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# ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ

## Prabasi Shramika

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ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର

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### ସଂପାଦକୀୟ



ଭାରତୀୟ ସମସ୍ତ ନାଗରିକ ଜୀବିକା ନିର୍ବାହ କରି ପାରିବା ପାଇଁ ଯେ କୌଣସି ରାଜ୍ୟରେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କରିବା ଏକ ସାମ୍ପ୍ରଦାୟିକ ଅଧିକାର; ମାତ୍ର ବହୁ ଅସଂଗଠିତ ଏବଂ ଅଶିକ୍ଷିତ ଶ୍ରମିକମାନେ ଯେତେବେଳେ ଠିକାଦାର ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ଅନ୍ୟ ରାଜ୍ୟକୁ ଯାଇ କାମ କରୁଛନ୍ତି ସେହି ସମୟରେ ସେମାନେ ବହୁ ଶୋଷଣ ଏବଂ ନିର୍ଯ୍ୟାତନାର ଶିକାର ହେବାର ନଜରକୁ ଆସୁଛି । ଏହି ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକମାନଙ୍କର ସମସ୍ୟା ସମାଧାନ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ଆନ୍ତଃରାଜ୍ୟ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ (ନିୟୁକ୍ତି ନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରଣ ଓ ଚାକିରି ସର୍ତ୍ତାବଳୀ) ଆଇନ ୧୯୭୯ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକାରୀ ହୋଇଆସୁଅଛି । ଏତଦ୍ୱ୍ୟତୀତ, ଏହି ଶ୍ରମିକମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଏକାଧିକ ଶ୍ରମ ଆଇନ ମଧ୍ୟ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକାରୀ ହୋଇଥାଏ ।

ଅନ୍ୟ ରାଜ୍ୟରେ କାମ କରୁଥିବା ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଶ୍ରମିକମାନଙ୍କର ସମସ୍ୟା ଦୂର କରିବା ପାଇଁ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର ବିଭିନ୍ନ ପଦକ୍ଷେପମାନ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିଆସୁଛନ୍ତି । ତେଲେଙ୍ଗାନା ରାଜ୍ୟରେ ଇଡି ମଧ୍ୟରେ ହେଲପ୍ ଡେସ୍ ଖୋଲାଯାଇସାରିଛି । ଅନ୍ୟ ରାଜ୍ୟ ଚଳୁଥିବା ତାମିଲନାଡୁ, ଦିଲ୍ଲୀ, କର୍ଣ୍ଣାଟକ ଆଦି ରାଜ୍ୟରେ ହେଲପ୍ ଡେସ୍ ଖୋଲି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଶ୍ରମିକଙ୍କ ସମସ୍ୟା ସମାଧାନ କରିବାର ପ୍ରୟାସ ଜାରି ରହିଛି । ଏତଦ୍ୱ୍ୟତୀତ, ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକମାନଙ୍କର ଅଭିଯୋଗକୁ ତୁରନ୍ତ ଧ୍ୟାନ ଦେଇ ଏବଂ ତାଙ୍କ ସମସ୍ୟାର ସମାଧାନ ପାଇଁ ଆମ ରାଜ୍ୟରେ ଏକ ନିଃଶୁଳ୍କ ଟେଲିଫୋନ୍ ନଂ. ୧୫୫୩୭୮ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକାରୀ ହୋଇଆସୁଅଛି । ଶ୍ରମିକମାନେ ନିଜର ଆଇନଗତ ଅଧିକାର ଉପରେ ସଚେତନ ହେଲେ ଏବଂ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କରୁଥିବା ରାଜ୍ୟମାନଙ୍କର ଶ୍ରମ ଆଇନର ବ୍ୟାପକ ପ୍ରବର୍ତ୍ତନ ହେଲେ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ ମାନଙ୍କର ସମସ୍ୟା ବହୁ ମାତ୍ରାରେ ସମାଧାନ ହୋଇପାରିବ ।

ଆମର ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ରାଜ୍ୟ ସରକାରଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା ନିଆଯାଉଥିବା ସଠିକ୍ ପଦକ୍ଷେପ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକମାନଙ୍କର ନିରାପତ୍ତା ଓ ସୁରକ୍ଷା ନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରଣର ବଳୟ ଭିତରେ ରହିବ ।

ଏହି ପତ୍ରିକାଟିକୁ ସରସ ସୁନ୍ଦର କରିବା ପାଇଁ ବିଭାଗୀୟ ପ୍ରମୁଖ ସଚିବ ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ଅନୁ ଗର୍ଗ, ଆଇ.ଏ.ଏସ୍. ଓ ଶ୍ରମ କମିଶନର ଶ୍ରୀ ସଚିନ୍ ରାମଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ଯାଦବଙ୍କ ପ୍ରେରଣା ଓ ଉତ୍ସାହ ନିଶ୍ଚିତ ଭାବରେ ପ୍ରଶଂସନୀୟ ।

ଏହି ପତ୍ରିକାଟିରେ ପ୍ରକାଶିତ ସମସ୍ତ ବିଷୟବସ୍ତୁକୁ ତୁଟି ରହିତ କରିବା ସକାଶେ ଯଥା ସମ୍ଭବ ଉଦ୍ୟମ କରାଯାଇଛି । ତାହା ସତ୍ତ୍ୱେ ଯଦି କୌଣସି ତୁଟି ରହିଯାଇଥାଏ ତାହା ଅନିଚ୍ଛା କୃତ ।

ପତ୍ରିକାଟି ପାଠକ ମାନଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା ଆଦୃତ ହେବ ବୋଲି ଆଶା ।

(ସୁଧାକର ବୁର୍ଗା)  
ସଂପାଦକ

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## PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES FACED BY THE EMIGRANT WORKERS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The present chapter in continuation with the previous one, deals with the problems and challenges faced by the socially excluded emigrants in the Middle East countries particularly in the Gulf region. The Indian workers in the Gulf constitute about 5 million of the estimated 25 million of the total Indian Diaspora. According to the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs government of India, majority of them are in UAE, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. The temporary workers' community in the Gulf countries mainly comprises of people from all Indian states, particularly from Kerala and Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh etc. (MOIA, 2008). Large numbers of them who have emigrated to Gulf countries have suffered untold miseries. Hundreds of Gulf sufferers who got cheated either in the hands of travel agents or by the employers in the Gulf or by the natives of host countries, have returned back to their motherlands. Thus there is a need to identify and address the problems of Gulf sufferers particular the problems related to their human and civil rights.

The Indian emigration to the Middle East is a topic which has received the attention of economists, sociologists and demographers from the last few decades. Most of the studies (Prakash, 1978, Mathew and Nair, 1978, Kurien, 1979, Radhakrishnan and Ibrahim, 1981) dealt mainly with the profiles and socioeconomic

backgrounds of emigration, processes of emigration, economic and social impacts of remittances and issues and problems of return emigrants from the southern state Kerala and some of them studied the impact of Gulf migration on society especially the impact of male emigration on women and family from Kerala (Gulati, 1983, 1987, 1993, Sekhar, 1993) and (Bahdwar, 2011) from Punjab. The economic impacts of Gulf emigration on the country of origin country have been studied by some of the economists and demographers from Kerala (Nair, 1989, Thomas, 1993, Prakash, 1998a, 1998b, Zachariah, Mathew and Rajan, 2001). All these studies have neglected two aspects of Gulf emigration. First, these studies have only focused on the emigration from one state that is Kerala, the largest supplier of workers to the Middle East from India and attention has not been given to the other states of the country. Secondly, although these studies provide rich information about the issues of emigration from India to the Gulf countries, particularly from Kerala based on primary information collected from emigrant households, but we do not have much information about the labour market situation, the employment, wages, working conditions of emigrants, and their various problems and hardships which emigrants face in the Middle East countries. This is the context in which the present chapter has been planned in this study.

To understand the problems of the

emigrant workers, the present chapter has been divided into two parts. The first part deals with the problems of illegal or irregular workers working in the Middle East. Whereas the second highlights the problems and hardships of regular workers. The division of this chapter into two parts have been done because the problems and working condition of illegal and legal workers are different from each other.

### 5.1 Irregular Workers in the Middle East

Let us start with the first category of the illegal workers. According to Birks and Sinclair (1999), one of the highest concentrations of foreign labour in the world can be found in the six Gulf States, namely Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). With only 0.4 per cent of the world population they host 13 per cent of the world wide labour migrant population. In 1990, the number of the emigrant workers in the six countries accounted for about 7.8 million people out of a total population of 19 million (Evans and Papps, 1999). A large number of illegal workers also resides in the Gulf countries.

A large number of scholars have defined the illegal workers. The ILO (1999) has defined illegal worker as a person who has not been granted an authorization of the state on whose territory he or she is present that is required by law in respect of entry, stay or employment, or who has failed to comply with the conditions to which his or her entry, stay or employment is subject. According to Shah (2009), "the term, 'irregular migration' is preferable to terms

such as 'illegal' migration and 'undocumented' migration. Several terms are currently used in the literature to refer to the status of emigrants who enter countries on an irregular or unlawful basis: illegal, clandestine, undocumented or irregular. She quoted the wordings of Elie Wiesel, the Nobel Peace Prize winner, who once stated that a human being cannot be illegal. The term 'illegal' is a negative term, which ignores the contributions made by the emigrant workers to the host economy. It seems to put the blame squarely on the emigrant worker forgetting illegal roles of others, whereas in a number of cases, the migrant may simply be a victim only forced into an irregular situation by traffickers and recruitment agents. Behind so-called illegal emigrant workers, there are always illegal local employers and/or intermediaries. A preferred term, which can accommodate various diverse situations, is 'irregular migration'.

On the other hand, Gosh (1998) believed that in the discussion on irregular migrants, it is important to note that a person is not simply being irregular by the very act of being. Rather a person is made illegal by altering laws and regulations of the country of origin and destination. In regions where there is no legal restriction on the movement of people, the issue of irregular migration barely comes up.

According to Gosh (1998) irregular emigrants can be distinguished along two categories. First, poverty, unemployment and economic hardship serve as the principal push factors for survival

migration. Second, lack of opportunities to enhance economic welfare is a pull factor for opportunity-seeking migration. The distinction of irregular emigrants into two categories is an important analytical tool to directly focus on the different circumstances and motivations that cause these two types of movements. He further states that opportunity-seeking migrants are more cautious about potential risks and rewards of irregular migration, and are more willing to stay in the country of origin if the risk and punishment of migrating is too high. Survival migrants, however, are more driven by economic despair and risks of punishment and discomfort are less likely to keep them from moving. Furthermore, they are more likely to accept almost any job in the destination country.

It is, therefore, not surprising that most of the irregular survival migrants can be found in low skilled, low wage jobs. Poverty and unemployment are generally more important causes for irregular emigration instead of the search for better opportunities. There may also be a mismatch between the level of labour demand and the opportunities offered by the receiving country for legal entry. According to Gosh (1998) it is almost impossible to restrain migrants to come if there is a significant demand for labour unless the punishment for illegal entry and the employer sanction are exceptionally high. This mismatch can be called the demand pull in destination countries.

The Illegal workers run the risk of unfair exploitation and human rights violations.

Since their employment is illegal, neither they nor their employers notify the authorities that they are working. This means that it is virtually impossible to keep track of them, or afford them any protection. Moreover, many of these illegal workers are at the mercy of underground brokers who find them jobs and dictate their terms of employment. This leaves them exposed to a variety of potential abuses, including restrictions of their freedom of movement, violation of their contracts, and embezzlement of their wages etc. These workers are vulnerable because of their illegal status, and their ability to make complaints about unfair treatment is further limited by their lack of knowledge about their host country and their inability to speak the local language (International Labour Organization, 2002)

According to Kapiszewski (2001) the Middle Eastern countries use this term illegal immigrants for different kinds of workers. They use the term for over-stayers on a tourist visa and engaged in work, students engaged in employment, trainees overstaying their visas, regular migrants continuing beyond the contract period, especially regular migrants running away from their designated employer before expiry of contract. Three categories of the illegal emigrants exist in the Middle East. The first category contains people who were illegally smuggled into the country, for example, in UAE most of the illegal entries take place in the remote mountain region of the east coast of the country where people arrive by boat from Iran, Pakistan or India

and disembark at night. From there, those people find their way with the help of the people of their own nationality, but even from the nationals to some remote farms or the cities on the west coast of the country where most of the work can be found. The UAE government undertook steps to curb these kinds of entries by issuing a decree in the mid-1990s that ordered all owners of fishing boats to be nationals (Kapiszewski, 2001). The second, category contains of people who entered the country on false passports or documents. This could be someone else's passport or a new faked one. Indian illegal emigrants in the Middle East are rarely come under these two categories. The third and last category of irregular emigrants is of those emigrants who have overstayed their visa for different reasons (Shah, 2009)

During the fieldwork it has been observed that there are eight reasons by which Punjabi workers became illegal in the host countries of the Middle East. First, they overstayed their original visa term and have been unable to extend it or renew it. Second, emigrant entered the country on a visitor or tourist visa and started working without proper documents or getting work permit. Third, they changed employer without proper authorization or resigned from the job (changing employment without consent of original sponsor and the authorities is illegal).

Fourth, they were unable to regulate their status or simply leave the country since their employers did not give back their passports. It is common practice in many

Middle East countries that employers confiscate the worker's passport for as long as the worker stays in the county. Without passport and the approval of their sponsor, emigrants cannot obtain the exit visa to leave the country. Fifth, they finished their contracts but were unable to leave the country as their employers did not provide them with the return ticket which they were unable to buy themselves. Sixth, they left their sponsors when they were not paid the salaries or delay in getting salaries or when they were forced to work for longer hours than the labour law allows. Seven, they changed their place of work as a result of the actions of their sponsors who, facing economic difficulties, instead of repatriating their employees, forced them to look for another job (both to avoid paying the cost of a worker returning home and also because they were unable to legalize the transfer of their sponsorships). Eight, some more ambitious emigrants leave their companies because they can earn more outside than they earn in the company.

In the present study the term irregular workers has been used for two types of emigrants. First, who have overstayed their visa for different reasons, they have come legally in the host country through work contract but due to different reasons they have to leave their company and have to work illegally in the Middle East. Second, who entered the country on visit or tourist visa and started working without proper documents or getting work permit. A large proportion of all irregular emigrants in the GCC countries belong to the first category (Shah, 2009)

## 5.2 Estimated Number of Irregular Emigrants in the GCC

No firm estimate of the total number of irregular emigrants in the GCC countries is available. Reliable public use data on the numbers of irregular emigrants are almost nonexistent. No routine publication is available within the sending or receiving countries on the extent of the problem. Kapiszewski (2001) contends that irregular emigration has constituted a substantial proportion of all labour movements to the Gulf countries since the beginning of the oil era. He estimates that in recent years, illegal immigrants in each GCC country made up at least 10 per cent of the total population or 15 per cent of the workforce. Based largely on newspaper reports, he estimated the number of irregular emigrants during the late 1990s in all the GCC countries, and found the highest number to be in Saudi Arabia i.e. 7,00,000 (See Table 5.1). During the initial phase, the GCC countries did not take much action to curb irregular migration even though the rulers were aware of the practice and probably of the scale, perhaps because they needed large numbers of workers for their development. Thus, the presence of irregular workers was tolerated since it was beneficial for the economy and was very profitable for employers and middlemen (Kapiszewski, 2001). Beginning in the mid-1990s, however, several concrete steps at reducing the number of non-nationals were taken, including serious attempts to curb the irregular entry and stay (Shah, 2009). According to a representative of the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs in India, it was recently reported that the Gulf States

deported 81,000 Indians in 2007, about half of them were deported from the UAE and Saudi Arabia while 8,234 from Kuwait (ibid). The government of UAE announced a general amnesty scheme for three months June to September 2007 which were later extended up to November 2, 2007 calling all the persons who are staying illegally in the UAE either to leave the country or amend their status, if they wished to continue to work in UAE. About 70,000 Indian workers who were staying illegally benefited from the amnesty have either left the country or legalized their status with proper documents (MOIA, 2007-08). In Bahrain, it is estimated that despite the government's action towards regularizing the migrant workforce, about 60,000 unauthorized migrant workers were still present in the country in April 2008. (ibid).

**Table 5.1**

### Year wise Estimate of Irregular Emigrants in GCC Countries

Country	Year	Estimated irregular Emigrants
Bahrain	1997	8,300
Kuwait	1979/80,	(a)100,000.
	1997	15, 000 (a)
Oman	1998	40,000
Qatar (b)	1997 -98	100,000
Saudi Arabia	1997	700,000
UAE	Early 1990	300,000

Source: Shah (2009)

Note: (a) Illegally employed Filipino housemaids.

## 5.3 Reasons for Irregular Status

As it has been mentioned earlier, in the Middle East there are various categories of irregular workers who have violated the rules of the host governments and working



illegally. But in the present study Punjabi workers who were working illegally in the host countries and about whom information has been provided by the other respondents were illegal because of one reason that is they overstayed their visa for different reasons and left their companies and camps and started working illegally without informing the authorities and without the consent of their employers. They have neither use any illegal means for emigration nor smuggled through any illegal way. They had emigrated legally by getting work permit and from the host government or sponsorship from the employers. But when they returned back they were illegal and blacklisted by the host governments for further re-emigration to any of the member country of GCC.

In this study among 300 respondents only 34 (11.33 per cent) were working illegally in the Middle East countries. Therefore for proper authenticate information additional information about working conditions, exploitation of irregular workers has been collecting from the regular emigrants.

Now a question would come in the mind of the reader of this chapter that if an emigrant emigrated as a regular worker why he became irregular. A number of reasons are responsible for this change. Table 5.2 highlights the reasons of the irregular status of Punjabi emigrants working in the Middle East. The majority of the respondents (66.33

per cent) reported that workers leave their companies because their companies do not pay their salaries or generally they are low paid and sometimes leave the company because of poor accommodation and poor quality of mess food. Some emigrants who were working illegally in the Middle East reported that the travel agents promised jobs, good accommodation facilities and handsome salaries to them before their emigration but when they reached in the Middle East they were offered poor salaries and with poor accommodation facilities in the labour camps. They have paid significant sums of money for working visas or work contracts. However, by the time of arrival in the Gulf States these promises proved to be false, and the often deeply indebted Punjabi emigrants have no other option than to leave the company or work for local sponsors under often highly exploitative conditions. They had to sign a contract often in Arabic or English languages that they could not understand. Gardner (2011) also found that "many emigrants reported that they arrived in the Gulf and discovered that they will be required to work a job different from the one they were contractually promised in the sending country: men who were promised jobs as supervisors, for example, find themselves working as supervised "tea boys", or men who were promised jobs as drivers are sent to work on a construction site".

