of forced prostitution.



Binita Nepali is a 14-year old sex-worker. She inherited the occupation through her caste status in Nepal. She dreams of going back to school but caste & gender discrimination are leaving her no alternatives.

Manual scavenging

Manual scavenging, the removing of human excreta from dry latrines, railroad tracks and sewers by hand, is a caste-based form of slavery reserved exclusively for Dalits. It is estimated that around 1.3 million Dalits in India, with 98% of those being women, are forced into manual scavenging.

CEDAW, the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women and the Special Rapporteur on Slavery have all expressed concern over Dalit women engaging in manual scavenging.



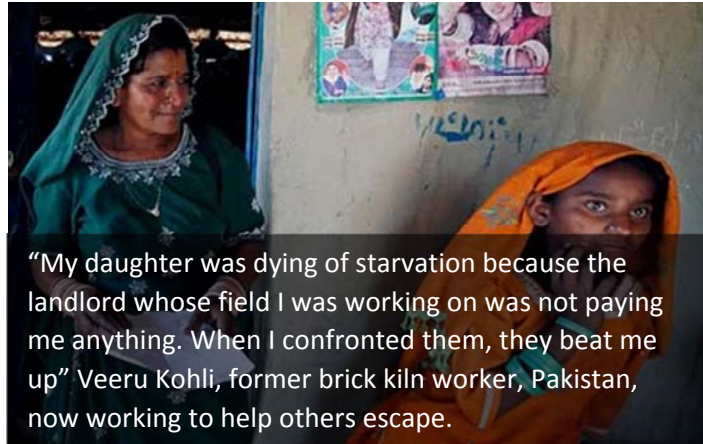
"They do not give money. Sometimes they give 2 rotis [bread]. One house did not give me anything for two or three days. So I stopped going there. They came to threaten and I went back to clean. I had to."

"Manual scavenging is not a career chosen voluntarily by workers, but is instead a deeply unhealthy, unsavoury and undignified job forced upon these people because of the stigma attached to their caste." Navi Pillay, Former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

Brick Kilns

In Pakistan and India thousands of Dalit women are working in indirect bonded labour in the Brick Kiln industry.

Studies have shown that these workers are predominantly Dalits or from minority groups. Women and girl children are typically considered the property of brick kiln owners and may suffer from sexual abuse and violence. Whole families are enslaved and work long days with little or no compensation.



“My daughter was dying of starvation because the landlord whose field I was working on was not paying me anything. When I confronted them, they beat me up” Veeru Kohli, former brick kiln worker, Pakistan, now working to help others escape.

Textiles - Sumangali Scheme

Teenage girls, predominantly Dalits, are lured to work in South India’s cotton spinning mills under the so called ‘Sumangali Scheme’ (marriage scheme), where they are promised a lump sum for their dowry after completing three years of work. They live in very basic company-run hostels and face threats and violence from factory supervisors. The girls are often trapped in a 68-hour working week, with no contracts or payslips, and being locked inside factory and dormitory compounds during working and non-working hours.



“I do not like the hostel; there is no entertainment and no outside contact and it is very far from the town. It is like a semi-prison.” Young girl working under the Sumangali scheme at a spinning mill in Tamil Nadu

“Caste-based apartheid underpins the ‘camp coolie’ and sumangali systems allowing the powerful to enslave, with impunity, vulnerable workers, often young Dalit women and girls, for the manufacture of textiles and garments for northern hemisphere markets, and hence to derive considerable profits from their enslavement.” Aidan McQuade, Director, Anti-Slavery International