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# Dalit family sold for Rs 2.75 lakh in Rajasthan

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AJMER: A court in Rajasthan has asked the police to register a case against an influential Rajput family in Ajmer district for allegedly selling an entire Dalit family for Rs 2.75 lakh to a Tonk-based furnace factory to work there as bonded labourers.

Mahaveer, his wife Sharda and their children Rakesh, Mukesh, Ghisalal, Chitar and his wife Sajani were sold last year, but the incident came to the fore when the family escaped from captivity. One year after the alleged transaction, the seven members of the Dalit family escaped and reached their native Sunariya village in Ajmer. They took refuge in a jungle after they were brutally beaten allegedly by the Rajput family members who also burned down their house. The court order came after an Ajmer-based lawyer decided to take up their case.

On Friday, a court in Sarwar asked the police to register cases against the alleged culprits, including Gopal, Bhupender, Prahalad and Hanuman Bheel. "Last year Gopal, Bhupender and Prahalad took us to Tonk on a jeep and left us at the furnace factory. We had to work there for 15 to 16 hours daily," recalled Mahaveer. He said factory owner Mustakim Bajigar refused to pay any wages saying he had already paid money. "We used to get very less to eat and were not allowed to go out," said Sharda.

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