

**Report dated the 30th June 2005 to the
National Human Rights Commission, New Delhi on the
Incidence of Bonded Labour in the Villages of Yadagiri Taluk
of Gulbarga District of Karnataka.**

Sub: Complaint from Shri Shantappa Gadwal, Taluk Convener, Jeevika-Jeethaha Vimukta, Yadagiri, Karnataka regarding rehabilitation of Bonded Labourers.

Ref: NHRC Letter in Case No. 218/10/97-98 (FC), NHRC (Law Division-IV) dated the 25th January 2005 addressed to me.

In the reference cited the Honourable Commission had forwarded a complaint received from Shantapappa Gadwal, Taluk Convener, Jeevika-Jeethaha Vimuktha, an NGO of Karnataka requesting me to visit the four villages of Yellheri, Kanekal, Balichakra and Kalebalgunda of Yadagiri Taluk of Gulbarga District in Karnataka to ascertain if there were any Bonded Labourers in those villages. Accordingly I proceeded to Yadagiri on the 30th May 2005 to investigate into the matter.

2. Before reaching Yadagiri, I had, with the help of the Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Bangalore arranged for the Taluk sanchalak of JEEVIKA Shri Siddappa Lingeri to meet me at Yadagiri on my arrival, since Shri Shantappa Gadwal had ceased to be the Taluk convener of Jeevika-Jeethaha Vimuktha. On arrival at Yadagiri I discussed with Shri Siddappa Lingeri and Shri Mali Biradhar, Executive Officer, Taluk Panchayat, Yadagiri and Shri Chauhan, Tahsildar, Yadagiri the contents of the petition that have been forwarded to me by the Honourable Commission. The petition itself was written in Kannada and with the help of these gentlemen I extracted the names of the Bonded Labourer mentioned in the petition sent by Shri Shantappa Gadwal. Since only the village of Balichakra among the four villages mentioned in the Commission's reference cited figured in the various petitions that had been sent to me and only one name of a bonded labourer in Balichakra had been mentioned, I decided to consult the list of names that were available with Shri Siddappa Lingeri pertaining to the villages of Yellheri, Kanekal, Balichakra and Kalebalgunda in his records so as to be able to make a meaningful enquiry. These records of Shri Lingeri yielded the

names of 4 bonded labourers in Kanekal, 12 bonded labourers in Kalebalgunda and 20 Bonded Labourers in Yellheri. Noting down the names of these Bonded Labourers and accompanied by Shri Siddappa Lingeri, Shri Mali Biradhar, Executive Officer, Taluk Panchayat, Yadagiri and Shri Chauhan, Tahsildar, Yadagiri I visited the villages of Kanekal, Kalebalgunda and Balichakra between 3.30 P.M. and 8.30 P.M. on the 30th May 2005 and the village of Yellheri on the 31st May 2005 and held personal enquiries in these villages through and in the presence of the people of these villages.

I. Kanekal Village

In the village of Kanekal about 100 persons gathered for my inquiry. During a conversation of about one hour with the assembled people I elicited the information that, of the 4 names provided by the petitioner, one person by name Shri Saranappa S/o Lakshmanna had not existed at all in the village. Another person Smt. Sabavva d/o Siddappa Boli had died 3 years ago. Smt. Sabavva had died 3 years ago under very difficult circumstances, reportedly of starvation.

Of the remaining two, Shri Hanumanta S/o Hallappa has migrated to Bangalore as a casual labourer and is currently working at construction sites there. He was a bonded labourer till two years ago with landlord Bannappa Gowda of Kanekal. He is no more a bonded labourer. He has migrated to Bangalore 500 kms away with his family, and returns to the village on rare occasions like a marriage. He has thus found his escape from bondage, on his own, by migrating to Bangalore as a construction worker. The fourth person Shri Saabappa S/o Mallappa was in the village itself and I spoke to him in person. He was a bonded labourer till five years ago. Today he is no more a Bonded Labourer and is presently doing casual labour. About 8 years ago he had taken a loan of Rs.2, 000/- from his master Bannappa Gowda and worked for 20 months as a bonded labourer to discharge that small debt. Thereafter he has been working as a casual labourer in the village. The assembled people informed me that there were no bonded labourers in the village any more. The practice of taking of advances and discharging such loans through bondage does not exist any more at present. There was, however, considerable indebtedness amongst the poor who take loans at a rate of interest of 24% and repay them through their earnings by casual labour. There was

considerable hunger in this village and the poor families go hungry for up to 90 days in a year.