Table 5.2

### Respondent's Views Regarding Why People Work Illegally in the Middle East

Reasons for Irregular status in the Middle East	S.B.S Nagar	Jalandhar	Kapurthala	Hoshiarpur	Total
Company does not pay good salary	23 (30.66)	27 (36)	31 (41.33)	27 (36)	108 (36)
Low salary and poor accommodation and poor quality of food	24 (32)	22 (29.33)	21 (28)	33 (44)	100 (33.33)
Work without salary	03 (4)	02 (2.66)	03 (4)	01 (1.33)	09 (9)

Reasons for Irregular status in the Middle East	S.B.S Nagar	Jalandhar	Kapurthala	Hoshiarpur	Total
The companies do not give overtime or pay money for overtime	06 (8)	09 (12)	01 (1.33)	00 (00)	16 (5.33)
Failed to renew work permit	02 (2.66)	00 (00)	00 (00)	00 (00)	02 (0.66)
Working under contractors	10 (13.33)	06 (8)	05 (6.66)	04 (5.33)	25 (8.33)
Good income outside the company	02 (2.66)	02 (2.66)	02 (2.66)	00 (00)	06 (2)
If condition of work permit are different then actual	05 (6.66)	07 (9.33)	06 (8)	05 (6.66)	23 (7.66)
If there is no work in the company	00 (00)	00 (00)	04 (5.33)	01 (1.33)	05 (1.66)
If workers are medically unfit and cannot get work permit they start working illegally	00 (00)	00 (00)	02 (2.66)	04 (5.33)	06 (2)
<b>Total</b>	<b>75 (100)</b>	<b>75 (100)</b>	<b>75 (100)</b>	<b>75 (100)</b>	<b>300 (100)</b>

Figures in parentheses are column wise percentage

#### 5.4. Rights and Benefits of Irregular workers: A Threat to Human Rights

The irregular workers face a number of problems in the all the Middle Eastern countries. They are living in abusive working conditions, paid low salaries, no medical facilities etc. A large number of them are forced to live in the semi-slave conditions (Jain, 2005). According to the Human Rights Watch (2003) there are cases where exit visas were arbitrarily withheld which place the migrant in a situation of forced labour. In all of the GCC countries they do not have any social and human rights which is the main cause of their slavery conditions. The International Labour Migration Survey (2003) has given country wise details of the rights and benefits of regular and irregular workers in six Gulf countries of the Middle East which are expressed through the different policies and laws of these countries. Table 5.3 shows that irregular workers in almost all the GCC countries do not have civil and human rights. Their condition is worse in the four countries namely Kuwait, Qatar, Oman and in Saudi Arabia. On the other hand UAE and Bahrain have some soft corners for the irregular emigrants. There are lots of

differences between the rights and benefits enjoyed by the nationals, regular emigrants and irregular emigrants. Table 5.3 shows the difference as the first, the irregular workers are not allowed to start or join trade unions, as trade unions generally do not exist in those countries. Secondly, they are not allowed to bargain collectively for their salaries and working conditions. Thirdly, they cannot even appeal against the forced labour if they appeal they will be deported immediately to their home countries. Fourth, they have neither protection against discrimination at work nor equal treatment with nationals or other emigrants in respect of wage and minimum wage. Sixth, the most harassing rule against them is, they do not have any right for protection against sexual, racial and ethnic harassment. Seventh, they also have no legal access to housing, social benefits or medical care, they also do not have an adequate prevention of occupational accidents or diseases. Eight, residences without a job is in general not allowed and the right to family reunification is not recognized. Lastly, they also do not have access to legal proceedings in a language they understand.

Table 5.3

Rights and Benefits of Irregular Workers in Six Gulf Countries of the Middle East Rights and Benefits to Irregular /illegal workers	Bahrain	Kuwait	Qatar	Oman	Saudi Arabia	U.A.E
Form or join a worker's organization	No	No.	No	No	Illegal residence is a violation of regulations	No.
Bargain collectively	No	No.	No	No		Yes.
Protection against forced labour	No	No.	No	No		Yes
Protection against discrimination at work	No	No.	No	No		Yes
Minimum age of employment	No	No.	No	No		Yes
Equal treatment with nationals in respect of wage	Yes	No.	No	No		No
Equal treatment with nationals workers in respect of minimum wage	Yes	No.	No	No		No
Join a social protection scheme	No	No.	No	No		Yes
Protection against sexual harassment	Yes	No.	No	No		Yes
Protection against racial and ethnic harassment	Yes	No.	No	No		Yes
Access to training	Yes	No.	No	No		Yes
Access free public Medical/ health services	Yes	No.	No	No		Yes
Free housing (e.g. for agriculture workers)	No	No.	No	No		No.
Accompanied by family embers	No	No.	No	No		No.
Vote in local/ national election	No	No.	No	No		No.
Access to legal proceedings in a language they understand	Yes	No.	No	No	Yes	
Adequate prevention of occupational accidents or diseases	No	No.	No	No	No.	

Source: Table compiled from the "International Labour Migration Survey 2003: country summary" by ILO, Geneva.

Hari Ram 29 year old resident of village Slaimpur, district Kapurthla, he is Valmiki by caste and belongs to a poor family and his father is a daily wage earner and alcoholic. In his family he is the only son and has three elder sisters. He was not interested in the study, as he dropped out of school after lower primary stage. He learned so many skills like welding, painting, tailoring etc in 1999 large number of his people from his village including some of his friends emigrated to the Gulf countries. Hari also wanted to emigrate but since he was their only son, his parents tried to discourage him. He was always worried about his three

unmarried sisters. His earning was not sufficient to meet the needs of his family and marriage of his sisters. So ultimately he decided to emigrate. He borrowed Rs. 1, 50,000 from a money lender by pledging his home to the money lender. He obtained visa for Oman on payment of Rs. 90,000 to an unlicensed agent. For his travel and related expenses he spent another Rs.15, 000 rupees. He went to Delhi by bus and from Delhi to Oman by air. On landing in Oman he contacted an Arab under whom he was supposed to work. There were twenty other emigrants with him who had come under the same group visa.

All twenty one were taken by the Arab to

his work site and they were accommodated there. The Arab asked them to wait for three weeks after which the group was put to different tasks like mason helper, plumber, painter etc. He was promised for a fixed salary equivalent to Rs.17, 000 per month. But he was paid only 8,000 rupees per month in irregular instalments. Hari used to send about 80 per cent of his salary to his family to pay outstanding debt but this could not even pay the interest of the debt.

The entire group was living in the inhuman condition and was forced to eat unhygienic, tasteless food, sometimes they had to eat outdated "Khaboos" (a type of Bread) in their breakfast and lunch. He had to share his room with the 12 other workers. He used to work 16 hours per day and seven days in a week. He spent one and half years in this company and for the last four months of the period no payment was made by the employers in spite of repeated requests from Hari and his friends.

Frustrated with the treatment meted to them, they told the employer they would go to the labour court for settlement of their claim. On hearing this, the employer called the policemen and the whole group got arrested. They were not given any reason for their arrest. The group was jailed for a month and was told that they would be let out of jail only if they apologize for the theft they had committed from their employer's house. Only then they come to know that theft was the charge levelled against them. Since they found that their protests were to no avail, they wrote the apology as dictated to them by the police.

After releasing from the jail some of Hari's friends returned back, but Hari got success to escape and started working

illegally because he had no alternative as he had to pay the loan and had to arrange money for his sister's marriage. Depending upon the availability of work he used to work for 18 hours a day and used to live in the in-human conditions to save more and more money. Sometimes he used to share a room with twenty unknown persons. He had no time for his daily needs he said sometimes he used to bathe after weeks.

He worked about eight month illegally; suddenly one day police arrested him from his work site and sent him back to India. After returning on the suggestion of one of his friends Hari wrote to the embassy in Oman, explaining the entire episode and pleading for their intervention in the case. No response however came from the embassy officials. Now Hari has no saving left, his one sister is married but two sisters are still unmarried. He has reverted to his father's occupation from which he had tried to escape. He is still unmarried

### 5.5 Inhuman Living Conditions of Irregular Workers

Irregular emigrant workers in the Gulf often are trapped in horrible living and working conditions denied justice and their basic rights. This harms not only the emigrants, but also the international image and prestige of the host countries (Shah, 2009). According to the fact sheet of the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights (UNHCHR) "Without status, the illegal migrant is a natural target of exploitation. He or she is at the mercy of employers and may be obliged to accept any kind of job, and any working and living conditions. In the worst cases, the situation of migrant workers is akin to slavery or forced labour. Illegal migrants rarely seek

justice for fear of exposure and expulsion, and in many States have no right of appeal against administrative decisions which affect them" (Ibid). Even the Indian embassy unlike the other which have special cell devoted to looking after the welfare of low skill labour from their country, provides no resources to them, except to promise to take up the matter with the local authorities, which it never does. In this regards the position of Indian as indeed of most Asian countries vis-a vis the Gulf countries can well be appreciated if we keep in mind the asymmetrical relationship between these labour-sending and labour-receiving countries (Jain, 2003). As Weiner (1982) put it: "Gulf governments have little fear that any of the South Asian governments could do more than mildly protest mistreatment of emigrants, nor would they be likely to suddenly withdraw migrants for political reasons or attempt to use migrants to extend their influence. India is dependent upon the Gulf for oil, exports, employment, remittances, contracts, and for the good will that it seeks as a counterweight in its relations with Pakistan. The Indian Government is thus willing to tolerate conditions for Indians in the Gulf that it would not tolerate for its citizens elsewhere, and its intervention on their behalf are likely to be in a subdued and less public fashion".

### 5.6 Housing without Permanent Roof

It is almost impossible for a regular or irregular emigrants to buy property in any of the Gulf countries. The regular workers are housed in the labour camps but it is very difficult for the irregular workers to get a rented house or accommodation in labour camps, due to widespread antiforeigner sentiments and residency registration

regulations. Therefore, irregular emigrants rely on social networks to organize housing for themselves. Some might use a friend's reference or links to rent a house, others crowded into an unofficially rented single room apartment with unlimited immigrants. Respondents reported that the visa over stayers usually manages to find an apartment while they are still legal and are in most cases never checked upon a second time. Again others live unreported with relatives or friends who have legal status and living in the camps. Respondents reported that sometimes cheap and dirty housing is provided by the employer to the irregular emigrants. Generally all the irregular workers are living in the rented houses in the corners of the city. In this case, a proportion of the already low wage is kept to pay for housing cost. Some of the irregular workers have to face tremendous problems in paying the rent, they have to work hard more than their capacity to pay rent and other necessities. They live in the overcrowded small rooms with more than 10 to 20 persons in a room using single toilet which remain unclean for weeks. Generally the room of irregular workers has no separate kitchen, no place for recreation, and privacy and no proper ventilation. Respondents also reported that the irregular workers live in unhygienic conditions they use poor quality, unclean and smelly bedding, blankets and pillows without washing for months in the summer. One of the respondents when narrating the story of his worse condition said that when the electricity goes different types of sweat smell starts coming from the room one cannot even breathe in this situation. Most of the irregular workers suffer from the skin

infections such as fungus, itching etc. Some of the respondents reported that irregular workers who do not have rented room and social network in the host country are living in the pipes away from the city or live at the work sites without even a fan and they take a bath and wash their cloths once in a week. They cook their food turn wise once in 24 hours. Due to a high degree temperature which exceeds sometime 48 degrees Celsius, often the taste of the cooked food changes. But they became habitual to eat this type of smelly, tasteless and unhealthy food. The irregular respondents informed that they do not live in the permanent place of residence due to the fear of police and immigration department. They always frequently have to change their place of residence. Nationals of the host countries and even the regular workers do not like them. The regular workers always treat them as burden and keep distance from them. The overall condition of the irregular workers in the Middle East is below the living standard of human beings or worse than animals.

### 5.7 In human Working Condition

The irregular workers in all the countries of the Middle East are forced to work in the inhuman conditions. Though it is not officially sanctioned, most of the irregular workers work more than 12 hours a day, 7 days a week without any holiday. Although the governments do not allow the emigrant workers to work outside when the temperature exceeds 44 degrees Celsius (112 degrees Fahrenheit) but this rule does not apply on the irregular workers they always forced to work outside even when the temperature exceeds 48 degrees Celsius.

Beside the inhuman working conditions they are always in fear of police because they would be immediately deported to their countries if caught by the police or immigration department. As stated by respondents, the police is frequently done raid in suspicious areas (mostly bachelor areas, houses or accommodations, work sites) to search for undocumented foreigners or irregular workers. Fear of detection keeps irregular emigrant workers away from even legitimately available services. They are not able to secure protection for themselves against hazards to their health and safety, join unions or organize themselves for collective bargaining, obtain fair wages, ask for compensation in case of injury or illness, or have any employment security.

Baljit Singh 29 year resident of village Kang of district SBS Nagar (Nawanshahr), married and Chamar by caste was working as a carpenter before his emigration. He was born in a joint family which comprised beside his parents, sister, and brother, grandparents etc. His father was an unskilled worker who did several types of works such as tilling land, helping meson and Seeri (Landless Agriculture worker) in the farms of higher caste. He is middle class passed, after schooling he was keen to migrate to the developed countries because some of his friends emigrate to the UK and Australia. Their parents were farmers who sell their land for the emigration of their children, but due to poverty and lack of finance he was unable to do so. In 2006 one of his close friends migrates to the Kuwait which motivated him to emigrate to the Gulf. He borrowed rupees 80 thousand from his brother in law (Sister's husband) with a

promise to send him a visa, in return his brother in law sold ornaments of his wife to raise the money.

Baljit entered in the Kuwait into a contract with an unlicensed recruiting agent as a cycle mechanic. But he was sent to work on a construction site as a mason helper with a very low salary equivalent to rupees 7000 per month as against rupees 15000 promised in the agreement. Even the salary was low and he was not paid the regular instalments also. Baljit complained to the labour court, which ordered the employer to make regular payment. The condition regarding the accommodation facilities was also broken by the employer, he was accommodated in a dormitory in which 65 persons were accommodated there were only seven toilets for 65 persons. They used to cook their food themselves twice in 24 hours. He spent two years in the company but in these two years neither he could save a single penny nor pay his debt. But he did not come back he left his company and started working outside the company without informing his employer. He used to earn good outside because now he had not to pay for his accommodation and other unnecessary charged to the company, he use to work day and night, and seven days in a week without any break. But unfortunately after six months the Kuwait police arrested him for breaking the bond and staying in the country illegally without the consent of his employer and he was jailed.

After six months in jail, he was released and sent home by the government. He had to pay for his return air ticket, for this he again borrowed money from his friend. He

returned back with no saving and with his visa debit still outstanding. When his brother in law and other family member got wind of what happened they could not tolerate his brother in law sent his wife to her parents for money that he learned to Baljit or his emigration. Baljit is now working in private factory and trying to pay his debt.

### 5.8 Public and Health Services

Health insurance and other services are not provided to the irregular workers in any of the Middle East country. Even though theoretically employers are obligated to pay social security payments but they do not do so, because through these payments the irregular employment would be detected and punishment or fine would be imposed on the employers. Some of the respondents reported that at some construction sites workers who are injured on the job are not being paid compensation or hospital bills. In case of illness they cannot even go for treatment to a private doctor because the government has strictly instructed private doctors to diagnose foreign workers after seeing his legal status in the forms of "Patakka" (Identity card). So the Irregular emigrants again rely on their social networks and consult either doctors who are acquaintances or borrow medicine from the family and friends. Those who cannot rely on social networks often trying to ignore their illnesses and frequently end up in emergency rooms. Some of the respondents who were working illegally in the Middle East said that many time their family members had sent them medicine from

India. These examples should suffice to show that irregular emigrants face a life without basic civil or human rights and they developed various strategies to cope with this situation. Of utmost importance to both the process of emigration itself as well as to the day-to-day life in Middle East are social networks but sometime even these networks do not provide an environment which allow irregular emigrants to stay permanently with them in their camps.

### 5.9 Low Wage and Discrimination

There are no rules plying salary or wage to the irregular workers in any of the Middle East countries. Generally irregular workers get high salaries than worker working in the companies and having regular status. High wages are both the causes and consequences of irregular emigration for Punjabis emigrants. But irregular workers also face a number of problems regarding their wages. The local contractors do not pay or delay their salaries. Labour courts are available for the regular workers but due to illegal status these irregular workers cannot complaint to the labour courts or seek help from the police. They always remain at the mercy of the employers.

### 5.10 Lack of Knowledge of Local Language

Arabic is official and public language in all the Middle East countries. Irregular workers must have knowledge of Arabic language because without this they cannot find jobs or communicate with the nationals. Even the knowledge of local language is a prerequisite for success in any host country, because the language provides tremendous opportunities to the emigrants for jobs and

upward mobility. According to Wittgenstein (1961) "The limits of my language mean the limit of my world (cf. Judge, 2003a). Lack of knowledge of the language of host society also makes the emigrants introvert in the sense that they look for security, friendship, and interaction from within their own community (Ibid). Respondents reported that knowledge of Arabic is must if an emigrant wants to work illegally in any of the Middle East country because without proper knowledge of Arabic they become dependent on those who know the Arabic for finding jobs and buying goods.

### 5.11 Kafala System: The Root Cause of All Problems

The private sector in all the GCC countries has been reserved for emigrant workers who were brought to various countries in the Gulf under what was known as the Kafala System. The majority of the workers emigrated to GCC countries through Kafala System. It is a system whereby an emigrant is sponsored by an employer who assumes full economic and legal responsibility for the employee during the contract period. This system has been described as modern-day slavery, leaves emigrant labourers vulnerable to human trafficking and forced labour practices, and has resulted in gross human rights abuses. The system requires that the emigrant only work for the sponsor and, in some cases, the sponsor will keep the passport of the emigrant as assurance that the emigrant will not try to leave the employer. According to the Kafala System, a foreigner was not allowed to work in any



GCC countries without local sponsorship (Kafil). Once the employment relationship is broken, foreign workers become illegal residents, and must immediately leave the country. Although the system has met with much criticism over the years, there has been little incentive by the governments of the region to change it (Colton, 2010).

Kafala System is popularly known among the Punjabi emigrants as 'Thekedari System' or contract system. Almost all the respondents reported that this system is the root cause of the bad condition of the irregular workers. Even regular workers working under this system also suffer problems like low wage, delay in salary, poor accommodation, poor quality of food etc. Low-paid workers in the Gulf region were facing problems mainly because of the sponsorship regulations. Under this system a worker becomes totally dependent upon this "Kafil" (sponsor) therefore the sponsor takes advantage of their weakness and exploits the workers. Generally sponsors breaks the terms of the contract by paying low salary as promised in the contract. As a result it becomes difficult for a worker to survive and repay the debt that he borrowed to meet the travel cost. So the worker leaves his job and start working illegally outside the company without informing his 'Kafil'. But because the worker has left his the passport to the sponsor now he cannot go back to his country. This is the main reason of growing irregular worker in the GCC states. The authorities of these states are fully aware of the high number of irregular workers and announce an

amnesty every four to five years. Usually, within a period of three months, the irregulars could turn themselves in to their embassy and get a legal entry if they were not able to get back their passports (Shah, 2009). Without these amnesties it would be impossible for the emigrants to ever leave the country, since everybody that leaves the country needs an exit visa issued by the concerned department of the host country. During the amnesty of 1987 in Kuwait, out of the approximately 20,000 to 30,000 illegally residing emigrants, about 10,000 made use of the legal exit possibility. In the UAE, in the year 1999, there were 8,663 irregular emigrants arrested, with the majority of the people coming from Pakistan, followed by Afghanistan, India, Iran and Bangladesh. The following year, the number of irregulars arrested rose up to 10,766, again with Pakistan accounting for the majority of the cases, about 78 per cent. Similarly the UAE as many of the other Gulf States try to tackle the problem of irregular emigrants by launching amnesties. In 1996, a four-month amnesty was ordered during which visa overstayers and absconders could leave the country without any penalty. Most of the workers that left were from Asian countries, such as the Philippines, Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran, and they were employed on construction sites and in service positions (Australia Visa, 1997). Shah (2009) has given country wise details of amnesty returnees from the six GCC countries of the Middle East (Table 5.4) on the basis of data compiled from the various newspapers of these countries.

