 

Following are contemporary forms of slavery in Pakistan

Marriages without consent. Forced marriages, child marriages, child labor, bonded labor in brik klins, agriculture sector, laborers in industry

Amond causes of bonded labor include peshgi system which strengthen debt bondage. It creates vicious circle of debt for workers in Brik klin, agriculture, sugar mills and other sectors.

Causes include lack of land reforms, lack of implementation of fair wages, lack of implementation of ILO conventions, lack of implementation of bonded labour abolition act, Tenancy Act and decisions of the court given in support of farmers, laborers, peasants, for their economic cultural rights.

Reports say 2.3 million workers are bonded in modern slavery. However, we believe that 70 percent of the peasants, labourers, workers languishing in the serious conditions are not even registered in state departments. Governments are reluctant and sometimes unable to implement decisions of the higher and superior courts. Particular judgement given by the Sindh High Court Hyderabad Circuit in human rights defender Ghulam Ali Laghari is important in Sindh province. In its detailed 65 verdict by DB bench of Justice Salah ul Din Panhwar and Justice Adnan Iqbal Chaudhry in petitioned filed by us.

*P L D 2020 Sindh 284*

*Before Salahuddin Panhwar and Adnan Iqbal Chaudhary, JJ*

*GHULAM ALI---Petitioner*

*Versus*

*PROVINCE OF SINDH through Senior Member, Board of Revenue, Sindh and 12*

*others---Respondents*

*Constitutional Petition No. D-451 of 2016, decided on 1st October, 2019.*

On indication of defenders, the Sindh High Court struck down tenancy laws sections which were allowing bonded labour. It was surprising for the court, lawyers that in Tenancy Law how this section was added by the parliamentarians which was allowing bonded labor. Answer is simple: Parliamentarians in Pakistan are feudal lords, own lands and exploit peasants, laborers in their lands and businesses. Verdict was passed but it was challenged by the Sindh Government in the Supreme Court where it is still pending adjudication.

This court decision covered heath insurance, land rights, fair accounting, census of peasants, their entry in the record and right as co sharer and so many other important rights including the case will be heard by judges not bureaucrats.

Bonded Labor Abolition Act, Criminal Procedure provisions are not being implemented in Pakistan and criminal procedures law is not effective for ensuring the proper liberty of the peasants from the bonded labor.

Human rights defenders working on bonded labor are facing serious threats from feudals, police, contractors, Brik Klin owners, some were even attacked. Ghulam Ali laghari’s house was burnt because he dragged the landlord into the revenue department and later in the court for settlement of accounts and other his rights on the land.

Recommendations:

* Implementations of Laws on prevention of bonded labor, tenancy and Sindh Agri Women Workers Act, SIRA, ILO etc.
* Peasants, laborers, representation in parliament and other forums.
* Land reforms in Sindh & Pakistan
* Making vigilance committees on bonded labor functional
* More funding should be promised for eradication of this threat.
* Sindh Government should withdraw its appeal against the Sindh High Courts’ decision on peasants, and its implementation
* Cooperation and coordination between workers (Agriculture, Brik Klin other sectors) and owners or grower organizations should be improved.
* Laws, systems, mechanisms for protection of human rights defenders working on modern forms of slavery.
* Capacity building of workers, defenders, organization which are part of the Anti Slavery Network Sindh and its further strengthening.
* Application of Business and Human Rights in the all sectors.

***RightsNow Foundation/Sindh Human Rights Defenders Network***