Thus the fact of the matter is that two of the four cases reported were indeed bonded labourers at one time but they have come out of bondage on their own – Shri Hanumanta S/o Hallappa escaping his bondage by migrating to the distant city of Bangalore and Shri Saabappa S/o Mallappa taking to casual labour after having toiled as a bonded labourer.

Thus we have no Bonded Labour in this village at present, by default.

II. Kalebalgunda Village

Shri Siddappa Lingeri had given me a list of 12 cases in this village.

About 45 men and women gathered for my inquiry at this village. My investigation which lasted one and quarter-hours revealed that of the 12 cases, one person with the name of Chennappa S/o Gunjalappa did not exist at all in the village. Three other persons, namely, Shri Rachetti S/o Basanna, Shri Chandappa S/o Eerappa and Shri Eesahappa S/o Siddalingappa had died and were no more. None of them, however, had been a bonded labourer at any time.

Of the remaining eight, three persons, namely, Shri Mallikarjuna Aasare S/o Asireddy, Shri Rajappa S/o Bhimshappa and Shri Venkatesh S/o Rangaiah had been bonded labourers – the first person till about 15 years ago and the other two till about 10 years ago. Two of them have migrated to Bangalore as casual labourers and return to the village for about 10 days in a year at festival time. The other person Rajappa lives in the village itself doing casual labour.

The other five persons whose names were given by Shri Siddappa Lingeri had never worked as bonded labourers at all as elicited by me from the assembled villagers.

Thus we have no Bonded Labour in this village at present, by default.

III. Balichakra Village

I met Shri Venkanna, the lone name mentioned in the petition, in the presence of the villagers here. He told me that he had been a Bonded Labourer till about 3 years ago, having worked as such for two years, having taken a loan of a Rs. 8,000/- as advance. He has now migrated to Bangalore where he does casual labour. At present he has no debts contracted with any private moneylender but has a loan taken under the Government's IRDP Scheme.

He has thus found his freedom from bondage on his own through migration.

Thus we have no Bonded Labour in this village at present, by default.

IV. Yellheri Village

Shri Siddappa Lingeri had given me 20 names as being bonded labourers in this village.

My investigation in this village for 2 ½ hours sitting in the Kabbaligagudem area, speaking to about 50 villagers, all adults and very articulate, established that the following four among them are all Bonded Labourers even as of today:

S/S Shri

1. Basavarayappa Agasar S/o Agasar, 30 years.
2. Durgappa S/o Buggappa, 50 years.
3. Basavaraj S/o Nagappa, 41 years and
4. Bhimshappa S/o Sabanna, 30 years.

Of the rest, no one in the village seemed to know the names of Kamruddin S/o Khaja Hussein and Chennappa S/o Sabanna.

Rame S/o Sithya could not be traced in the village.

Shri Mallappa S/o Mareppa had died at the age of 20, having been a bonded child labourer for five years.

The remaining 12 persons shown below had all been Bonded Labourers at some time or the other till a few years ago ranging from 4 years to 10 years, but were at present doing casual labour and were not bonded labourers any more:

S/Shri

1. Hemly S/o Lasmova.
2. Bhimaraya S/o Hanumantha.
3. Narsia Reddy (He is a Lambani and his father's name could not be ascertained)
4. Yellappa S/o Hanumantha.
5. Sumant S/o Thimmappa.
6. Balappa S/o Narsappa.
7. Basavaraj S/o Ashappa.
8. Mallappa S/o Sabanna.
9. Ramkrishnappa S/o Bhimraya.
10. Sanna Bhimshappa S/o Sabanna.
11. Onnappa S/o Mallappa (He was a bonded child labourer and is reportedly aged only 12 years, on migration to Bangalore).
12. Mallappa S/o Siddappa.