Table 5.4  
Amnesty Returnees from Six GCC Countries

Country	Amnesty started	Repatriation/Regularization
Bahrain	1995	32,365 in 1995 and 52,000 in 1997 either left or regularized their papers; 23,632 in 2000; In August-December 2008, 110,000 regularized their status and 11,053 were deported
Kuwait	November, 1997	11,502 left in December 1997; 15842 regularized and 4,458 repatriated in 1998; 9000 left in 2002
Oman	January 1998	24,000 left in March-April 1998; 13,000 in 2001
Qatar	November 1997	10,000 regularized or repatriated between January-April 1998
Saudi Arabia	1995	2-2.3 million between October 1997-July 2000; about 700,00 deported per year
United Arab Emirates (UAE)	August 1996	200,000 left during August-December, 1996; Another 300,000 expected to have left by March 2003; 176,000 regularized and more than 174,000 repatriated in 2007

Source: Shah (2009)

### 5.12 Criminalization of irregular workers

The respondents also reported that a large number of the irregular workers are involved in the sale of illegal liquor to maximize their income. They do not have any fear of police and law system because they are already illegal.

### 5.13 Regular Workers and problems faced by them in the Middle East

The people living in one part of the world basically moved to other parts for their livelihood and India is no exception. India and Pakistan supplied most of such unskilled labour, registering almost 200 per cent growth between 1970 and 1975. In 1975, Indian expatriates constituted 39.1 per cent, Pakistanis 58.1 per cent, and other Asians 2.8 per cent of the total non-Arab expatriates in the Gulf. Since then, Indian emigration has overtaken that of Pakistan and other Asian countries of origin. Further, since the Kuwait war of 1990-91, Indians has replaced evens the non-national Arabs in the Gulf, viz. the Jordanians, Yemenis, Palestinians and Egyptians. From less than 258,000 in 1975, emigrant Indian

population in the Gulf went up to 3.318 million in 2001, which is now estimated to have crossed 3.5 million (Khadria, 2006)

Although the illegal aspect of Punjabi Diaspora cannot be ignored because in many of the developed countries, they use illegal or undocumented, fake sources for their emigration in search of better opportunities. But emigration to the Middle East countries is different from the rest. It is very difficult for a skilled, unskilled or semiskilled worker to go illegally to the Middle East countries because all of them are temporary emigrants who are supposed to return to India after expiry of their contractual employment. Regular workers are of two types. First, who emigrated under the Kafala system under the sponsorship of local company etc. Second, the category of the workers emigrated under the "free visa system". According to the law of GCC states, every citizen of the Middle East countries is eligible to sponsor up to three domestic workers. The citizens are required to pay a security deposit, an annual fee of \$1,300, "issuance of a free visa," which requires a

security deposit of \$1,500. The visa is valid for two years and has no minimum income limit. Citizens are also required to earn a minimum of \$1,640 per month (Youssef, 2007). This system is popularly known as "Azad Visa" among the Punjabi emigrants.

The problems encountered by the emigrants may be examined at two levels, First in relation to recruitment violation and second in relation to the working and living conditions in the labour importing countries. Commonly reported recruiting violations are delayed deployment or non deployment of workers, overcharging or collecting fees in excess of authorized placement fees. Delayed deployments are often caused by factors beyond the control of the recruitment agency such as when the embassy delayed the assurance of Visa or when the employee's request the postponement of worker's departure for some reasons. Non deployment is however a serious problem in which excessive fee is collected from the workers. What makes overcharging serious problem is that the workers end up paying huge amount equivalent to many months salary in exchange for the job that pay so little (Sasikumar, 2003).

Some other major problems encountered by the regular emigrants in their countries of employment include. Firstly, permanent termination from the jobs. Second, changing the clauses for contract to the disadvantage of the workers. Third, delay in payment of salary dues. Fourth, violation of minimum wage standards. Fifth, forced over-time work without returns. Sixth, denial to keep once own passport.

#### 5.14 Termination from Jobs, Deportation and Ban

Due to the worldwide economic recession the demands of labour force in all the Middle East countries are decreasing day by day. The bulk of labour in all the Middle East countries became surplus and were trying to save their jobs. As a result large numbers of the emigrants were expelled from their jobs. The trend of the low demand of labour in all the Gulf countries is still going on. Numbers of causes are responsible for this change. First, the major infrastructure projects requiring large numbers of unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled construction workers have been almost completed. Secondly, large numbers of business collapses were reported. There is less demand for buildings, flats and commercial complexes due to the ongoing economic recession. Thirdly, policies such as Nationalization is banning of visas for unskilled Asian workers and making employment of unskilled labour expensive, are likely to result in the decline in demand for workers of unskilled and semiskilled categories. As a result it is now difficult for the workers to save their jobs.

On the other hand terminating a work contract for the emigrants is a difficult task throughout the Middle East countries and changing the sponsor can be complicated. While some sponsors let their workers go, some of them ask for money to do that while others simply refuse. However, in many cases a worker is left with half-a-year or one-year ban from entering the country. This is a situation that has been proven to create irregular emigrants, as many whose

employer refuses to let them go, either abscond or return to their country and come back on forged documents. Emigrants are taken to some Middle Eastern countries on one job contract, but are put on different jobs on reaching the destination country. This automatically annuls their contracts. Nonpayment and irregular payment of salary is another common complaint if they oppose immediately they are shown the road of their home.

Although labour courts and law system is available for the emigrants, but respondents reported that they cannot seek help from the court because the cost of a court case may have to be borne by the employee, which makes this instrument of justice questionable. Many foreign workers simply do not have the financial means to file a complaint. Furthermore, there is no protection of dismissal from work in filing a complaint against the employer. According to respondents, therefore, an employee who has problems with his employer is better off seeking for other solutions if he could like to remain in the country.

### 5.15 Number of Working Hours and Overtime

For proper understanding the working conditions of the workers, attempts have been made to know the maximum number

of working hours in the host country. The respondents reported that they used to work seven days per week, often continuously for weeks or months without days off. Although the governments of some Gulf countries have regulated the maximum working hours in a day but companies always violate the rules. The labour laws call for a maximum of eight working hours per day and up to 48 hours per week. The maximum for certain jobs is nine and 54 hours, respectively, but not more than seven and 42 hours, respectively, for jobs in Petrol refineries, the cement/asbestos industry, and others. It is found that the maximum working hours respondents reported ranged from 8 to 14 hours (Table 5.5). Near about half the respondents used to work, on an average, 12 hours per day with 8 hours duty and four hours overtime. A majority of them 36.66 per cent worked 13 to 16 hours per days. The most common complaint that respondents reported during fieldwork was that they did not get paid for overtime work. Officially, there is provision of overtime in most labour receiving countries, the rate of which is 1.5 times the normal pay during working days and two times during the weekends. However, most employers do not respect this provision. Sometimes they are also not paid for their overtime.

Table 5.5  
Maximum Number of Working Hours

Working hours	S.B.S Nagar	Jalandhar	Kapurthala	Hoshiarpur	Total
8-12	35 (46.66)	31 (41.33)	28 (37.33)	36 (48)	130 (43.33)
13-16	26 (34.66)	22 (29.33)	33 (44)	29 (38.66)	110 (36.66)
17 - 20	07 (9.33)	14 (18.66)	08 (10.66)	06 (8)	35 (11.66)
21-24	06 (8)	05 (6.66)	02 (2.66)	03 (4)	16 (5.33)
Above 24 hours	01 (1.33)	03 (4)	04 (5.33)	01 (1.33)	09 (3)
<b>Total</b>	<b>75 (100)</b>	<b>75 (100)</b>	<b>75 (100)</b>	<b>75 (100)</b>	<b>300 (100)</b>

Figures in parentheses are column wise percentages

### 5.16 Congested Housing for the Emigrant Workers

Living and working conditions of emigrant workers vary from country to country and depend on the nature of the job in the Gulf countries. Professionals are provided with reasonably good accommodation, health care facilities, and working conditions. But the working and living conditions of the majority of the semiskilled and unskilled workers are extremely poor. The accommodation for construction workers is commonly referred to as labour camps. While for workers in other professions it is referred to as staff accommodation. Large companies and the formal sector provide accommodation to their employees in the labour camps at the outskirts of the city. A section of the workers is also accommodated within the factory premises. However, sometimes construction workers do not get such facilities. They rent their own accommodation and live with other emigrants (rarely happens). In a typical situation, a large group of people is accommodated in a small room, with little or no privacy. Some respondents said their labour camps often bear resemblance to prisons. They also informed that it is not uncommon that up to ten

men or more persons share one small room. Furthermore, some construction companies that work in three shifts around the clock let their workers share the same bed with two other shift workers. In some cases the labour accommodations even lack air conditioning. In general, the quality of staff accommodation varies. Usually, there would be a small toilet in a second room and sometimes also a small kitchen. In those

camp, workers typically live six-to-eight individuals per room, although these numbers vary significantly. Many states in the Gulf have promulgated regulations to limit the number of workers per room, but respondents informed that it seems these regulations are widely ineffective or ignored by the private companies.

According to Sambidge (2009), in UAE about 75 per cent of the labour camps are to be below government standards. Inspections in 2008 found that 70 per cent of worker accommodations violated hygiene and safety rules. Paying fines (about \$545 for the third violation) for allowing sewage to remain in the open is cheaper than removal and repair. Generally these camps have inadequate sewage and ventilation, substandard drinking water, sleeping facilities and unsanitary food preparation areas are common in these camps.

Similarly Gardner (2011) also pointed out that many emigrants face less desirable conditions. Camps may consist of decrepit buildings, ad hoc structures, or aging villas in older suburban neighborhoods. Men often live eight or more in a room. Many of these camps have itinerant supplies of electricity or water.

The number of persons per room ranges from one to more than twenty (Figure 5.1). A majority of the respondents 39.66 per cent were living in a room having six to ten persons in a room. Interestingly 73.31 per cent of the respondents were sharing rooms with more than five persons. In another 8.33 per cent the average number of persons per room is as high as eleven to fifteen. The employers meet the rent for the

accommodation of workers in worker camps and charges have been deducted from the salaries of the employee.

### Problems and Challenges by East

Figure 5.1

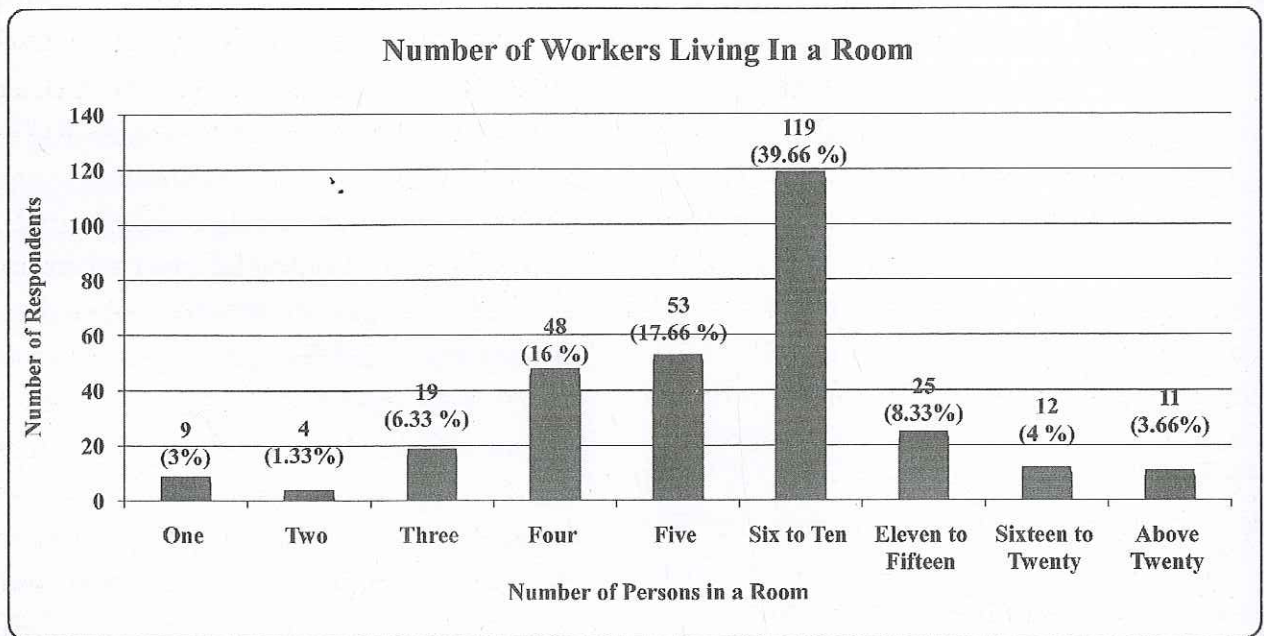


Table 5.6 provides the information about the size of the rooms where respondents used to reside. The average size of the respondent's room was 10x 8 to 10 x 16 fets. 62.32 per cent of the respondents were residing in these rooms.

Table 5.6

### Size of Respondent's Room at Abroad

Size of room in fets	S.B.S Nagar	Jalandhar	Kapurthala	Hoshiarpur	Total
10 x 8	07 (9.33)	08 (10.66)	01 (1.33)	11 (14.66)	27 (9)
10 x 10	20 (20.66)	03 (4)	20 (26.66)	21 (28)	64 (21.33)
10 x 12	13 (17.33)	30 (40)	13 (17.33)	03 (4)	59 (19.66)
10 x 14	09 (12)	15 (20)	10 (13.33)	03 (4)	37 (12.33)
10 x 16	05 (6.66)	00 (00)	01 (1.33)	12 (16)	18 (6)
10 x 18	00 (00)	04 (5.33)	08 (10.66)	00 (00)	12 (4)
10 x 20	00 (00)	01 (1.33)	01 (1.33)	12 (16)	14 (4.66)
10 x 22	00 (00)	00 (00)	00 (00)	02 (2.66)	02 (0.66)
10 x 30	00 (00)	00 (1.33)	00 (00)	01 (1.33)	01 (0.33)
12 x 12	07 (9.33)	07 (9.33)	16 (21.33)	03 (4)	33 (11)
13 x 13	00 (00)	01 (1.33)	01 (1.33)	01 (1.33)	03 (1)
Above 13 x 13	11 (14.66)	04 (5.33)	04 (5.33)	03 (4)	22 (7.33)
Tent Accommodation	03 (4)	02 (2.66)	00 (00)	03 (4)	08 (2.66)
<b>Total</b>	<b>75 (100)</b>	<b>75 (100)</b>	<b>75 (100)</b>	<b>75 (100)</b>	<b>300 (100)</b>

Figures in parentheses are column wise percentages

### 5.17 Resigning of Contracts in the Host Country

A relatively new phenomenon in Middle East emigration is the resigning of contracts upon arrival. During the fieldwork, emigrants shared this experience as happening in two ways. First, a new contract could be prepared for signature soon after arrival in the destination country. This new contract would have clear terms and conditions which are explained to the emigrant worker. Alternatively, a new contract could be signed at the time the first salary is paid; the contract and several other documents are prepared for signature, but emigrants are mostly unaware of what they are signing, and the salary stipulated is usually 10 per cent to 15 per cent lower than in the original contract signed in Punjab before emigration. Second, medical tests on arrival and a re-assessment of skills levels were also becoming common, with the results of either assessment sometimes used to justify a reduction of wages. The practices of contract substitution and a repetition of the medical examination once abroad cannot be considered fair. The new contracts are usually prepared in Arabic or English language, as mentioned in the second chapter majority of the respondents are illiterate or semi literate therefore they cannot understand what has been written in the contract.

### 5.18 Denial to Keep Once Own Passport

Even though the law does not allow the employers to collect the passport of the employees, but it is a common practice throughout the Middle East countries to do

that. The common discourse behind is that it serves as a protection against workers who want to run away from the company and look for another work. However, employers who breached the law did not get punished for that. The governments of the Middle East countries have launched an initiative to fine employers who held the workers' passports. Several major construction firms are known to have an unwritten policy of not hiring workers who refuse to give up their passports, and in some documented cases even make money by charging fees to return passports (Shah, 2009). Taking of passports and keeping workers pay in arrears are two widespread methods employers use to control workers. This practice is the main cause of forced labour in which the worker cannot change his job, if the employees exploit him. Zachariah, Prakash, and Rajan (2002) also found that custody of passport by the employer is a serious problem faced by the emigrants in the U.A.E. By this practice the employer gains absolute control over all movements of the emigrants in his employ. They further say that in many cases, the employer refuses to release the passport to the emigrant workers on the ground of minor labour problems or disputes regarding payment of wages. Generally all categories of worker who were denied the return of their passports belong to all the sectors of economic activity: construction, production, transport and services, causing considerable hardship to the emigrants (ibid).

### 5.19 Poor Working Conditions

In order to study details of working conditions of Punjabi emigrants, the

respondents are being asked about their living conditions, the facilities and perquisites that they enjoyed, the emigration prospects. In their study Zachariah, Prakash, and Rajan (2002) found that the workers who have proper visas and work contracts specifying the working conditions, do not face serious problems and workers who emigrate without proper visas for work and work contracts face severe problems. But in the present study respondents reported that the working conditions of the regular workers are not much different from the working conditions of the irregular workers. The construction boom in all the GCC states requires and is driven by emigrant workers and low labour costs. Heat, exhaustion, and inadequate safety requirements pose serious health and safety problems for labourers, who are subject to substandard and often inhumane work and living conditions and systematic violation of basic human rights. The jobs that may be considered dirty, dangerous and demanding (3D jobs) are considered fit only for non-nationals and spurned by nationals (Shah, 2009). Emigrants are often forced to work longer hours than those indicated in the contract they signed in the sending country, and many reported not receiving additional wages for these additional (overtime) hours (Gardner, 2011).

### 5.20 Lack of Upward Job Mobility

The countries of the GCC are characterized by the duality of a primary and secondary labour market, there are often no or only limited possibilities for upward mobility in the secondary labour market.

Emigrant workers often end up in the secondary labour market which essentially influences their options for promotion. In the Middle East, as mentioned above, foreigners occupy the jobs in the private sector and can be found in every sector of it. This fact has interesting consequences when taking into account the highly employed social hierarchy in the country. In general, it can be said that the Arabs and Europeans have already been in higher positions they can move vertically. But the condition of the foreign workers would be same. Among the respondent of this study very few of them had got promotion during their emigration.