Some of them like Shri Ramakrishnappa S/o Bhimaraya and Shri Onnappa S/o Mallappa have migrated to Bangalore for casual labour while the others work in the village itself as casual labourers.

In addition to the 4 cases of Bonded Labourers mentioned above in this village, **through my own initiative to find out whether there were other Bonded Labourers in this village whose names had not been reported by the NGO Jeevika, I investigated and established that there were as many as 9 more Bonded Labourers in the village. Their names are given below:**

S/Shri

1. **Kanekal Badrappa S/o Shankarappa, 65years**
- 2-5. **Shri Hanmanthu S/o Ramappa, 30 years and 3 members of his family namely his mother Smt. Shankamma W/o Ramappa, his brother Bhoodeppa and his wife Smt. Shankamma.**

6-7. Hanmanthu S/o Sabanna, 35 years and his son Reddappa who is 12 years old and is thus a bonded child labourer.

8. Sabanna S/o Thayappa, 30 years.

9. Buggappa S/o Durgappa, 25 years.

They all belong to the backward Kabbaliga caste.

Thus in this village there are at present 13 bonded labourers, including the 9 cases established by me. If these numbers are not more, that is because the erstwhile bonded labourers have ceased to be such, by default, finding their liberation on their own.

3. Conclusions.

The essential position that emerged from my personal enquiries in the villages of Yellheri, Kanekal, Balichakra and Kalebalgunda of Yadagiri Taluk of Karnataka is that many of the bonded labourers have used the route to migration to cities as far away as Bangalore (800 Kms.), Bombay (500 Kms) and Hyderabad (200 Kms.) to escape bondage. **During my visit, apart from confirming the existence of a few bonded labourers as mentioned in the complaint petition and from a list obtained from the representative of the NGO Jeevika, I was able to identify on my own 9 Bonded Labourers in the village of Yellheri.** In all these villages, I found through enquiry, considerable economic distress exists with hunger levels being high, often families going to bed hungry for 90 days in a year. Indebtedness also continues to be high with the agricultural labourers borrowing at heavy rates of interest, ranging from 24 percent, even for food grains and repaying from the meager wages they earn as labourers. The incidence of bondage itself has come down since the date of the complaint petition of JEEVIKA, but it is mainly thanks to migration. However, it needs to be stated that migration to big cities with women and children hundreds of kilometers away where there is no support of any kind and sky is the only roof, is only an exchange of one form of slavery to another form of extreme distress. The brokers who enable these poor rural agricultural labourers to migrate to cities work for contractors, demand and obtain from these migrating labourers as commission a substantial portion of the wages that these poor labourers get in these cities, which means that the migrating labour never gets more than Rs.50/- a day net on average. The only relief, if any, they get

is when they return for a few days to their native village for festivals. Till 8 years ago the advance wages for one year of work in Yellheri village for bonded labour amounted to only 8 bags of Jowar of 70 kg each. This rose to 12 bags three years ago. No cash was paid. As for those who are even now slaving away as bonded labourers in the village of Yellheri, the advance given to them is now mostly paid in cash, though Jowar also constitutes a part of this advance often. Whether fully in cash or part cash and part Jowar, this advance is rarely ever more than Rs.9000/- per annum at present, which works out to less than Rs.25/- per day. This is far below the minimum wages prescribed. The cruelty of all this is compounded when we find that there is no rest or relief for the bonded labourers as gathered by me during my discussion in Yellheri, where the bonded labourers whose names I have listed in this Report work from very early in the morning till late in the night. Some of them like the members of the family of Hanumanthu s/o Ramappa work as bonded labourers in several different households eking out small quantities of Jowar like half a bag of Jowar per annum from those various households. Many a bonded labourer just gave up bondage, as the remuneration was simply inadequate to keep body and soul together or because of old age, but the fact remains that many of them are still forced to live a life of bondage in Yellheri in return for a pittance owing to extreme poverty and helplessness. Some of them started their life of bondage when they were mere children as in the case of S/Shri. Sumant S/o Thimmappa, Basavaraj S/o Ashappa, Durgappa S/o Buggappa, Basavaraj S/o Nagappa and Bhimshappa S/o Naganna. The case of the family of Hanumanthu S/o Sabanna is a case of inter-generational bonded labour. He is a bonded labourer at present and so is his 12-year-old son Reddappa. Hanumanthu's father also had been a bonded labourer.

4. Recommendations:

The Honourable Commission may forward this report of mine to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Karnataka for action as follows:

1. All the bonded labourers listed by me in the village of Yellheri should be released forthwith as per the provisions of the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976 and rehabilitated comprehensively.

2. The families of all the erstwhile bonded labourers whose names have been listed by me in this Report in the four villages of Yellheri, Kanekal, Balichakra and Kalebalgunda should be provided with comprehensive assistance under the asset-based anti-poverty programmes of the State and Central Governments, along with a house. The family of Hanumanthu and his brother Bhoodeppa should be treated as two separate families.
3. The State Government should depute the Assistant Commissioner of Yadagiri Sub-division to the following villages listed in the complaint petition to the Honourable Commission for a comprehensive survey to identify the existence of Bonded Labour and Bonded Child Labour in these villages:
 1. Chepetla
 2. Himalpur
 3. Gajarkot
 4. Kandakoor
 5. Ashnal
 6. Hattikuni
 7. Baligera
 8. Idloor
4. The State Government should draw up a plan for the entire Yadagiri Taluk with a view to mitigating the existing conditions of distress through action required to make the Taluk hunger free, provide the required credit for consumption and other needs, and make the Taluk a Bonded Labour free Taluk. In doing this the State Government should involve not only the Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, which is the nodal Department for bonded labour but also the Department of Labour as there is incidence of bonded child labour as well in the village of Yellheri and it would be reasonable to presume that a similar situation in regard to Child Labour exists elsewhere in the Taluk as well.
5. The remarks of the Deputy Commissioner, Gulbarga may be called for, for reporting to the State Government that there are no bonded labourers in the District.

6. The explanation of the Gram Panchayat, Yellheri should be called for, for its failure to discharge its responsibility in this regard vide the Karnataka Panchayats Raj (Third Amendment) Act, 2000, Section 58 A, published through Karnataka Government Notification dated the 13th November 2001.
5. The State Government may be requested to submit their report of compliance of the above recommendations within two months.
6. I have already requested the officers of the Government of Karnataka who accompanied me on my Inquiry to the villages to release all these 13 bonded labourers forthwith and provide them rehabilitation assistance. I have also informed them that I would be visiting Yadagiri Taluk again within two months to verify that the rehabilitation of all these bonded labourers has begun. I have also addressed the Principal Secretary, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj giving the full details of this case with a request to take all necessary action as required under the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976.

K R VENUGOPAL
SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR.

29th June 2005.

Dear Shri. Baligar,

Sub: Complaint from Shri Shantappa Gadwal, Taluk Convener, Jeevika-Jeethaha Vimukta, Yadagiri, Karnataka regarding rehabilitation of Bonded Labourers.

Ref: 1. NHRC Letter in Case No. 218/10/97-98 (FC), NHRC (Law Division-IV)
Dated the 25th January 2005 addressed to me.
2. My DO Letter dated 1st June 2005 to you.

In the reference cited the Honourable Commission had forwarded a complaint received from Shri. Shantapappa Gadwal, Taluk Convener, Jeevika-Jeethaha Vimukta, an NGO of Karnataka requesting me to visit the four villages of Yellheri, Kanekal, Balichakra and Kalebalgunda of Yadagiri Taluk of Gulbarga District in Karnataka to ascertain if there were any Bonded Labourers in those villages. Accordingly I proceeded to Yadagiri on the 30th May 2005 and investigated into the matter. In this connection my letter 2nd cited refers.

2. Accompanied by Shri Siddappa Lingeri, Shri Mali Biradhar, Executive Officer, Taluk Panchayat, Yadagiri and Shri Chauhan, Tahsildar, Yadagiri I visited the villages of Kanekal, Kalebalgunda and Balichakra on the 30th May 2005 and the village of Yellheri on the 31st May 2005 and held personal enquiries in these villages through and in the presence of the people of these villages.