### 5.21 Sick Leave and Medical Facilities

Health facilities provided to the workers again vary from country to country. In Saudi Arabia the necessary primary health care services are available in major cities, under a Government policy called 'Health for All'. Everyone, irrespective of the legal status, can access this service. In the UAE and Bahrain also, emigrants can go to general hospitals. However, the cost of medicine and tests has to be borne by the emigrants themselves. In some cases, companies/factories have their own authorized doctors. In the UAE workers who are formally employed have to undergo annual medical checkups. If someone is sick, the employer bears the cost of medical service, when recommended by the supervisor. Some tests like HIV/AIDS and hepatitis A, B are compulsory for the workers. If the worker is detected positive, the employers do not take any responsibility and they are



deported home immediately (Siddiqui, 2004).

But some companies breach the law by not providing medical treatment to its employees. Respondents reported that they themselves had to pay for their treatments in case of illness. Furthermore, the company refuses to pay for their repatriation costs, as was stipulated in their contracts. There are several cases when labour health provisions have been violated, and where there is no indication of a means through which justice can be obtained. Table 5.7 shows that the majority of the respondents 74 per cent of the respondents had no health insurance in the Middle East. Even those who were covered under the health insurance reported that generally hospitals use poor quality of medicine for the emigrant labour. Labourers often suffer accidents, such as getting pieces of cement and steel chips in the eyes, sustaining hand injuries from grinders or power tools, and falls. At the time of fieldwork some workers told me that, medical care for heat stroke, fever, and workplace injuries (for example, a welder whose leg was injured by a grinding machine) consisted of male nurses handing out 'Panadol' a generic painkiller. Therefore they often used to ask their families to send medicine from India through courier or registered post because medicine in the Gulf are expensive than India. The respondents also reported that only the most serious injuries receive medical care, the employer pays for transportation to the hospital and for medical expenses, which labourers must repay upon recovery thereby increasing

their debt. Both local and foreign contractors have been resistant to safety laws that protect construction workers; in fact, accidents and injuries are often attributed to workers inexperience and language problems, or mistake. In this case the worker cannot claim benefits of the health insurance. Emigrants were generally not happy about the procedure followed after the death of an emigrant, when a fellow countryman died abroad, the body was repatriated to India because of the cost involved, and they reported delays in sending corpses home for cremation were very common. According to Jain (2003) the death of emigrants presents particular problems for families and surviving Indians working in the Gulf countries. The biggest problem of course is bringing home the bodies for funeral rites. In 1996, for example, 2,877 Indians had died in the Gulf countries, including 1,461 in Saudi Arabia and 785 in the UAE. In Saudi Arabia cremation is not permitted for the non-Muslims. In this regard elsewhere only meagre facilities are available. The dead bodies cannot be claimed until the responsibility of death (in the case of an unnatural one) has been fixed and the wages and death compensation due to the deceased have been paid to the next of kin. The whole procedure usually takes one to two months, and in complicated cases even longer. Charn Dass, 37 years old Bazigar by caste, from village Kitna, Hoshiarpur district; born in a poor family he is fourth among the six children. They had their ancestral land in the village but they had to sell this land to meet the

expenses of marriage of two sisters of respondent. His father was a daily wage earner. Suddenly his father fall ill and large amounts of money had to be spent on his medical treatment. The family sank deep into indebtedness even for their daily needs they had to borrow from their relatives. He planned to migrate to the Middle East because he had no alternative come out of the debt. He borrowed 50000 rupees from a money lender. And with the help of one of his friends he got successful in getting visa in 1999 and emigrated to Bahrain.

Soon after reaching Bahrain he got the job as an attached labourer in a local construction company. He was given a salary equivalent to 7000 per month. He was staying in a small camp where he had to pay for his food, rent of the shared room, etc. He used to work for 7 days a week and 14 to 16 hours per day. His father died in 2004 but he could not come on his death ceremony. Suddenly one day he fell down unconscious while at work. He was hospitalised in Bahrain for two months. His company refused to pay for his medical treatment. His friends arranged money for paying the hospital bills. After his release from the hospital, he was advised to rest completely for a period of five years. He was thus compelled by the company to return home without any compensation. Charn Dass did not disclose the nature of disease, but merely said it was due to the extreme heat in the Bahrain.

**Table 5.7**  
**Any Health Policy Insurance in the Middle East**

Health insurance by the company	S.B.S Nagar	Jalandhar	Kapurthala	Hoshiarpur	Total
Yes	17 (22.66)	12 (16)	26 (34.66)	23 (30.66)	78 (26)
No	58 (77.33)	63 (84)	49 (65.33)	52 (69.33)	222 (74)
<b>Total</b>	<b>75 (100)</b>	<b>75 (100)</b>	<b>75 (100)</b>	<b>75 (100)</b>	<b>300 (100)</b>

Figures in parentheses are column wise percentages

### 5.22 Poor Quality of Food

The living conditions of the respondents are also reflected through the food that they consume in the host country. In the study mess facility was provided to the 45 per cent of respondents who were living in the labour camps. Large numbers of them 54.33 per cent cooked their food themselves (Table 5.8). The quality of mess food was very poor as the worker reported, 3 days in a week they had to eat outdated "Khaboos" a type of bread with poor quality of "Dal" (pulses). In the camp generally food for the hundreds of workers had been cooked in the mess so it was difficult for the contractor of messes to maintain the quality of food. These messes are run by the south Indian contractors and cooks and generally they cook south Indian food better than Punjabi foods. But on the other hand in camps, Punjabi workers are who are second in numbers forced to eat food cooked by the south Indian cooks who did not know Punjabi food recipes, as a result the taste of food changes. Some of the respondents reported that the mess contractors use to use outdated and poor quality of material in the mess. The workers had to eat stale food they used to eat breakfast and lunch cooked in

the last night and dinner cooked in the noon. They had to eat food which has been always outdated, tasteless, unhygienic, and smelly due to high temperature. The respondents also complained that they had to eat south Indian food four days in a week because of two reasons. First, in the camps, south Indian workers were dominating numerically. Secondly, the mess contractors also did partiality with the Punjabis and prefer to cook south Indian foods for the people from their regions. On the other hand who themselves (54.33 per cent) used to cook their food were satisfied with the quality of food. Only those workers are getting problems regarding food who was provided food by the companies.

Table 5.8

**How the Respondents arrange their food**

Source of Food	S.B.S Nagar	Jalandhar	Kapurthala	Hoshiarpur	Total
Cook themselves	39(52)	47(62.66)	39(52)	38(50.66)	163(54.33)
Mess facility by the company	34(45.33)	28(37.33)	36(48)	37(49.33)	135(45)
Hotel/Dhaba	02(2.66)	00(00)	00(00)	00(00)	02(0.6)
Total	75 (100)	75 (100)	75 (100)	75 (100)	300 (100)

Figures in parentheses are column wise percentages

Table 5.9

**Quality of Food**

Quality	S.B.S Nagar	Jalandhar	Kapurthala	Hoshiarpur	Total
Good	39(52)	47(47.66)	39(52)	38(50.66)	163(54.33)
Bad	36(48)	28(37.33)	36(48)	37(49.33)	137(45.66)
total	75 (100)	75 (100)	75 (100)	75 (100)	300 (100)

Figures in parentheses are column wise percentages

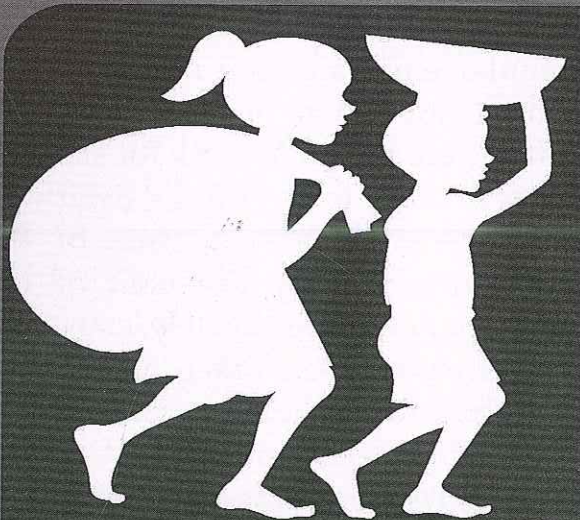
In a nutshell, emigrant workers have made significant contributions to both their own countries as well as the labour-receiving countries, at enormous cost to the

life, health and well being of themselves and their families. The condition of irregular workers is worse than regular emigrants. They are very vulnerable in the Middle East. Almost a majority of them work in the construction industry. These irregular emigrants have no access to any legal right and therefore no avenues for insisting on basic worker's rights. They are treated as little more than machines, separated from their families and uprooted from the support system of the community. The jobs that they are performing are dirty, dangerous and degrading and they suffer from physical, mental and psychological problems. They are vulnerable to various forms of discrimination, such as low wages, racism and harassment etc. Many of these irregular emigrants are indebted to the money lenders in the home country, due to this they are forced to work for starvation wages in order to pay off the debit which they borrowed at the time of their emigration to pay the cost of their transportation. Unfortunately, exploitation exists even when a worker has emigrated properly, through the approved channels of the host government. Sometimes the emigrant workers were placed in jobs that were not agreed. The companies changes the employment contract signed and accepted by the emigrant in the home country. Sometimes the emigrant workers are not in fact provided with any employment at all by sponsoring companies, but are required to find employment and then pay a percentage of their salary to the sponsor company. Many recruitment agencies (Popularly known as supply companies among the Punjabis) charge well above the

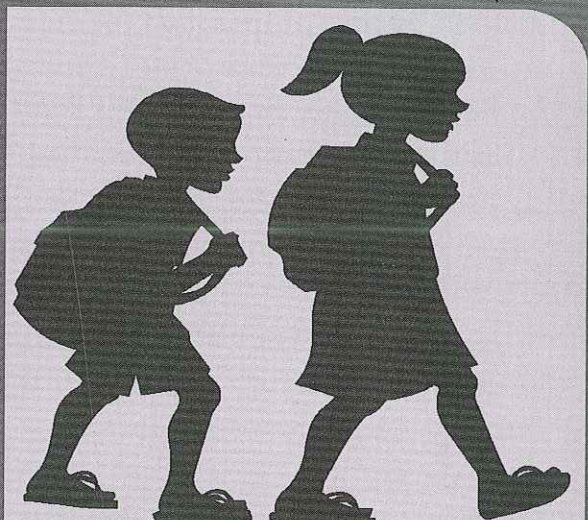
prescribed fees. Workers encounter unfair wages and terms; early dismissal by the foreign companies and inadequate conditions of housing and other benefits in comparison to agreed terms in the home country. Almost all the respondents reported that the problems of low wages, poor terms and conditions, and particularly lack of appropriate housing and medical

facilities existed for emigrant workers in the Middle East. Their families left behind also face problems because when young workers, especially men, emigrate from their homes for long periods of time, this has also resulted in inadequate care and support of their family. Many elderly people suffer, and women and children are left without male support.

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ଶ୍ରମ ନୁହେଁ



ଶିକ୍ଷା ଚାହୁଁ

ଶିଶୁ ଶ୍ରମ ମୁକ୍ତ ଓଡ଼ିଶା - ଆମର ସଂକଳ୍ପ

## RIGHTS OF MIGRANT WORKERS UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW

### ABSTRACT

*The protection of the rights of workers employed outside their countries of origin has been the subject of increasing concern throughout the UN system. A large array of international instruments exists to provide parameters for the regulation of international migration and standards for human and labour rights.*

*This paper sets out to identify the various instruments of international stature which contain or include provisions protecting the rights of such persons. The paper also goes ahead to discuss some of the basic challenges to the protection of the rights of migrant workers and concludes by proffering some priorities for action.*

### 1.0 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

#### 1.1 MIGRANT/MIGRANT WORKER

At the international level, no universally accepted definition for "migrant" exists. The UN Convention on the Rights of Migrants and Their Families defines a migrant worker as a "person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a State of which he or she is not a national." From this a broader definition of migrants follows:

"The term 'migrant' should be understood as covering all cases where the decision to migrate is taken freely by the individual concerned, for reasons of 'personal convenience' and without intervention of an external compelling factor."

The term therefore applied to persons, and family members, moving to another country or region to better their material or social conditions and improve the prospect for themselves or their family. The United Nations defines migrant as an individual who has resided in a foreign country for more than one year irrespective of the

causes, voluntary or involuntary, and the means, regular or irregular, used to migrate. Under such a definition, those travelling for shorter periods as tourists and business persons would not be considered migrants. However, common usage includes certain kinds of shorter-term migrants, such as seasonal farm-workers who travel for short periods to work planting or harvesting farm products.

The definition indicates that 'migrant' does not refer to refugees, displaced or others forced or compelled to leave their homes. Migrants are people who make choices about when to leave and where to go, even though these choices are sometimes extremely constrained. Indeed, some scholars make a distinction between voluntary and involuntary migration. While certain refugee movements face neither external obstacles to free movement nor are impelled by urgent needs and a lack of alternative means of satisfying them in the country of present residence, others may blend into the extreme of relocation entirely uncontrolled by the people on the move.

## 1.2 IRREGULAR MIGRANT

A person who, owing to unauthorized entry, breach of a condition of entry, or the expiry of his or her visa, lacks legal status in a transit or host country. The definition covers inter alia those persons who have entered a transit or host country lawfully but have stayed for a longer period than authorized or subsequently taken up unauthorized employment (also called clandestine/undocumented migrant or migrant in an irregular situation). The term "irregular" is preferable to "illegal" because the latter carries a criminal connotation and is seen as denying migrants' humanity.

## 1.3 DOCUMENTED MIGRANT

A migrant who entered a country lawfully and remains in the country in accordance with his or her admission criteria.

## 1.4 RECEIVING STATE

Country of destination or a third country. In the case of return or repatriation, also the country of origin. Country that has accepted to receive a certain number of refugees and migrants on a yearly basis by presidential, ministerial or parliamentary decision.

## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

International migration is a growing phenomenon, with an estimated 185 to 192 million people living outside their country of origin as at 2005. Today, some 200 million people live outside their countries of birth or nationality. That would be the fifth most populous country in the world if all of the people were together in the territory of one State. Indeed, migration impacts on nearly

all countries around the world, either as origin, transit or destination countries, and many countries are all three of these. As more people migrate, concern about their vulnerability to human rights abuses has increased.

The special vulnerability of migrants stems from the fact that they are not citizens of the country in which they live, they have crossed an international border and - unlike citizens - that they may generally enter and live in another country only with the express consent of its authorities. This vulnerability, which derives from an alien status, often contrasts sharply with the determination, ingenuity and resilience required for the migration process itself.

This dissociation between nationality and physical presence has many consequences. As strangers to a society, migrants may be unfamiliar with the national language, laws and practice, and so less able than others to know and assert their rights. They may face discrimination, and be subjected to unequal treatment and unequal opportunities at work, and in their daily lives. They may also face racism and xenophobia. At times of political tension, they may be the first to be suspected - or scapegoated - as security risks. By linking anti-terrorism and immigration control in the context of the 'war on terror', many governments have encouraged - however unintentionally - xenophobia against migrants and refugees. In some countries, national discrimination law does not protect migrant workers, and in any case migrants are more likely to work in sectors where

labour standards are not applied, or even not applicable.

Migrants are too often seen as exploitable and expendable, a source of cheap, docile and flexible labour, constrained to "3-D" work or working conditions: dirty, dangerous and degrading, that nationals are unavailable for and/or unwilling to accept.

Where a migrant enters another country illegally, or enters legally and subsequently loses any legal immigration status, his or her vulnerability to abuse and exploitation sharply increases. Irregular migrant workers 'easily fall prey' - in the words of the ILO - to extortion and are highly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation by employers, migration agents, corrupt bureaucrats and criminal gangs. Women in an irregular status are doubly vulnerable owing to the high risk of sexual exploitation. Victims of smuggling and trafficking may find themselves both irregular in legal terms, and in situations of exploitation at the hands of the traffickers or smugglers. The more illegal a migrant, the greater is the danger of the journey, or of being exploited, or even enslaved by traffickers and unscrupulous employers.

And yet, migration has long contributed to development and economic and social well-being in both destination and origin countries. In this age of globalisation, inevitable economic, technological and demographic trends have combined to make labour mobility an essential component of development and prosperity in all regions of the world. Today, the labour and skills of foreign workers are needed by low, middle and high-income countries alike.

Thus, there is a compelling case for a human rights response in international law. The most recent, large-scale effort is the United Nation's International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICMW).

The United Nations Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICMW) was signed in 1990 and entered into force in 2003. The Committee on Migrant Workers (CMW) monitors implementation of the convention. The treaty is meant to ensure minimum protections to all migrants, focusing on ensuring freedom from discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, sex, religion or any other status, in all aspects of work, including in hiring, conditions of work, and promotion, and in access to housing, health care and basic services. It also ensures freedom from arbitrary expulsion from their country of employment and protection from violence, physical injury, threats and intimidation by public officials or by private individuals, groups or institutions.

The convention, in addition to laying out a comprehensive list of rights for migrant workers and their family members, sets guidelines for the promotion of legal and humane migration channels. The ICMW passed unanimously in a 1990 UN General Assembly, opening it to ratification. By signing the convention, countries agree to a monitoring and reporting process once it enters into force.

Support among nations has been

tentative. The ICMW received the 20 ratifications necessary for entry into force in 2003, 13 years after its passing. Today, among the 27 current signatories, major receiving states are notably absent.

Many nations have signed, but most are countries of origin of migrants. No Western migrant-receiving State has ratified the Convention, even though the majority of migrants live in Europe and North America. Other important receiving countries, such as Australia, Arab states of the Persian Gulf and India have not ratified the Convention either. This means that the treaty is not in effect where the majority of migrants actually live and work. So, one of the main questions in this debate is whether these specific non-signatories should jump on-board and sign. They often contend that the treaty will limit their national immigration control policies. But, supporters argue it will do no such thing.

It should be noted that the ICMW does not attempt to create new rights. Rather, it explicitly extends to migrants those rights set forth in other UN documents.

### **3.0 OVERVIEW OF MIGRANT WORKERS' RIGHTS UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW**

#### **3.1 THE CORE HUMAN RIGHTS TREATIES**

Until relatively recently human rights law did not explicitly refer to migrants or recognize them as a vulnerable group. They were protected because this body of law applies to 'everyone' and is universal in its application. It still remains the case that human rights norms are dispersed

throughout a wide range of texts. This means that migrants have been 'invisible' in much human rights discussion, and that fact has contributed to popular belief that they were a group apart, without the same fundamental rights as others.

#### **3.1.1 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights**

The ICCPR gives 'everyone' freedom from abuses such as arbitrary killing, torture and inhuman treatment, slavery, forced labour, child labour, arbitrary arrest, unfair trial, and invasions of privacy; all persons also have the right to marry; to be protected as minors; to peaceful association and assembly; to equality; to freedom of religion and belief. These rights apply to everyone ... irrespective of his or her nationality ... (and) must be guaranteed without discrimination between citizens and aliens.

#### **3.1.2 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**

The ICESCR gives 'everyone' the right to the progressive realisation of social, economic and cultural rights, including health, housing and education; and to labour rights such as collective bargaining, workers compensation, social security, just and favourable working conditions and environment. The right to health, for example, requires states to provide emergency health care to everyone, at a minimum; nor may states discriminate in 'denying or limiting equal access for all persons, including ... minorities, asylum seekers and illegal immigrants, to preservative, curative and palliative health services'.



### 3.1.3 Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

The CAT reinforces the prohibition on torture and gives general protection against refoulement to a country where an individual would be at risk of torture.

### 3.1.4 International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

The ICERD requires that laws against racial discrimination must apply to non-citizens 'regardless of their immigration status'.

The Geneva Conventions draw no distinctions between citizen and non-citizen, or between regular and irregular migrant, in their protection against violations of humanitarian law in time of conflict. These treaties require governments to ensure that human rights are respected by regulating the actions of national authorities - the police force, public education authorities, hospitals.

Increasingly governments are also required to ensure that rights are respected in the private sphere, and that private persons - including employers - do not violate rights. When states ratify the ICERD they accept a three tier set of obligations; they undertake to 'engage in no actor practice of racial discrimination', to 'ensure' conformity by public authorities, and to 'prohibit' discrimination by private groups. Through their ratification of the Vienna Convention on Consular Access, states undertake to respect the right of all migrants to consular access and protection.

### 3.2 SPECIFIC CONVENTIONS PERTAINING TO MIGRANT WORKERS

Three complementary universal instruments provide the necessary legal framework not only for protection of migrants' human rights, including labour rights, but also for national migration policy and international cooperation to regulate migration. These are the:

- a. 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW).
- b. ILO Migration for Employment Convention, 1949 (C-97).
- c. ILO Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (C-143)

The fundamental importance of the ICRMW and the complementary ILO Conventions is that they provide a comprehensive normative framework for defining national and international migration policy under the rule of law. They outline a rights-based approach, but are far more than human rights treaties. They set parameters for a wide range of national policy and regulatory concerns, and they delineate the agenda for inter-State consultation and cooperation on most pertinent issues, including exchange of information, cooperation in combating irregular migration, smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons, pre-departure orientation for migrants, orderly return and reintegration in home countries, and others.

### 3.2.1 INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF ALL MIGRANT WORKERS AND MEMBERS OF THEIR FAMILIES (ICMW)

As its title implies, the ICMW addresses the working situation of migrants, entitling them to the same pay, hours, safety considerations, and other workplace conditions that nationals enjoy. However, the convention goes beyond rights in the workplace by enumerating a comprehensive list of protections for migrants' family members, with the goal of acknowledging migrant workers as more than simply economic factors of production. Indicative of this concern are provisions barring the arbitrary expulsion of legal migrant workers.

As stated earlier, the ICMW does not attempt to create new rights. Rather, it explicitly extends to migrants those rights set forth in other UN documents, examined above. The ICMW brings together in a single text the rights which already protect migrants -including irregular workers - and which have already been accepted by most states through the 'core' human rights treaties. It gives some additional rights to regular migrant workers -including the right to family reunification. Most of the rights set out in Part III, which applies to 'all' migrant workers, and thus includes irregular migrants, are fundamental civil and political rights, mirroring the ICCPR. There is to be equal treatment between all migrant workers and nationals in respect of basic economic and social rights, including

remuneration, work and employment conditions, social security, emergency medical care, and access to education for the children of migrant workers. Cultural rights are also protected. They may join any trade union. The Convention emphasises that these rights apply to 'all' migrant workers, irregular as well as regular, by obliging states parties to ensure that 'migrant workers are not deprived of any rights ...by reason of any irregularity in their stay or employment'.

The Convention grants certain rights solely to regular migrant workers, and to their families, giving them equal treatment with nationals in respect of - inter alia - access to educational institutions and service, vocational guidance and training, housing, social and health services, and participation in cultural life. They are given the right to form trade unions and rights to political participation. They also have a right to family reunification.

The Convention establishes a Committee to oversee implementation by states. The Committee examines reports from states, and considers communications from individual and other states alleging violations. An ILO representative is to participate in a consultative capacity at the Committee's meetings.

The Convention is important both as a synthesis of the rights and duties which have been already agreed by governments through the core human rights treaties. It extends some rights - for example by extending rights to migrant workers directly against employers as well as against

the state. It also grants some new rights - for example to transfer earnings and savings, and to be informed of the rights contained in the Convention.

Another notable feature of the ICMW is its inclusion of the undocumented. Recognizing the risks undocumented migrants face from employers and others, the ICMW aims to ensure that, despite issues of questionable legal status, "Every migrant worker and every member of his or her family shall have the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law." Even absent legal status, undocumented migrants are ensured certain legal rights.

The treaty recognizes that legal migrants have the legitimacy to claim more rights than undocumented migrants, but it stresses that undocumented migrants must see their fundamental human rights respected. Migrants with proper documentation enjoy a wider range of rights under the convention than the undocumented, including some level of political participation, access to unemployment benefits and public work schemes, access to education and training opportunities, the ability to form unions, and family reunification.

The principle of human rights therefore is that entering a country in violation of immigration laws does not deprive an irregular migrant of his or her most fundamental human rights, nor does it erase the obligation of the host state to protect these individuals. The analogy is sometimes made with the operation of criminal law where; although an individual may have

broken the law, and be liable to prosecution for a specific criminal offence, he or she retains their basic human rights - to due process or humane treatment - throughout the legal process, and after conviction.

Notably however, the ICMW specifically states that the rights it lays out for undocumented workers should not be interpreted as implying their regularization, and it further endorses that states combat illegal migration while strengthening channels for lawful migration.

### 3.2.2 ILO MIGRATION FOR EMPLOYMENT CONVENTION, 1949 (C-97)

The earlier ILO Migration for Employment Convention (No. 97) provides the foundations for equal treatment between nationals and regular migrants in recruitment procedures, living and working conditions, and access to justice, tax and social security. It sets out details for contract conditions, participation of migrants in job training or promotion, provisions for family reunification, and appeals against unjustified termination of employment or expulsion, as well as other measures to regulate the entire migration process.

Convention No. 97 (ratified by 47 member States as at 22 September 2008) provides for equality of treatment and non-discrimination in respect of nationality, race, religion or sex between migrant workers who have been regularly admitted and nationals, arising out of laws or regulations or the practices of the administrative authorities in four areas: living and working conditions, social

security, employment taxes and access to justice. The provisions include, among others, equal remuneration, membership of trade unions, and enjoyment of the benefits of collective bargaining.

The Convention, and its accompanying Recommendation (No. 86), also set out details for contract conditions, the participation of migrants in job training or promotion and deal with provisions for family reunification and appeals against unjustified termination of employment or expulsion, and other measures to regulate the entire migration process.

In Article 11, Paragraph 1, the Convention gives a definition of migrant workers:

"For the purpose of this Convention the term migrant for employment means a person who migrates from one country to another with a view to being employed otherwise than on his own account and includes any person regularly admitted as a migrant for employment."

Convention No. 97 excludes "(a) frontier workers; (b) artists and members of the liberal professions who have entered the country on a short-term basis; c) seamen".

Apart from these exclusions the principle of equal treatment is applicable to all migrant workers who have been regularly admitted in countries having ratified the Convention.

Equal treatment (treatment not less favourable to that which applies to nationals) is the central element of Convention No. 97. It is contained in Article

6 which prohibits discrimination between regularly admitted migrant workers and national workers with regard to:

a. ... remuneration, including family allowances where these form part of remuneration, hours of work, overtime arrangements, holidays with pay, restrictions on homework, minimum age for employment, apprenticeship and training, women's work and the work of young persons; membership of trade unions and enjoyment of the benefits of collective bargaining; accommodation; and social security (that is to say, legal provision in respect of employment injury, maternity, sickness, invalidity, old age, death, unemployment and family responsibilities, and any other contingency which, according to national laws or regulations, is covered by a social security scheme). This also applies to employment taxes, dues or contributions payable in respect of the person employed; and legal proceedings relating to the matters referred to in this Convention.

Article 3, Paragraph 2 of Convention No. 97 invites ratifying States to engage in cooperation to combat misleading propaganda. It has been clarified by the ILO Committee of Experts that misleading propaganda not only covers misleading information that migrants may receive before their departure, in order to lure them into going to a specific country, it also concerns racist propaganda in the countries of destination.

Article 4 requires States to provide migrant workers with adequate and free

services in connection with recruitment and job placement.

Article 7 provides that a member State should "ensure that the services rendered by its public employment service to migrants for employment are rendered free". This also applies to private employment agencies through ILO Convention No. 181.

Convention No. 97 contains important protection provisions for migrant workers. For instance, they should have access to appropriate medical services (Article 5) and should be allowed to transfer their earnings and savings (Article 9).

Article 8 of Convention No. 97 prohibits the expulsion of migrants admitted permanently, in the event of incapacity for work. This is an important provision. In many countries, there remain questionable linkages between health status and job security or security of residence.

Some bilateral agreements signed between countries of origin and countries of destination contain language linking the termination of employment (and therefore expulsion) to a worker's contraction of "HIV/AIDS or any other contagious disease". Indeed a number of countries require migrant workers applying for jobs to undergo mandatory testing for HIV/AIDS or condition the renewal of the work permit on such testing. This is clearly a violation of human rights and goes also against the ILO code of practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work. Such a requirement would also be regarded as contrary to Convention No. 97.

Ratifying States may, under Article 14, exclude from the ratification any or all of

the three annexes to the Convention. The two first annexes deal with organized migration for employment. They contain important provisions, however. For instance, Article 5 of Annex I and Article 6 of Annex II make provision for migrant workers to obtain a written contract indicating conditions and job descriptions before leaving the country of origin. And Article 3 of Annex I speaks of the required supervision by States of agencies dealing with recruitment, to ensure compliance with the law. The third Annex is more general and deals with migration, whether organized or spontaneous.

### 3.2.3 ILO MIGRANT WORKERS (SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS) CONVENTION, 1975 (C-143)

The complementary ILO Migrant Workers Convention (No. 143) provides specific guidance regarding treatment of irregular migration and facilitating integration of migrants in host societies. Article 1 establishes the obligation of ratifying States to "respect the basic human rights of all migrant workers," independent of their legal situation in the host State. Its Part II details standards for integration of long term migrant workers.

The full title of Convention No. 143 is "Convention concerning Migrations in Abusive Conditions and the Promotion of Equality of Opportunity and Treatment of Migrant Workers". The Convention consists of three parts and governments may decide to exclude either Part I or Part II from their ratification of this instrument.

## Basic Human Rights

Part I runs from Article 1 to 9 and constitutes the first attempt by the international community to deal with irregular migration and to do it from a rights-based perspective.

Article 1 thus lays down the general obligation for member States to respect the basic human rights of all migrant workers. In other words, the rights of all migrant workers, regardless of their status, are to be respected. The intention is to affirm, without challenging the right of States to regulate migratory flows, the right of migrant workers to be protected, whether or not they entered or remained the country on a regular basis, with or without official documents. This Article refers, according to the ILO Committee of Experts, to the fundamental human rights contained in the international instruments adopted by the UN in this domain, and includes the fundamental rights of workers covered by the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, adopted by the International Labour Conference on 18 June 1998. The ILO Declaration lists these rights in Paragraph 2 as follows: "(a) freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining; (b) the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour; (c) the effective abolition of child labour; and (d) the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation".

Articles 2 and 3 of Convention No. 143 invite member States to act and possibly cooperate to suppress the clandestine

movement of migrants. Here, attention is paid to the fact that it is the recruiters or the employers of irregular workers who may be prosecuted and sentenced, but not the migrant workers themselves. The ILO Committee of Experts has indicated however that, contrary to the spirit of the Convention, "sanctions against migrants in an irregular situation are very widespread, both in sending and in receiving countries". It must be added that actual sanctions against employers are in fact very rare, compared with deportation or other measures applied against migrant workers. So Articles 2 and 3 deserve to be borne in mind.

Cooperation between member States as provided by the Convention should also, according to

Article 4, make it possible to prosecute the authors of trafficking whatever the country from which they exercise their activities. This is reminiscent of the adoption more recently by a number of countries, of legislation that includes "extraterritorial" provisions, namely in addressing the issues of trafficking and pedophilia and enabling countries to prosecute offenders even if their crimes have been perpetrated outside of their territory.

Consultation of social partners is foreseen in Article 7 of the Convention which provides employers and trade union organizations with the right of initiative in the field of combating abusive conditions in labour migrations.

Part I of the Convention also lays down certain protective measures for migrants

who have lost their employment. In that respect, Article 8 specifies that:

"One: On condition that he has resided legally in the territory for the purpose of employment, the migrant worker shall not be regarded as in an illegal or irregular situation by the mere fact of the loss of his employment, which shall not in itself imply the withdrawal of his authorization of residence or, as the case may be, work permit". And

"Two: Accordingly, he shall enjoy equality of treatment with nationals in respect in particular of guarantees of security of employment, the provision of alternative employment, relief work and retraining".

Rights of undocumented migrant workers With regard to migrant workers in an irregular situation, Article 9 reads as follows: "Without prejudice to measures designed to control movements of migrants for employment by ensuring that migrant workers enter national territory and are admitted to employment in conformity with the relevant laws and regulations, the migrant worker shall, in cases in which these laws and regulations have not been respected and in which his position cannot be regularized, enjoy equality of treatment for himself and his family in respect of rights arising out of past employment as regards remuneration, social security and other benefits". In other words, a migrant worker who has performed work, even if in an irregular situation, has the right to be paid his salary and is entitled for the work performed to social security and other benefits, as would apply to a migrant in a regular situation.

Part II of Convention No. 143: equal opportunities

Part II of Convention No. 143 only applies to regularly admitted migrants. While Convention No. 97 intends to prohibit inequalities of treatment between migrant workers in a regular situation and national workers, Part II of Convention No. 143 aims to also provide for "equality of opportunity", that is to say that it also aims at eliminating discrimination in practice by proposing specific measures to ensure equality, including for instance in recruitment, job mobility or education and vocational training.

According to Article 10 of Convention No. 143, this also applies to social security, trade union and cultural rights.

Article 14 suggests that migrant workers should be allowed to change employers, at least after a period of maximum two years. This is an important means of avoiding abusive situations and the obligation to stay with an employer for longer periods may give the employer an unwarranted way of putting pressure on his/her employee by threatening to stop or not renew the contract in which case the worker will have also lost residential authorization and will be forced to leave the country or face deportation.

### Family Reunification

Article 13 requires States Parties to the Conventions to facilitate the reunification of the family of the migrant workers legally residing on their territory. It should also be said that Article 9(4) of Convention No. 143 provides that "nothing in this Convention

themselves in forced labour conditions, with travel documents such as passports taken from them and an obligation to pay the "debts" incurred in moving them to the destination country.

While it is often only adult workers who migrate, if they do take their families, their children are often forced to work. Trafficking in persons often involves children and young workers.

The principles of freedom of association and the right to organize are recognized to apply to all workers, including migrants, regardless of their being regular or irregular. Unscrupulous employers will frequently try to stop migrant workers joining trade unions. It is the absence of unions that makes migrant workers easy to exploit.

Key points of the ILO's core Conventions are:

### **3.3.1 Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87)**

Guarantees the removal of acts of discrimination against trade unions; the protection of employers' and workers' organizations against mutual interference; and calls for measures to promote collective bargaining. Article 2 is vital: Workers and employers, without distinction whatsoever, shall have the right to establish and, subject only to the rules of the organization concerned, to join organizations of their own choosing without previous authorization. 149 ratifications as at 14 July 2008.

### **3.3.2 Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98)**

Protects workers who are exercising the right to organize; upholds the principle of non-interference between workers and employers organizations; and promotes voluntary collective bargaining. 159 ratifications as at 14 July 2008.

### **3.3.3 Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)**

This aims at the immediate suppression of all forms of forced or compulsory labour, with exceptions such as a military service, convict labour, and during emergencies such as war, fires and earthquakes. Ratified by 173 countries as at 14 July 2008 - the most widely ratified Convention.

### **3.3.4 Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105)**

This provides for the abolition of all forms of forced or compulsory labour as a means of political coercion or education; as sanctions against the free expressions of political and ideological opinions; as workforce mobilization; as labour discipline; as a punishment for taking part in strikes; and as measure of discrimination. 169 ratifications as at 14 July 2008.

### **3.3.5 Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100)**

This underscores the principle of equal remuneration between men and women, for work of equal value. 166 ratifications as at 14 July 2008.



### 3.3.6 Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)

This provides for a national policy designed to eliminate, in respect of employment and occupation, all direct and indirect discrimination based on race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin. 168 ratifications as at 14 July 2008.

### 3.3.7 Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)

Applies to all sectors of economic activity; States must declare a national minimum age for admission to employment; all children are covered whether or not they are employed for wages; States must pursue a national policy to ensure the effective abolition of child labour; the minimum age for entry into work shall not be less than that for the completion of compulsory schooling (although a lower age than 14 years may be adopted for light work, for countries which are less developed); an age level of 18 is set for hazardous work. 150 ratifications as at 14 July 2008.

### 3.3.8 Prohibition and Immediate Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)

Member States to draw up a time-bound programme for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour. While the Convention itself gives a list, member States, in consultation with social partners, shall also draw up their own list of the worst forms. 168 ratifications as at 14 July 2008.

## 3.4 OTHER INTERNATIONAL LABOUR STANDARDS

While many international labour standards are relevant to migrant workers, two may be specially noted here:

### 3.4.1 Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181)

The first is the Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181). 20 ratifications as at 14 July 2008. ILO member States that ratify the Convention should ensure that private employment agencies do not charge workers for their services; and that workers are allowed to join trade unions.

In particular, Article 11 states:

"A Member shall, in accordance with national law and practice, take the necessary measures to ensure adequate protection for the workers employed by private employment agencies as described in Article 1, Paragraph 1(b) above, in relation to:

- (a) freedom of association;
- (b) collective bargaining;
- (c) minimum wages;
- (d) working time and other working conditions;
- (e) statutory social security benefits;
- (f) access to training;
- (g) occupational safety and health;
- (h) compensation in case of occupational accidents or diseases;
- (i) compensation in case of insolvency and protection of workers' claims;

- (j) maternity protection and benefits, and parental protection and benefits."

Regulating employment agencies properly would play a very important role in ensuring migrant workers' welfare. Only 20 countries have ratified this Convention, and very few of these are large "origin countries".

Article 8 of the Convention is particularly concerned with preventing abuses of migrant workers, it says:

1. A Member shall, after consulting the most representative organizations of employers and workers, adopt all necessary and appropriate measures, both within its jurisdiction and, where appropriate, in collaboration with other Members, to provide adequate protection for and prevent abuses of migrant workers recruited or placed in its territory by private employment agencies. These shall include laws or regulations which provide for penalties, including prohibition of those private employment agencies which engage in fraudulent practices and abuses.

2. Where workers are recruited in one country for work in another, the Members concerned shall consider concluding bilateral agreements to prevent abuses and fraudulent practices in recruitment, placement and employment.

### 3.4.2 Employment Relationship Recommendation, 2006 (No. 198)

A new Recommendation, adopted by the International Labour Conference in 2006, deals with the employment relationship. It is concerned with establishing when a

genuine worker-employer relationship exists. The use by unscrupulous employers of disguised employment relationships to avoid legal obligations to workers, and to discourage union organization, is on the increase.