3. The following are my findings:

I. Kanekal Village

Two of the four cases reported were bonded labourers at one time but they have come out of bondage on their own. These persons are Shri Hanumanta S/o Hallappa who escaped from his bondage by migrating to Bangalore and Shri Saabappa S/o Mallappa taking to casual labour after having worked as a bonded labourer.

The practice of taking of advances and discharging such loans through bondage does not seem to exist any more in this village. There was, however, considerable indebtedness amongst the poor who take loans at a rate of interest of 24% and repay them through their earnings by casual labour. There was considerable hunger in this village and the poor families go hungry for up to 90 days in a year.

II. Kalebalgunda Village

Three persons, namely, Shri Mallikarjuna Aasare S/o Asireddy, Shri Rajappa S/o Bhimshappa and Shri Venkatesh S/o Rangaiah had been bonded labourers

in the past. They are not Bonded Labourers any more. Two of them have migrated to Bangalore as casual labourers and return to the village for about 10 days in a year at festival time. The other person Rajappa lives in the village itself doing casual labour.

III. Balichakra Village

I met Shri Venkanna, the lone name mentioned in the petition, in the presence of the villagers here. He told me that he had been a Bonded Labourer till about 3 years ago, having worked as such for two years, having taken a loan of a Rs. 8,000/- as advance. He has now migrated to Bangalore where he does casual labour. At present he has no debts contracted with any private moneylender but has a loan taken under the Government's IRDP Scheme.

He has thus found his freedom from bondage on his own through migration.

IV. Yellheri Village

My investigation in this village established that the following four among the names reported are Bonded Labourers even as of today:

S/S Shri

1. Basavarayappa Agasar S/o Agasar, 30 years.
2. Durgappa S/o Buggappa, 50 years.
3. Basavaraj S/o Nagappa, 41 years and
4. Bhimshappa S/o Sabanna, 30 years.

The remaining 12 persons shown below had all been Bonded Labourers at some time or the other till a few years ago ranging from 4 years to 10 years, but were at present doing casual labour and were not bonded labourers any more:

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1. Hemly S/o Lasmova.
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8. Mallappa S/o Sabanna.
9. Ramkrishnappa S/o Bhimraya.
10. Sanna Bhimshappa S/o Sabanna.
11. Onnappa S/o Mallappa (He was a bonded child labourer and is reportedly aged only 12 years, on migration to Bangalore).
12. Mallappa S/o Siddappa.

Some of them like Shri Ramakrishnappa S/o Bhimaraya and Shri Onnappa S/o Mallappa have migrated to Bangalore for casual labour while the others work in the village itself as casual labourers.

In addition to the 4 cases of Bonded Labourers mentioned above in this village, **through my own inquiries to find out whether there were other Bonded Labourers in this village whose names had not been reported by the NGO Jeevika, I investigated and found that there were as many as 9 more Bonded Labourers in the village. Their names are given below:**

S/Shri

- 1. Kanekal Badrappa S/o Shankarappa, 65years**
- 2. To 5. Shri Hanmanthu S/o Ramappa, 30 years and 3 members of his family namely his mother Smt. Shankamma W/o Ramappa, his brother Bhoodeppa and his wife Smt. Shankamma.**
- 6-7 Hanmanthu S/o Sabanna, 35 years and his son Reddappa who is 12 years old and is thus a bonded child labourer.**
- 8. Sabanna S/o Thayappa, 30 years.**
- 9. Buggappa S/o Durgappa, 25 years.**

They all belong to the backward Kabbaliga caste.

Thus in this village there are at present 13 bonded labourers, including the 9 cases found by me.

4. The essential position that emerged from my personal enquiries in the villages of Yellheri, Kanekal, Balichakra and Kalebalgunda of Yadagiri Taluk of Karnataka is that many of the bonded labourers have used the route to migration to cities as far away as Bangalore (800 Kms.), Bombay (500 Kms) and Hyderabad (200 Kms.) to escape bondage. **During my visit, apart from confirming the existence of a few bonded labourers as mentioned in the complaint petition and from a list obtained from the representative of the NGO Jeevika, I was able to identify on my own 9 Bonded Labourers in the village of Yellheri.** In all these villages I found that considerable economic distress exists with hunger levels being high, often families going to bed hungry for 90 days in a year. Indebtedness also continues to be high with the agricultural labourers borrowing at heavy rates of interest, ranging from 24 percent, even for food grains and repaying from the meager wages they earn as labourers. The incidence of bondage itself has come down mainly thanks to migration. However, it needs to be stated that migration to big cities with women and children hundreds of kilometers away where there is no support of any kind and sky is the only roof, is only an exchange of one form of slavery to another form of extreme distress. The brokers who enable these poor rural agricultural labourers to migrate to cities work for contractors demand and obtain from these migrating labourers as commission a substantial portion of the wages that these poor labourers get in these cities, which means that the migrating labour never gets more than Rs.50/- a day net on average. The only relief, if any, they get is when they return for a few days to their native village for festivals. Till 8 years ago the advance wages for one year of work in Yellheri village for bonded labour amounted to only 8 bags of Jowar of 70 kg each. This rose to 12 bags three years ago. No cash was paid. As for those who are even now slaving away as bonded labourers in the village of Yellheri, the advance given to them is now mostly paid in cash, though Jowar also constitutes a part of this advance often.

Whether fully in cash or part cash and part Jowar, this advance is rarely ever more than Rs.9000/- per annum at present, which works out to less than Rs.25/- per day. This is far below the minimum wages prescribed. The cruelty of all this is compounded when we find that there is no rest or relief for the bonded labourers as gathered by me during my discussion in Yellheri, where the bonded labourers whose names I have listed in this Report work from very early in the morning till late in the night. Some of them like the members of the family of Hanumanthu s/o Ramappa work as bonded labourers in several different households eking out small quantities of Jowar like half a bag of Jowar per annum from those various households. Many a bonded labourer just gave up bondage, as the remuneration was simply inadequate to keep body and soul together or because of old age, but the fact remains that many of them are still forced to live a life of bondage in Yellheri in return for a pittance owing to extreme poverty and helplessness. Some of them started their life of bondage when they were mere children as in the case of S/Shri. Sumant S/o Thimmappa, Basavaraj S/o Ashappa, Durgappa S/o Buggappa, Basavaraj S/o Nagappa and Bhimshappa S/o Naganna. The case of the family of Hanumanthu S/o Sabanna is a case of inter-generational bonded labour. He is a bonded labourer at present and so is his 12-year-old son Reddappa. Hanumanthu's father also had been a bonded labourer.

5. In the context of the findings I request that action as follows may please be taken:

1. All the bonded labourers listed by me in the village of Yellheri may be released forthwith as per the provisions of the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976 and rehabilitated comprehensively, along with a house.

2. The families of all the erstwhile bonded labourers whose names have been listed by me in the four villages of Yellheri, Kanekal, Balichakra and Kalebalgunda may be provided with comprehensive assistance under the asset-based anti-poverty programmes of the State and Central Governments, along with a house. The family of Hanumanthu and his brother Bhoodeppa may be treated as two separate families.

3. The State Government may please depute the Assistant Commissioner of Yadagiri Sub-division to the following villages listed in the complaint petition to the Honourable Commission for a comprehensive survey to identify the existence of Bonded Labour and Bonded Child Labour in these villages:

- 1.Chepetla
- 2.Himalpur
- 3.Gajarkot
- 4.Kandakoor
- 5.Ashnal
- 6.Hattikuni
- 7.Baligera
- 8.Idloor

4. The State Government may please draw up a plan for the entire Yadagiri Taluk with a view to mitigating the existing conditions of distress through action required to make the Taluk hunger free, provide the required credit for consumption and other needs, and make the Taluk a Bonded Labour and Child

Labour free Taluk. In doing this the State Government may involve not only the Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, which is the nodal Department for bonded labour but also the Department of Labour as there is incidence of bonded child labour as well in the village of Yellheri and it would be reasonable to presume that a similar situation in regard to Child Labour exists elsewhere in the Taluk as well.