Migrant workers are more likely to be involved in these "informal" employment relationships. The Recommendation states:

### In the context of the transnational movement of workers:

(a) in framing national policy, a Member should, after consulting the most representative organizations of employers and workers, consider adopting appropriate measures within its jurisdiction, and where appropriate in collaboration with other Members, so as to provide effective protection to and prevent abuses of migrant workers in its territory who may be affected by uncertainty as to the existence of an employment relationship;

(b) where workers are recruited in one country for work in another, the Members concerned may consider concluding bilateral agreements to prevent abuses and fraudulent practices which have as their purpose the evasion of the existing arrangements for the protection of workers in the context of an employment relationship."

## 4.0 MECHANISMS FOR PROTECTION OF MIGRANT WORKERS' RIGHTS

International human rights protection for migrant workers takes two forms.

Historically, aliens looked to their countries of nationality to assist them -

through diplomatic protection - when their rights were violated, and so did not need - at least in principle - the protection of the international community. Migrants are distinguished from refugees by the fact that they, unlike refugees, can look to their country of nationality for protection and so do not require protection from the international community. Diplomatic protection is the first and older protection mechanism, and its importance is growing.

International human rights law creates a second, and newer, system under which individuals are entitled to enjoy rights whether they are in their own countries or abroad. These rights derive not from their nationality, but from the human rights treaties which the state - their own or the country in which they live - has voluntarily undertaken to respect. This situation represents a major departure from, and also a restriction on, the broad autonomy which States have traditionally enjoyed in their dealings with aliens, and migrants. But it should be emphasised that it is a departure which states have agreed, and upon which governments have voluntarily embarked.

The practical implications of this system for migrants are profound, but they are not yet fully developed or understood. Nor do migrants, their legal representatives or even trade unions make full use of the complaints procedures which exist under the UN and regional treaties - to obtain redress in individual cases, or as a means of developing a comprehensive case law on migrants' rights, or to challenge national laws and policies which impact negatively on migrants.

A powerful obstacle to all rights protection is ignorance, and many migrants know little about what their rights are, or how to claim them. Many, perhaps most, migrant workers know little about their rights and the actions they can take when inequities or mistreatment occur. While this is a problem which their own countries can address, by providing information before they leave, the countries in which they live and work have the primary responsibility for protection.

Reporting on Saudi Arabia - where migrants make up almost half of the total population, and where rights protection is particularly weak - Human Rights Watch has urged the government to 'provide a clear enunciation of the specific rights that migrant workers are entitled to enjoy'; the information should be practical not theoretical'. It should 'draw on the specific abuses that migrants are most likely to face'. The information should be translated into the languages of the countries of origin, and provided to every worker on arrival as a routine matter of immigration practice.

#### 4.1 DIPLOMATIC PROTECTION

When a state arrests a non-citizen, international law requires the arresting state to inform him of his right to contact consular officials of his home state, and to communicate such a request to consular officials 'without delay'. Consular officials are entitled to visit a national who is in custody, and may provide assistance, including arranging legal representation'. The practice is rooted in the reciprocal interest of all states to safeguard their nationals abroad.

The importance of this practice has grown in the contemporary world as labour migration -both regular and irregular - has increased; for example, embassies of South Asian countries provide a range of services to migrant workers including shelter and medical services to runaway workers, repatriation, issuing of passports to those whose passports have been retained by employers or agents; legal action to obtain payment of wages and compensation.

When it was unable to ensure that its consuls could have access to Mexicans in custody in the US, many of whom were irregular migrant who had been charged and convicted of capital offences, Mexico took its case to the International Court of Justice, and succeeded in its claim that the US was in breach of international law. This important case demonstrated the essential role of consular access in human rights protection. It also shows the need for 'lateral' legal approaches in using general provisions of international law to provide specific rights protection for migrants.

Even graver breaches of the right to consular protection occur, as for example in the case of Saudi Arabia where Indian authorities have reported that they do not receive any advance information from the Saudi authorities about the execution, by beheading, of Indian nationals - migrant workers; 'we generally get the information after the execution from our local newspapers'.

#### 4.2 THE HUMAN RIGHTS TREATY SYSTEM

When states ratify any one of the human

rights treaties, they undertake to implement the treaty's provisions through national law and policy. In each case this implementation is overseen - and monitored - by a committee of independent experts, who are elected by governments, and who are referred to as Treaty Bodies. They review the steps taken by governments to protect human rights. The Human Rights Committee reviews reports from the 154 countries which are parties to the ICCPR; and can also determine complaints from those countries which have given it jurisdiction over individual cases in circumstances where individuals (citizens or migrants) claim their rights have been violated. One of the Committee's first decisions concerned discrimination between men and women in national immigration laws, and the family's right to live together. At the time, Mauritian law gave male citizen an automatic right to bring their wives to live in Mauritius, whereas a woman had no equivalent right for her husband. The Committee found that this was sexual discrimination and was a breach of the ICCPR. Mauritius then changed the law. The Committee also requests states to remedy particular situations; example include alleged forced labour, and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment of Haitian nationals in the Dominican Republic; alleged violations of the rights of aliens in Azerbaijan; and it has asked Switzerland to ensure that restraints in cases of forcible deportation 'do not affect the life and dignity of the persons concerned'. Similarly, the Committee on the Rights of the Child monitors the steps taken

by 192 states to implement that Convention, and a similar process is now beginning under the ICMW.

Problems relating to the treatment of migrants arise under each of these treaties, and are considered by each treaty body. There is not yet a common jurisprudence and it can be difficult to know exactly how a particular right - for example, non-discrimination - is to be interpreted across the board. There is a strong case for joint comments and recommendations by the treaty bodies which would establish a clear and consistent approach, which policy makers would then follow.

#### 4.3 REGIONAL SYSTEMS

Migrants' rights are also protected under regional treaties. Case law and advisory opinions from the European and the Inter American Courts of Human Rights ('ECtHR' and 'IACtHR'), and the African Commission should be followed by countries in the three regions.

In Europe, although decisions of the ECtHR have not affected member states' formal control over external borders and free movement rights, they have circumscribed decision making in some individual cases. This means that while the European Convention does not create any right of entry, it may prevent the removal, or deportation, of a third country national from a member state - for example where it is the home of his immediate family, and removal would be an infringement of the right to respect for family life. In an important advisory opinion, the IACtHR stated that the enjoyment and exercise of an

irregular migrant's contractual employment rights are not affected by any irregularity of migration status.

#### 4.4 NATIONAL PROTECTION

The human rights system works on the principle that individuals take their cases to the international procedures only as a last resort, after all domestic remedies have been exhausted, and that international human rights law is to be applied in the first instance by national courts. Increasingly national courts are applying international human rights law to cases which come before them.

A recent UK case concerned a refusal of state support to three African asylum seekers, who were not allowed to support themselves by working while their application for asylum was under review. The court determined that this decision had resulted in a 'level of abject destitution' which breached the prohibition of inhuman and degrading treatment in the ECHR.

#### 4.5 UN SPECIAL MECHANISMS

Both the UN and the Inter American system have appointed Special Rapporteurs to report on the human rights of migrants; the Inter American Commission also conducts site visits and holds special hearings. Other UN thematic rapporteurs report to the Human Rights Commission on migrant-related issues in the course of mandates on -e.g. - health, violence against women and trafficking. All are important tools for improving factual knowledge of the circumstances in which migrants are most vulnerable, and for establishing a dialogue with governments. The reports of

the thematic special rapporteurs give practical effect to human rights principles and apply them to the situation of migrants, notably the reports of the Special Rapporteurs on the Right to Health, and on Violence against Women.

### 5.0 THE PROBLEM OF DATA

A major obstacle to policy making is lack of information - on types of violation, the places where they occur, and their characteristics. Violations have been generally under recorded, and lack of reliable data and of policy-oriented research is a recurring theme in migrants' rights issues.

There are a number of reasons for the absence and under recording of data. Migrants are less likely than citizens to place their jobs at risk by reporting abuse by employers. Under recording is greater to the extent that migrants are irregular or marginal, and so less able - or willing - to report their difficulties to national or international authorities and seek redress through formal procedures.

Irregular migrants who are subjected to rights abuse by immigration authorities in the course of deportation seldom report his or take legal action once they have reached their home country. In many situations, migrants do not know what rights they are entitled to, and still less how to claim them; the case of migrant women is an extreme example this lack of knowledge, and of under recording. Another is forced labour, which takes place in the illicit underground economy and so tends to escape national statistics.

National statistics are sometimes restricted by official fears that the information - e.g. on illegal entry and enforcement - could be 'misused'. Media and governmental reports on rights violations during the migratory process are increasing, but it is not clear whether this reflects increased levels or increased exposure. NGO reporting on migrants' rights is also increasing, but it remains modest in comparison with that on refugees.

Much reporting, as well as standard setting, has focused on migrant workers. This work has a wider relevance for migrants since most - with the limited exception of, e.g., some family members and students - are or have been in some form of remunerated activity.

An EU expert study in 2004, noted that one of the biggest gaps in the understanding of trafficking is in data collection, and is due to many factors which are linked to the illegality of traffickers' activities, the use of different definitions, the lack of data sharing and political decisions. It proposed the establishment of independent 'National Rapporteurs' who would collect and analyse information from different source, and develop common guidelines so that the data collected could be compared.

### 6.0 CONCLUSION

Although international human rights principles are universally applicable, and generally apply to all citizens and migrants without distinction, the rights actually enjoyed by migrants, and their treatment, differ widely from country to country. But some conclusions can nonetheless be drawn

from the factual data - albeit too limited - which exists on the human rights situation of migrants.

It confirms the vulnerability of very many - though by no means all - migrants. It underscores the fact that some groups are more vulnerable than others to abuses. They include women and children, particularly those in domestic employment and victims of smuggling, and migrant workers in exploitative employment. It is sometimes assumed that it is only irregular migrants who experience exploitation, but this is not wholly correct. They may be at the highest risk, but regular migrants are also caught in situations of labour exploitation from which they find it difficult to escape; this is particularly acute in the informal and unregulated economy.

One of the 'drivers' of migration is a human rights 'deficit' in countries of origin, together with a high incidence of gender and other discrimination; this pattern of causation is both wider, including social and economic rights, and less specific than the persecution which causes refugee flight. Many migration decisions which are typically seen as motivated by the wish for greater economic opportunity are driven by human rights factors.

Available data underscores the links between irregular migration and trafficking and smuggling, between irregular migration and exploitative labour, and - generally - between an irregular immigration status and violation of human rights, by national authorities or by private individuals, employers, and criminal groups.

Attempts to end irregular migration by ever stricter controls have failed, and the clear correlation between illegality, lack of human rights protection, and abuses creates a serious policy dilemma for governments.

Similarly, human rights are generally not well protected in informal sector employment, including domestic work, that regulation in this type of employment is very difficult, and that much more needs to be done by governments. In many countries the failure to separate rights protection from immigration control, especially in relation to employment, has prevented migrants from reporting abuses to the authorities, and resulted in a de facto immunity - and impunity - for those who exploit migrants. This is encouraged by widespread ignorance of their rights on the part of migrants.

A central challenge for governments is to prevent xenophobia and racism, which together create an enabling environment for other human rights abuse.

The legal picture is more positive, at least in theory. It starts from the fact that human rights have been defined by governments, and voluntarily accepted by states as moral obligations and as legal duties. Human rights 'do not appear "deus ex machina"; they reflect state deliberation, practice and commitment'.

Migrants, whether they are regular or irregular, enjoy rights which are protected under general human rights law; most of these rights are guaranteed irrespective of an individual's immigration status. While relatively few states have yet accepted the ICMW as a legal obligation, the general -

'core' - treaties already protect migrants' rights and have a very high level of legal acceptance because they have been ratified by most states in both the industrialised and in the developing worlds. In some cases - notably the CRC - these treaties have created - in effect - a shared common law. They protect civil and political rights; social, economic and cultural rights; proscribe torture and discrimination, and they explicitly protect the rights of women and children. They ensure consular access. They criminalise exploitation in the form of forced labour and trafficking, and they protect the rights of its victims. There is a high - but too often unrecognised - degree of concordance between the rights in the ICMW and the rights protected by these widely ratified treaties.

Many international labour standards and employment rights are also human rights, most notably those contained in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. The relationship between human rights and labour standards is a strongly complementary one.

Consular access and protection is an important mechanism for rights protection, and there are many examples of its value. This is an area in which more resources are urgently needed especially by the countries from which unskilled migrants originate. But the fact that migrants' rights are to be found in different laws and treaties, and are 'dispersed' between a number of legal sources has made it hard for migrants to know their rights. Many migrants do not know the rights to which they are entitled,

and policy makers do not know their protection obligations. This has facilitated a belief that they, and particularly irregular migrants, have little rights protection in comparison with citizens. Only when the ICMW attains a much higher level of government acceptance is this major obstacle likely to be removed.

## 7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Flowing from the persistent violation of rights of migrant workers despite the existence of clear laws against it under international law, the following are clear:

1. There is a pressing need for more states to ratify all human rights treaties, including the CMW, and the ILO labour standards, so that migrants enjoy the same near universal level of protection as do children, through the CRC.
2. These rights must then be enforced through national laws, policies, and practices, so that the present gap - often chasm - between theory and practice is bridged.
3. One central difficulty is the fact that migrants' rights are dispersed between so many different treaties; and the one treaty which brings them together comprehensively is not yet widely accepted by states.

There is therefore a need for a simple and comprehensive statement of the human rights enjoyed by migrants, which brings together the principles contained in international law. This could draw on the example of the Guiding Principles for



Internally Displaced Persons, and be written in clear and non-legal terms. It should be easily understood by migrants, and could guide government officials in policy and law making. It would make migrants and their representatives aware of their rights, as well as trade unions and employers' organisations. Such a statement could be used by consular officials in their representations on behalf of their nationals, and it could inform the content of employment contracts in the informal, as well as the formal, sectors. It would not be a legal text, or 'compete' with international and regional treaties, but would protect by empowering migrants to know and claim their rights.

At the same time, rights based approaches to migration policy should be developed, using the ICMW and other human rights norms and labour standards as tools for policy making.

It is evident that there is a data 'gap' which has held back rights protection and research-based policy making. Conventional methods of data collection cannot easily be adapted to situations involving illegality, where people fear to report rights abuses. The two Special Rapporteurs - appointed by the UN and by the IACHR - make an important contribution to research, fact finding, and policy making. Similar appointments - like the proposed EU Rapporteur to collect data on trafficking - could usefully be made at a regional level to focus on those stages of the migratory process in which migrant's rights are at risk.

Laws and policies protecting the rights of migrants during the migration cycle should be set in the context of, and complemented by, development policies which address the underlying causes of migration. There is increasing recognition that discrimination, extreme gender inequality, and abuses of social and economic, as well as civil and political, rights are central factors in the decision to emigrate, and that this is especially true in the case of trafficking and smuggling.

The Joint Migration and Development Initiative has also suggested a two pronged approach to improving on the protection of human rights of migrants, migrant workers inclusive, these efforts relate to NGOs and :

a. Awareness raising: Through information campaigns. The production and distribution of information among a target audience helps raise awareness about migrant rights. This empowers migrants by giving them access to relevant knowledge that puts them in a position to make informed decisions about their lives.

b. Assisting vulnerable migrants: service provision can enhance the rights of migrants in transit countries, after arrival in countries of destination, and after return to the countries of origin. These services may include, legal advisory services, provision of shelter, psychosocial counseling etc.

One of such efforts is the Nigerian-Polish Initiative, founded on October 1st 2009 for migrants rights, which has provided free legal services to about 50 Nigerians living in Poland in the request for the new

biometric Nigerian passports. In addition, most of the detainees from the incident of the killing of the Nigerian at Warsaw, the Capital city of Poland, and whose travel documents were seized by the Polish Police authority have been assisted to regain access to their travel documents. Through the project, Nigerians have been given a voice in Poland.

In Nigeria, a team of migration lawyers have been trained and instituted by the initiative to implement actions relating to migration issues from Nigeria. This team of migration lawyers reacts on the issues of the imprudent entry visa refusal by many diplomatic missions and embassies in Nigeria as well as the cases of irregular migration that is most predominant in Nigeria.

The over-riding priority is to create a situation in which migration can take place in conditions of dignity, and become an informed choice rather than a strategy of survival - even desperation - in an economically asymmetric world, as it is today for many migrants.

**Foot Note:**

Source: International Organisation for Migration; Obtained from <http://www.iom.int/cms/en/sites/iom/home/about-migration/key-migration-terms-1.html#Migrant>, last accessed on 23rd April 2013 at 9:17 am.

Obtained from Wikipedia at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_Nations\\_Convention\\_on\\_the\\_Protection\\_of\\_the\\_Rights\\_of\\_All\\_Migrant\\_Workers\\_and\\_Members\\_of\\_Their\\_Families](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Convention_on_the_Protection_of_the_Rights_of_All_Migrant_Workers_and_Members_of_Their_Families) last accessed on 21/04/2013 At 4:22 Pm.

Guide on Ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (ICMW) Prepared by: The International Steering Committee for the Campaign for Ratification Of The Migrants Rights Convention, p.3

Exceptions include those with diplomatic status.

S. Grant and H. Grant, *International Migration and Human Rights*, A paper prepared for the Policy Analysis and Research Programme of the Global Commission on International Migration, September 2005, p.2.

Guide on Ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (ICMW) Prepared by: The International Steering Committee for the Campaign for Ratification of The Migrants Rights Convention, p.4.

Debate: UN Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers and their Families [obtained from: <http://dbp.idebate.org/en/index.php> Debate: \_ UN\_ Convention \_ on \_ the \_ Rights \_ of \_ Migrant \_ Workers \_ and \_ their \_ Families last accessed on 15th April, 2013 at 3:40 pm]

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ICMW [A.25(3)]

ICMW [Part IV]

See Jorge A.B., 'Immigrants Vulnerability as Subjects of Human Rights', *International Migration Review*, Vol.36, No.2, p.345, cited in S. Grant and H. Grant, *op cit.*, p.33.

*In Search of Decent Work-Migrant Workers' Rights: A manual for Trade Unionists*, International Labour Office, 2008, Geneva, p.74.

Recommendations are not subject to ratification and as such are not binding instruments. Yet when they accompany a Convention, they may provide useful guidelines on how to implement the Convention or on how to read a particular provision of a Convention.

Recommendation No. 86, for instance, in addition to Article 8 of the Convention, contains provisions aimed at protecting migrant workers, who have been admitted on a permanent basis, from expulsion on account of their lack of means or employment. Paragraph 18 of the Recommendation says:

"When a migrant for employment has been regularly admitted to the territory of a Member, the said Member should, as far as possible, refrain from removing such person or the members of his family from its territory on account of his lack of means or the state of the employment market, unless an agreement to this effect has been concluded between the competent authorities of the emigration and immigration territories concerned."

S. Grant and H. Grant, *International Migration and Human Rights*, A paper prepared for the Policy Analysis

and Research Programme of the Global Commission on International Migration, September 2005, p.21.