5. The remarks of the Deputy Commissioner, Gulbarga may be called for, for reporting to the State Government that there are no bonded labourers in the District.
6. The explanation of the Gram Panchayat, Yellheri should be called for, for its failure to discharge its responsibility in this regard vide the Karnataka Panchayats Raj (Third Amendment) Act, 2000, Section 58 A, published through Karnataka Government Notification dated the 13th November 2001.

I shall be grateful for action as above.

Yours sincerely,

K R VENUGOPAL

Shri V P Baligar IAS
Principal Secretary
Rural Development and Panchayati Raj
Government of Karnataka
MS Building, Dr Ambedkar Veedhi
Bangalore 560 001
Fax No:080 2 235 3927.

Copy to Smt.Vatsala Watsa IAS, Principal Secretary, Labour Department, Government of Karnataka, MS Building, Dr Ambedkar Veedhi, Bangalore 560 001.

6th February 2006.

Dear Bharihoke Saheb,

**Sub: Compalint from Shri Shantapa Gadwal, Taluk Convenor, Jeevika Jeetaha
Vimukta, Yadagiri, Karnataka regarding rehabilitation of Bonded
Labourers.**

- Ref: 1. Assistant Registrar (Law)'s letter dated 24th January 2006 addressed to me in NHRC Case No.218/10/ 97-98 (FC) (Law Division-IV).
2. My letter to the Principal Secretary, RDPR, Government of Karnataka, dated the 30th November 2005.

I invite your kind attention to the reference 1st cited.

2. In pursuance of the directions of the Commission forwarded in the Commission's letter dated the 28th October 2005, I sent a copy of the Commission's letter to the Principal Secretary, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Government of Karnataka, Bangalore seeking a report on action taken by the Government of Karnataka, in my reference 2nd cited. This was in pursuance of my previous letters addressed to him in regard to this case in June 2005. Copy of my letter to the Principal Secretary, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Government of Karnataka 2nd cited is enclosed herewith for your information.

3. I pursued action in regard to this during my visit to Bangalore for my periodical review with the Principal Secretary, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Government of Karnataka when I met him on the 29th November 2005. In this meeting I also drew his attention to a letter submitted to me by the Vimukti Trust of Bangalore dated the 22nd August 2005, copy enclosed, wherein they had reported that the Bonded Labourers identified by me were being harassed by the masters and threatened by the officials with dire consequences, after my investigation on the 30th and 31st May 2005. I pointed out to the Principal Secretary that a letter had been addressed to him also by the Bonded Labourers Shri Hanumantha S/o of Sabanna Kavali and Shri Basavaraja S/o Narasappa Madivala of Yelheri village of Yadagiri taluk of Gulbarga District, identified by me as Bonded Labourers, complaining of harassment and threats from the Assistant Commissioner, Tahsildar, Revenue Inspector and Village Assistant. I pointed out to the Principal Secretary, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj that this kind of conduct on the part of the senior officers of the Gulbarga District Administration amounted to a threat not only to the Bonded Labourers but to the NHRC itself, considering that they have been identified as Bonded Labourers by the Special Rapporteur of the NHRC himself. I sought action against these officials by the Government of Karnataka.

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4. While I have indeed taken up this matter with the Principal Secretary, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Government of Karnataka I believe that, based on the complaints made by the Vimukti Trust on whose behalf Shri Shantappa Gadwal had originally identified the Bonded Labourers and the letters given by Shri Hanumantha S/o Sabanna Kavali and Shri Basavaraja S/o Narasappa Madivala, the Honourable Commission should issue notices to the Assistant Commissioner and Tahsildar, Yadagiri to appear before the Commission and explain their conduct.

Yours sincerely,

K. R. VENUGOPAL

Shri Ajit Bharihoke
Registrar (Law)
National Human Rights Commission
Faridkot House
Copernicus Marg

New Delhi 110 001

Encl: As above.