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*This has been recommended by the Sub Commission Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Non-Citizens in his Final Report, E/CN.4/Sub.2/2003/23 (2003), para. 33.*

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*The essential elements of a human rights based approach in relation to migration are the observance of international human rights norms, including equality and non-discrimination, standard setting and accountability, the recognition of migrants as subjects and holders of rights, the participation of migrant communities and the integration of a gender, child's rights and ethnic perspective.*

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# STOP CHILD LABOUR

## ଶିଶୁ ଶ୍ରମିକ ପ୍ରଥା ଏକ ସାମାଜିକ କଳଙ୍କ

- ୧୪ ବର୍ଷରୁ କମ୍ ବୟସର ଶିଶୁଙ୍କୁ ବିପଦପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟରେ ନିଯୋଜିତ କରିବା ଏକ ଧର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ଅପରାଧ ।
- ଏଥିପାଇଁ ୨ ବର୍ଷ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଜେଲଦଣ୍ଡ ଏବଂ ୨୦ ହଜାର ଟଙ୍କାରୁ ୫୦ ହଜାର ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଜୋରିମାନା ହୋଇପାରେ ।
- ଆସନ୍ତୁ ମିଳିମିଶି ଶିଶୁ ଶ୍ରମିକ ପ୍ରଥାକୁ ବନ୍ଦ କରିବା ।

## MIGRATION PATTERNS AND CHALLENGES FOR INDIANS SEEKING WORK ABROAD: A SPECIAL FOCUS ON SOUTH INDIA

Bernard D'Sami

National Forum of Migrant Workers Rights

### INTRODUCTION

This paper, which focuses on the issues particular to those leaving India in the search of work, is authored by Dr. Bernard D'Sami, who heads the National Forum of Migrant Workers' Rights, and also the department of History at Loyola College, Chennai. Dr. D'Sami has conducted extensive research on out-migration and asylum seekers, has attended the summer institute on 'deforced migration' in the Refugee Studies programme of Oxford University, and has experience in organising refugee students at the national level. Presently he is involved in Participatory Action Research, with CARAM Asia and UNDP HIV-SSWA, to explore more deeply into the push and pull factors of outmigration and the HIV vulnerability of the migrant workers.

This research concentrates mainly on out-migration in an analysis of primary and secondary sources available with government agencies such as the Emigration Division, the Ministry of Labour (Union Government), and the Overseas Manpower Corporation. Research institutions, journals on labour economics and other publications have also been used for further information. In addition, the experiences from organisations such as the Christian Workers Movement, The Young Christian Workers, the Migrant Forum and The Peace Trust have also been used to supplement the research contributing to this paper. Consultation meetings were held in Chennai on 14th August and 15th & 16th

December 2000, from which personal accounts and recommendations for action emerged, as reflected in this document.

Issues related to internal migration, which are not a focus of this paper, have been researched and documented extensively by the V.V. Giri National Institute as well as other institutions. The challenges of migration, mobility and HIV vulnerability are gaining increasing importance as we learn more about HIV and how it is spread in India. Research has shown that the large majority of infections found in rural areas are directly linked to migration. The link between HIV vulnerability and migration has become recognised as a crucial element of the epidemic, and the scope for responses through government programmes and NGO initiatives is built into the India National AIDS Control Plan II, which identifies migrant workers as a "bridge population".

### INDIA'S MIGRATION SCENARIO

India is a country with a population of about 1 billion people. In landmass, it is one of the largest countries in the world and there are numerous entry and exit points. India has had a long history of migration, starting when the British moved parts of the population to Sri Lanka, Malaya and other countries to work in developing plantations. Movements of unskilled labour increased in the 1970s and export of labour to the Gulf countries began in recent decades of late, movement to South East Asian countries has become increasingly popular.

### The number of those who left the country for employment purpose

Year:	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
No in millions:	1.14	1.25	1.70	1.26	1.44	2.02	4.17	4.38	4.25	4.15	4.14	4.16	3.55

Much of the migration in recent years has been a direct result of the prevailing idea that jobs abroad are more lucrative than those found within the borders of India. Further, it has been found that returnees glorify their experiences in other countries, and minimise the challenges they may have faced. As of late however, media and individual reports of exploitation are exploding these myths. Non-governmental organisations and government agencies are also bearing the brunt of this reality as more and more Indians are returning to the country disenfranchised, disillusioned, often financially burdened, and sometimes emotionally and physically weakened.

#### Migrants - A Definition

The population of any country is altered by three factors namely fertility, mortality and migration. The third factor is the most difficult to measure as it is a fluid, continuous, non-discrete and poorly defined measure. Two major sources of information on migration in India are the Census of India's migration tables and National Sample Survey Organisation's (NSSO) reports on internal migration in India. The Census of India defines migrants as those people whose place of enumeration is different from their place of birth. The place of birth is the main criteria used to distinguish a migrant from a non-migrant. As of 1971 the Census also included a criterion on place of last residence in addition to the place of birth to identify migrants from non-migrants. The place of last residence states that migrants are those

individuals whose last residence is different from the place where they are enumerated. Return migrants are those who have returned to their place of origin. The NSSO uses the concepts of native place and usual place of residence in their definition of migrants, but neither the NSSO nor the Census considers the movement of people from India to other countries. (Migration in India: Data sources by Gayathri Balagopal in Review of Development and Change, Vol IV NO 2, July- December, 1999).

#### Migrant Workers: The Numbers

The Census of India does not record out migration from the country. The data maintained by the office of the Protector of Emigrants at the Federal Labour Ministry is one source of information, but it is limited to those who require emigration permission in order to leave the country. Those people possessing graduate and professional qualifications or those who travel to join subsequent contracts after completing the first do not require the clearance of the emigration authority. The annual outflow during the eighties has been estimated at well above 100,000 people. Skilled and white-collar workers constituted nearly 20% of the total migrant workforce, which means that the vast majority of migrants were from the unskilled sector. The Gulf countries were a major attraction for Indian migrants as this region was keen for help in building modern infrastructure throughout the 70s and 80s. Large numbers of unskilled Indians received contract work to assist in the process of construction in the difficult

conditions of sandy deserts and hot weather. This meant that as soon as the buildings, shopping complexes and industries were completed, the Indian migrants were repatriated.

### Destination: Gulf

In Gulf countries, migrant workers are often temporary contract workers. According to estimates made by the Indian government, there were over 1.5 million Indian migrant workers in the Middle East in 1991. The number jumped to over 4 million in 1995. They are the largest group of migrants in the Gulf. Most workers are low skilled workers coming from lower income families. They are mostly temporary migrants who could not qualify for residency. Most women work as domestic workers and nurses. Male migrants are also hired as domestic workers, construction site workers and technicians.

Though no specific or recent numbers are available, a report from Birks, Sinclair & Associates estimated the migrant non-national population of the 6 countries of the Gulf Co-operation Council (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates) at 7,075,851 people, of whom over 20% were Indians. About one in three of these were construction workers, whereas the rest included domestic workers, nurse aids, technicians, engineers, accountants and other labourers. According to the ILO figures of 1996, of the one million construction workers in the Gulf countries, 425,000 were from India.

### Destination: East Asia

Domestic workers and temporary contract workers are also popular in East Asian countries including Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore. For example, in 1995, a memorandum of agreement was signed

between the Indian Personnel Export Promotion Council and the Foreign Maids Employment Agencies Association of Singapore for a total of 75,000 maids. Hong Kong is also a popular destination for domestic workers. In 1995, about 1300 legal domestic workers were accounted for in the receiving country.

### Legal Framework for Migration

The 1970s witnessed the Gulf countries opening up to a 'petro-dollar' economy that required cheap labour. As a result, India became a country to supply that cheap labour. The Government initiated a system of registration for recruiting agents and laid down rules and regulations that had to be followed by the agents. The government itself started the Overseas Manpower Corporation (OMC) in the State of Kerala (from where the majority of Gulf-bound migrants are located) in November 1978. A second such agency was started in New Delhi and a third in Chennai. The OMC sends only qualified and skilled workers as per the requests and requirements of foreign employers. The employer overseas contact OMC directly for their employee needs.

### Emigrants to Europe, America and Oceania (Knowledge workers)

France	42,000
Germany	32,000
Netherlands	103,000
UK	790,000
USA	815,000
Portugal	102,000
Canada	250,000
Australia	200,000
Indonesia	30,000
New Zealand	30,000

In Chennai today, there are about 13,000 candidates on a waiting list to leave the country. Most from this office are sent to

Middle Eastern countries and some to South East Asian countries. The categories of workers being sent are doctors, para-medical personnel, cooks, engineers, electrical technicians, cost estimators, machinists, sheetmetal workers, electrical supervisors, accountants, draftsmen, architects, helpers, carpenters, masons, welders, fitters etc. From 1999 to February 2000, the corporation was only able to place 111 individuals in the categories mentioned above.

#### Contract Workers in Service Jobs to West Asia and the Gulf

Bahrain	110,000
Kuwait	150,000
Oman	280,000
Qatar	80,000
Saudi Arabia	700,000
UAE	500,000
Yeman	103,000
Libya	36,000

(Source : Jain (1989))

The emigration check on Indian passports has been in place since 1922. Before 1981, the Ministry of External Affairs handled issues related to overseas employment. As a result of the increase of emigration in the seventies due to the oil boom in the Gulf countries, coupled with the weaknesses of the Emigration Act 1922, a new Emigration Act was created in 1983 and responsibility for overseas employment was transferred to the Ministry of Labour. The aim of the 1983 Act is to facilitate the emigration of Indian workers for overseas employment on a contractual basis as well as to safeguard their interests and ensure their welfare.

Under the Act, only recruiting agents registered with the Ministry of Labour can recruit

for overseas employment after obtaining a registration certificate from the Protector General of Emigrants (PGE). Under the Central Government's PGE, there are eight offices located in Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, New Delhi, Cochin, Trivandrum, Hyderabad and Chandigarh. These offices work with the PGE to appoint private agents for recruitment to various foreign jobs.

In addition to the government offices, private agencies are prime recruiters for individuals to move overseas. Though most are legitimate organisations, a number of private agencies have been reported to exploit the rural and urban poor. Though they are promised a variety of jobs with lucrative returns, many unaware Indians are assigned to menial tasks including domestic help and construction work when they arrive in their host country. There have been several cases reported of individuals who are recruited to be teachers, nurses, secretaries, but end up being housemaids. Men who have been recruited as electricians and machinists end up in Gulf Countries herding camels in the desert. Much of this is due to the high demand for manual and domestic help and the laws by the government which state that women cannot be recruited as domestic help, and men cannot be hired for manual labour. Should any individual elect to migrate in one of these categories, they require certification by the Indian Embassy in their host country, and the amount worth one-way airfare to be deposited with the POE.

The legal provisions of the 1983 Emigration Act are inadequate for dealing with the numerous types of problems and exploitative acts faced by the migrants. For instance, there are numerous cases of death



and disappearance of Indian migrant workers. Family members in these cases receive no compensation or other remedial measures, and have no legal recourse whatsoever

#### Case Studies

The following cases were reported at a consultation organised in March 2000 by consumer protection groups. At the district level, they receive numerous complaints against agents who are primarily responsible for the exploitation of migrant workers.

Mr. S. is a qualified ITI technician, as a welder. He paid Rs.70,000 (approximately \$1550 USD) to a overseas employment agency based in Chennai for finding him a job with a company in Malaysia and providing him a visa. When he landed in Malaysia, to his shock, he found that no such job existed. He was stranded without job, little money and no accommodation. Though he found shelter at an ashram two weeks after the ordeal, he was levied a fine of \$500 for overstaying beyond the validity of his visa. He has no money to live or to return home. The agency in Chennai claims to have arranged a proper job and refuses to pay either the fine or the return ticket.

Mr. G. was a bakery-owner in Tiruppattur. As his business was not very profitable, he decided to go abroad and try his fortunes in the new land. He was recruited as a driver in Qatar. Without any hesitation, he sold his bakery and paid the agent Rs. 60,000 (approximately USD \$1300).

His dream was to establish a full-fledged bakery after 2 years of hard labour. There was no driver's post when he arrived in Qatar. Instead, he was expected to be a postal worker, delivering mail to villages lying not less than 10 km from the office. No matter what his morning destination, he was expected to return to his office by noon, otherwise he would miss his lunch. After just 2 months of service, he had developed a severe stomach problem and had to return to India.

Mr. R. was recruited as a Maintenance Engineer in a laundry and dry cleaning company in Bahrain in June 1993. Though his family received regular correspondence from him, the last letter they received was at the end of October 1993. The company claims that he was unhappy with his work and had expressed his desire to be released. They claim that he had not reported for duty on 23 November 1993. The government of Bahrain has certified that it has received no notice of either his death, or departure from the country. Despite continuous search attempts by his family, Mr. R. is still missing, almost 8 years later.

#### Problems Faced by the Migrant Workers

Despite the enormous support that migrant workers provide to the economy (see Table on remittances), bureaucratic red tape in processing documents for would-be migrants has spurred the proliferation of illegal agencies who get the job done faster. This leads to the exploitation of people wishing to migrate, both financially as well as physically. Also, often due to a lack of

awareness accompanied by misleading employment agencies, many migrants are given false or inappropriate visas for employment, which can lead to them being classified as illegal migrants in the receiving country.

The following problems have been identified by migrant workers and organisations working with them:

- They are often exploited by the agents from the time of getting the passport till leaving the country at every level: it is the middle-man [broker] who plays a major role.
- Most of the service workers pledge their jewels or dispose of their property to pay huge sum demanded by the agents.
- Many migrants are cheated by the agents by being given a menial job in the place of the promised one.
- There are also cases in which the migrant worker receives much lower salary than what is promised before departure by the agent.
- Domestic face sexual abuse in the host country as a result they are not in a position to return as they fear social boycott by the family and the community.
- There are cases in which the migrants are given severe punishments with shocking cruelty. There are several cases in which the migrant worker either has died or missing.
- Many migrant workers become undocumented workers and thereby lose their status of 'equality before law' because they are sent by the agents on either tourist visa or social visit visa.

There are too many unfortunate stories of the exploitation of migrant workers by

their employers and the citizens of the host country. Employers have been known to change or violate agreements, underpay or not pay their employees, provide unhealthy working and living conditions, demand long working hours and expose their employees to unnecessary risks. Many migrant workers report being subjected to physical, sexual and psychological abuse, and occasionally, are also subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Sometimes, their identity documents, residence and work permits are confiscated or destroyed.

Migrant workers often do not have equality with nationals of the state before the courts and tribunals. The police and immigration authorities arrest, detain and sometimes summarily deport them without due process. There are also reported cases of physical and psychological suffering by migrant workers in the custody of immigration authorities.

In addition, migrant workers in a foreign country have difficulty accessing the social, medical, legal and cultural support they need. They are often denied the right to organise, join or form associations for the protection of their economic, social, cultural and other rights, as well as being excluded from activities of Trade Unions, where they exist.

Migrant workers have very little preparation for what they are going to face in a new country. This often causes much emotional stress on the individual. Through the POE offices, the government of India offers basic information for those leaving the country to take up jobs in the Gulf and Southeast Asian countries. The information comprises the contact information of Indian Embassies and Consulates and basic orientation information regarding the

history and culture of the host country. A look into the government and NGO programmes suggests that there are no dedicated or developed programmes for assisting in the pre-departure, post-arrival or reintegration of migrant Indians.

Non-governmental organisations have only recently begun to realise the exploitation that is occurring. The Migrant Forum is one example of an NGO working solely on issues related to migrants. Several NGOs working on labour and health have started incorporating the migrant dimension into their work.

#### **Remittances to India by Regions of Origin, 1995-1996 (in millions of rupees)**

North America	86,385
Western Europe	28,561
Britain and Australia	33,617
Middle East	117,961

Other countries including SE Asia 21,086

#### **India . A Migrant Receiving Country Too**

Another major trend in the migration patterns of India is the high degree of cross-border migration between India and neighbouring countries. It has been estimated that there are anywhere between 1.8 million and 3 million Nepalese migrant workers in India and conversely an estimated 800,000 to 3.2 million Indians in Nepal. While the majority of these come and go voluntarily, there are also reports of coerced migration and trafficking. For example child-workers from Bihar have been taken illegally by private contractors to build roads in Nepal, and trafficking of Nepalese women and girls as sex workers to Mumbai and other destinations is taking place. As well as weaknesses in the support given to migrant workers who are leaving India for work abroad, there is also little support for those individuals who come to India for work.

#### **HIV Vulnerability of Migrant Workers**

These conditions of exploitation make it very difficult for migrant workers to protect their health. The casualisation and feminization of migration has brought untold misery in terms of health of the workers. The violation of human rights takes place from the day a migrant worker decides to go abroad. They are kept in the capitals or in big cities for months before they leave for the host country as their agents keep them in the waiting, supposedly, to prepare papers etc. This time of waiting, confusion, and sudden removal from the familiar home environment can lead to exposure to HIV. Men usually get their exposure to red-light areas during this period, and women migrant workers are often exploited at this stage .

The transit stage is an important stage during the migration process where often the rights of migrants are blatantly violated by recruiting agents and other intermediaries, setting aside the health of the migrant workers. The case of Indonesian women migrants who are housed during transit in overcrowded agency houses marked by sub human living conditions in Jakarta for extended periods of time, often up to a year, is a classic example where no/poor access to sanitation, nutrition, access to medical care as well as the threat of rape and sexual abuse impacts the health and HIV vulnerability of migrants in transit. The practice of confining prospective migrants to long periods of stay in 'hostels' also takes place in Cambodia. In India it is in Bombay where the migrants are kept in almost slave like conditions while they await employment in the Gulf countries.

Undocumented migrants, especially women migrants who are without legal

identities, are more vulnerable to abuse by corrupt and fraudulent recruiting agents, enforcement officials and others at borders who wield much power over migrants. Looking at the transit stage of migrants it is clear that many of the violations of their human rights contributing to their HIV vulnerability arises from irregular migration and of irregularities in the migration process. HIV vulnerability of migrant workers is impacted by the simultaneous violation of their rights to information, freedom of movement, protection from the law, right to health etc.

### **Mandatory Testing**

Many receiving countries in South East Asia, the Far East and Middle East require potential migrant workers to undergo mandatory tests for HIV and other infectious diseases. The question of mandatory testing on migrants for HIV raises many concerns. The first is at the level of the migrant workers' rights. The second is with regard to issues involved in using mandatory HIV testing on migrants as a strategy to manage the HIV epidemic. To assess the logic and ethics of mandatory HIV testing of migrants as a strategy to manage the HIV epidemic we need to look at two other issues - of notification and deportation of HIV positive migrant workers.

For migrant workers it is quite clear that mandatory HIV testing and deportation brings more anger than anything else, especially because of the manner in which it is done. An HIV positive result means that the migrant stands to lose their livelihood. This is everything to people who have been forced out from their land and country by poverty, often after selling or mortgaging their small piece of land or cattle for a job

which they thought would help their family and loved ones escape from and hunger and destitution. If they have tested HIV positive but not been informed about the result, or have been informed wrongly or improperly, the human and financial cost and pain for them and their families when they return home is immeasurable.

Mandatory testing is not fair either to migrant workers or to the host population in receiving countries. It gives a false sense of security to the local population in the receiving country who think that they are free from HIV because of the mandatory testing and deportation of migrants with HIV. Research and experience clearly indicate that the migration experience puts migrants at the risk of acquiring HIV.

Thus in the issue of mandatory HIV testing and deportation, the 26 are violated and include the right to equality and non-discrimination, the right to health, right to social security, right to work and right to freedom of movement. It also isolates them and reduces their participation in fighting the AIDS epidemic.

The host country health care system should take responsibility for the health of the migrant workers, [not first class fees and third class treatment]. In the receiving countries the migrant workers must also be included in national health/HIV information campaigns. Migrant workers also face discrimination in the host country's public hospitals and often fear to go to the doctors of the company/factory for the fear of deportation if identified HIV positive.

### **CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

These challenges and recommendation emerged from a consultation meeting held in December 2000. The list of participants

and the agenda of the event are annexed below.

### For Government

The challenge to provide full employment, job security and decent wages to all its citizens. In absence, citizens elect to find work in other countries.

The State should give priority to protecting the interests of migrant workers, keeping in mind that they bring in much needed foreign exchange through remittances.

Where laws and employment contracts for migrant workers exist, they are often either inadequate or work against the interests of the migrant. Laws specifically relevant to migrant workers are urgently required. Where laws are absent, a labour ordinance in which the status and rights of the migrant workers are defined is required. Bilateral and multilateral agreements between labour sending and labour receiving countries with the migrant workers' needs and interests at their centre are urgently required.

India must sign the 1990 UN Convention on Migrant Workers and their families. A Central Manpower Export Promotion Council is needed. This body would undertake the task of promoting the employment of Indians abroad. It would provide technical support services, undertake publicity and promotional work for Indian manpower abroad, communicate and establish links with international

agencies and foreign employers, and act as a focal point for dissemination of information and market intelligence.

South Asian Countries as labour exporting countries lack a policy framework for dealing with migrants at the regional level. A collective agreement would strengthen the bargaining power of sending countries to protect their workers abroad. Strengthened regional co-operation for this is essential.

Pre-departure information is the need and right of the migrant worker. Thus predeparture programmes with information on migration as well as on health, including sexual health and HIV/AIDS, should be given to the migrant workers before departure.

### For Civil Society

Close collaboration between labour unions and associations of migrant workers is needed for the effective implementation of laws.

A welfare fund for migrants and their families is needed for emergency situations.

It is important to document the HIV/AIDS vulnerability of the migrant workers. It can be done only through Participatory Action Research.

Human rights education and pre-departure information need to be integrated especially into community based intervention efforts to increase the awareness of people who migrate.

## APPENDIX I: AGENDA

### The National Consultation on Issues Related to Migrant Workers, 14th August, 2000

10:00 am	Dr. Bernard D'Sami, National Forum of Migrant Workers- Introduction to CARAMASIA
10:05 am	Mr. E. Rajarethinam, PEACE TRUST- Welcome Address & Purpose of the National Consultation
10.10 am	Introduction of Participants by themselves
10:20 am	Ms. Madhu Deshmukh, UNDP .The Role of UNDP in protecting the health and rights of migrants through social mobilisation and institutional partnership

10:30 am	Ms. Sharuna Varghese, CARAM ASIA . Migrant Situation in Asia
11:00 am	Dr. Bernard D'Sami, National Forum of Migrant Workers . Overview of Migrant Situation in India
11:45 am	Mr. E. Rajarethinam, PEACE TRUST . About the PEACE TRUST
12:20 am	Migrant Voice
12:40 am	Mr. Benny, Government General Hospital . AIDS and Indian Migrant Worker
14:00 pm	Mr. P. Balasubramanian, Protector of Emmigrants . The Response of Indian Government to the problems of Migrants
15:00 pm	Workshop groups
15:45 pm	General session with Group Reports

#### APPENDIX II (LIST OF PARTICIPANTS)

#### National Consultations on Issues Related to Migrants, 14th August 2000, Chennai

#### S. No. Name Organisation

1. Mr. Natarajan Chettiar Migrant Worker
2. Mr. A . Purushothaman Migrant Worker
3. Mr. G. Balasubramaniam Protector of Emigrants
4. Fr. Manu Alphose TNPFS
5. Sr. Jeanne Devos National Forum for Workers
6. Prof. Packiaraj Loyola College
7. Fr. S. Maria Martin YCW . India
8. Mr. K.J. Madhavan Consumer Rights Protection Council
9. Ms. Virgil D'Sami Arunodhaya
10. Mr. A. Lakshmanan Consumer Protection Council
11. Mr. K. Chandrasekar D.E.W
12. Mr. B. Thomas R.D.B.NET
13. Mr. R.Edwin R.E.W.S
14. Mr. Parthasarathy Migrant worker
15. Mr. S. RamaChandran Peace Trust
16. Mr. E. Rajarathinam Peace Trust
17. Dr. Bernard D'Sami National Forum for Migrant Workers
18. Mr. Banadict Jan DESH
19. Mr. G. Albin Joseph Rural Education Working Society
20. Mr. K. Ramesh Babu Freelance
21. Mr. V. Susai Raj Jeeva Jyothi
22. Mr. K. Arumugam Peace Trust Dindigul
23. Mr. G. Prem Kumar Peace Trust Dindigul
24. Mr. Andrew Sesraj.M. National Forum for Migrant Workers
25. Mr. P. Jayarama Chandran Makkal Shakti Iyyakam
26. Fr. Henry Jerome SJ AICUF
27. Mr. L.D.R. Manimaran Patteeswaran Consumer Protection Council
28. Ms. M. Suganthi Migrant Worker
29. Mr. Jai Shankar Liberty General Service
30. Fr. Charles Stephen Christian Workers Movement
31. Mr. Christian Rutges CIMIC
32. Ms. Sharuna Verghis CARAM Asia
33. Ms. Madhu Deshmukh UNDP
34. Mr. Mariappan Narasingapatti
35. Mr. Sunder Rajan Narasingapatti
36. Mr. A.M. Selvaraj Ajit Enterrises
37. Mr. G. Sudhagar CARE India
38. Mr. Feroz Khan
39. Mr. B. Nandha Kumar Arunodhaya

### Grievances against RAs/Project Exporters/ Foreign Employer In the case of unregistered/illegal Recruiting Agents

- Any recruitment of Indian nationals for employment abroad without Registration Certificate (RC) under Section 10 of the Emigration Act, 1983 is an offence punishable under Section 24 of the Emigration Act, 1983.
- Since such Agents are not registered with Protector General of Emigrants, Ministry of External Affairs and "Law and Order" is a State subject, the complaints are referred to concerned State Police Authorities /Protector of Emigrants for investigation and action for violation of Section 10 of Emigration Act 1983 and other provisions of the law as appropriate.
- The Police authorities in turn, after investigating the case and preparing it for prosecution, seek approval from Protector General of Emigrants, Ministry of External Affairs / competent authority for prosecuting the accused in the appropriate Court of Law under Section 27 of the Emigration Act, 1983.
- Requests for such Prosecution Sanction are processed and Prosecution Sanction issued on priority by the office of the Protector General of Emigrants, Ministry of External Affairs.

### MADAD

- Victim and his family member can register their grievance on Madad Portal at [madad@gov.in](mailto:madad@gov.in). This portal is linked to the website of Ministry of External Affairs. This is a user friendly Portal where once the complaint is lodged, it is automatically transferred to the concerned Mission/Post and status of its redressal is reflected on Track Grievance. The mobile number registered on the Portal gets an SMS-based response as and when the status changes. Meanwhile the received complaint is also forwarded to concerned Mission/Post for action in the matter.
- It is also advised to send email instead sending of hard copies as it is not only easier and faster to forward complaint, but also avoid wastage of papers, postage and photocopying/scanning work etc.

### In case of registered Recruiting Agents

- Show-cause Notice is served on registered Recruiting Agents against whom complaints are received and the Recruiting Agent is directed to settle/resolve the complaint in the first instance.
- If the Recruiting Agent fails to respond to the Show-Cause Notice or his reply is not satisfactory, his Registration Certificate is suspended for 30 days. If the complaint still remains unresolved, the Registration Certificate is suspended for an indefinite period and action is initiated for cancellation of the Registration Certificate and forfeiture of Bank Guarantee.

### Grievances Against Foreign Employers

- Whenever Indian emigrants face any problem from their Foreign Employer, they contact the Indian Mission/Post to complain against the Foreign Employers and seek redressal of their grievances.
- Such complaints basically relate to non-payment/reduced payment of salaries, nonavailability of promised jobs, adverse working conditions or exploitation etc.
- Immediately on receipt of a complaint, the Mission/Post takes up the matter with the foreign employer, Indian emigrants as well as local Authorities to settle the matter amicably. In deserving situations, they try to get the workers repatriated by coordinating with concerned Recruiting Agents and the Protector General of Emigrants.
- Indian Missions and Posts abroad have standing instructions to immediately take up such cases with relevant local authorities /foreign sponsors with a view to expediting the process of law and obtaining due justice.
- Indian Missions and Posts also recommend inclusion of such Foreign Employers in the Prior Approval Category (Black list) based on the merits of the case.
- On the basis of such recommendation, the Ministry places the concerned foreign company in the Prior Approval Category.
- A foreign company "when included in the Prior Approval Category list" is no longer allowed to recruit workers from India.

### Public Hearing by PGE

Grievance redressal by Protect General of Emigrants Public can address their queries and grievances to Protector General of Emigrants



**Madras High Court**  
**Tamil Nadu Construction And ... vs Union Of India on 29 February, 2016**  
**IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS**

**DATED: 29.02.2016**

**CORAM**

**THE HON'BLE Mr.SANJAY KISHAN KAUL, CHIEF JUSTICE**

**and**

**THE HON'BLE Mr.JUSTICE M.M.SUNDRESH**

**W.P. No.3120 of 2014**

Tamilnadu Construction and Unorganised  
 Workers Federation (TCWF),  
 Rep. by its President,  
 No.500/573, 1st Floor Kamaraj Bhavan,  
 Anna Salai, Thenampet,  
 Chennai-600 006. ..Petitioner

Versus

1. Union of India,  
 Represented by its Secretary,  
 Ministry of Labour and Employment,  
 Shram Shakti Bhawan, Rafi Marg,  
 New Delhi-110 001.
2. The State of Tamil Nadu,  
 Represented by its Secretary to  
 Government, Department of Labour  
 and Employment, Fort St. George,  
 Chennai-600 009.
3. The Commissioner of Labour,  
 DMS Complex, Teynampet,  
 Anna Salai, Chennai-600 006.
4. The Chennai Metro Rail Limited,  
 Represented by its Managing Director,  
 HARINI TOWERS, No.7, Conran  
 Smith Road, Gopalapuram, Chennai-  
 600 086.
5. The Tamil Nadu Construction Workers  
 Welfare Board, Represented by its  
 Secretary,  
 No.8, Valluvar Kottam High Road,  
 Nungambakkam, Chennai-600 034.
6. The Employees State Insurance  
 Corporation, Tamil Nadu Region,  
 Represented by its Regional  
 Director, 143, Sterling Road,  
 Nungambakkam, Chennai-34.
7. The Employees Provident Fund  
 Organisation, Rep. by the Provident  
 Fund Commissioner, Regional Office,  
 Chennai and Puducherry,  
 37, Royapettah High Road, Chennai-  
 600 014.
8. M/s Soma Enterprises Ltd.,  
 Rep. by its Managing Director,  
 Post Box No.4, Behind old Kumar  
 Theatre lane,  
 Vanagaram, Chennai-600 095.
9. M/s VSL India Pvt. Ltd.,  
 Rep. by its Managing Director,  
 #36, Annai Indira Nagar,  
 Thoraipakkam,  
 Old Mahabalipuram, Chennai-96.
10. M/s Larsen & Tubro Ltd.,  
 Rep. by its Managing Director,  
 Mount Poonamallee Road,  
 Manapakkam, P.B.No.979,  
 Chennai-600 089.
11. M/s Larsen & Tubro Ltd.,  
 Chennai Metro Rail Project,  
 Rep. by its Project Manager,  
 ECV02 & ECV03 Package,  
 No.44/62, Kasi Estate, 3rd Street,  
 Jafferkhanpet, Chennai-600 083.
12. M/s. Consolidated Construction  
 Consortium Ltd.,

- Rep. By its Managing Director,  
No.13, West Sivan Koil Street,  
Vadapalani, Chennai-600 026.
13. M/s Metro Tunnelling Chennai,  
(L & T-SUCG JV), M/s Larsen Toubro  
Limited, Rep. by its Managing Director,  
Mount Poonamallee Road,  
Manapakkam,  
P.B.No.979, Chennai-600 089.
  14. M/s Metro Tunnelling Chennai,  
(L & T-SUCG JV), M/s Shanghai Urban  
Construction (Group) Construction,  
Rep. by its Managing Director,  
No.500, Fu Shan Road, Shanghai, 200  
122, China.
  15. M/s Transtonnelstory Limited,  
Rep. by its Managing Director,  
4/1, Luganskaya Str, Moscow 115516,  
Russia.
  16. M/s Transtonnelstory Limited,  
Rep. by its Managing Director,  
26, General Belov Street, Moscow,  
115583, Russia.
  17. M/s AFCONs Infrastructure Limited,  
Rep. by its Managing Director,  
Afcons House, 16, Shan Industrial  
Estate, Veera Desai Road, Azad  
Nagar P.O., P.B.No.11978, Andheri  
(W), Mumbai-400 053.
  18. M/s Alstom Projects India Ltd.,  
Rep. by its Managing Director,  
The International, 5th Floor, 16, Marine  
Lines, Cross Road, No.1, Off  
Maharishi Karve Road, Churchgate,  
Mumbai-400 020.
  19. The Directorate of Industrial Safety  
and Health (DISH), Chennai 600 006.  
(R-19 impleaded as per order dt.27/  
08/2015 by C.J. & T.S.S.J. in WP.3120/  
2014). (R-9 R-15 & R-16 are deleted as  
per order dt.15.10.2015 by CJ&TSSJ in  
WP.3120/2014)... Respondents

**PRAYER:**

Petition filed under Article 226 of the  
Constitution of India, praying for the  
issuance For Petitioner :: Mr.K.Venkatesan  
For Respondents ::  
Mr.Su Srinivasan, ASGL, for R1 & R7  
Mr.STS.Moorthy, Government Pleader for  
Mr.V.Shanmughasundar, G.A.,  
for R2, 3, 5 & 19 for  
Mr.V.R.Kamalanathan, AGP.,  
Mr.Jayesh B.Dolia for R4  
Mrsaw.Rita Chandrasekar for  
M/s Aiyar & Dolia for R10, 11, 13 &14  
Mr.D.Balaraman for R17  
Mr.P.Ranganatha Reddy for  
M/s King & Partridge for R18  
Mr.G.Bharadwaj for R6

**ORDER**

(Order of the Court was made by  
M.M.Sundresh,J.) The petitioner has filed  
this Public Interest Litigation seeking  
implementation of various Labour Welfare  
Enactments qua the migrant workmen  
working with the respondent No.4. The  
grievance of the petitioner in a nutshell  
appears to be that despite the enactments  
governing the field, the unorganised migrant  
workmen have not been given the statutory  
benefits due to them.

2. Taking note of the fact that the  
respondent No.19 has been entrusted with the  
enforcement of various labour laws, by the  
order dated 27/08/2015, it has been impleaded  
as a party to this writ petition.

3. The learned counsel appearing for the  
petitioner submitted that though there are  
various labour enactments, they have not  
been implemented qua the migrant  
workmen. Unfortunately, such workmen have  
not been registered with the fifth respondent.  
A further submission has been made that the  
migrant workers, though entitled to in law are  
not given such benefits under the Inter-state

Migrant workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979 and Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970, which were enforced by Commissioner of Labour.

4. Basing reliance upon the counter affidavits filed, the learned counsel appearing for the respondents submitted that the prayer sought for in the writ petition is very vague. The petitioner has not pointed out the specific irregularity/non compliance by the concerned respondent. The respondents are scrupulously following the welfare enactments. Therefore, there is no basis in the allegations made by the petitioner.

5. The learned Assistant Solicitor General appearing for the Respondents 1 and 7 submitted that as and when complaints are received, appropriate action is being taken. The respondent No.4 has paid the provident fund without default upto May, 2015.

6. The learned Government Pleader appearing for Respondent Nos.2, 3, 5 and 19 submitted that the migrant workmen are entitled to be registered with the respondent No.5. Appropriate orders have been passed in this regard in G.O.Ms.No.40, Labour and Employment (12) Department, dated 09.05.2014, G.O.Ms.No.153, Labour and Employment (12) Department, dated 08.12.2014 and G.O.Ms.No.154, Labour and Employment (12) Department, dated 08.12.2014. Thereafter, about 13,525 inter-state migrant construction workers have been registered with the respondent No.5 as on 30.06.2015. The Respondent No.5 has been discharging his duty to the best of his ability. It is further submitted that the Inter-state Migrant Workmen(Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979, Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970, the Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996 and the Rules framed thereunder are to

be enforced by the Directorate of Industrial Safety and Health being a single agency as and when appropriate notification is issued by the Government-respondent No.2 within a reasonable time. Such a decision is taken to ensure better co-ordination and proper implementation of the various welfare legislations.

7. The learned counsel appearing for Respondent Nos.10 and 11 submitted that all the enactments are being followed scrupulously and the official respondents, on inspection, expressed satisfaction as to the steps taken for implementation of the welfare schemes. Thus, no interference is required. More or less, similar submission has been made by the learned counsel appearing for the other private respondents viz., Respondent Nos.13, 14 and 16.

8. The learned counsel appearing for the fourth respondent took a stand stating that it is the duty of the contractors to do the needful. They have been accordingly advised to enroll the workers in the Board. As the registration of workers is mandatory, the stand of the respondent No.5 is not clear.

Thus, no progress can be made in this regard. Insofar as the implementation of the various Labour Welfare Enactments are concerned, they are being scrupulously adhered to.

9. The learned counsel appearing for the respondent No.6 submitted that the immediate employer or the contractors should furnish the details of the employees employed by them to the principal employer of the factory/establishment for the purpose of getting benefits under the Employees State Insurance Act provided under the ESI Scheme.

10. Though the averments made in the affidavits are general and the prayer is primarily with regard to the migrant workmen, qua the respondent No.5, considering the issues involved, we would like to expand the scope of writ petition.

11. We are concerned primarily with two issues. One is with respect to the registration qua the respondent No.5. A perusal of the affidavit filed by the respondent Nos.2, 5 and 19 would show that the migrant workers are covered under the scheme. Therefore, we deem it appropriate to direct the fourth respondent to take adequate steps to put the contractors concerned on notice qua the compliance of registration of the migrant workers with the respondent No.5. Thus, the migrant workers would come under the protection guaranteed by the respondent No.5.

12. Coming to the second issue on the implementation, the following passage in the counter affidavit filed by the Respondent No.19 is apposite. "Prior to 24.06.2015, the Labour Laws such as Inter-state Migrant workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979, Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970 were enforced by Commissioner of Labour. To ensure better co-ordination and enforcement of labour laws it has been decided by the Government to entrust the implementation of all construction sector allied labour laws such as Inter-state Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979, Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970 to the Directorate of Industrial Safety and Health. The issue of notification in this regard is under active consideration of the Government. The Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996 and Tamil Nadu Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Rules, 2006 are enforced by the Directorate of Industrial Safety and Health."

13. As the respondent No.19 has been associated with the task of implementing the welfare enactments, we deem it fit to direct

the respondent No.2 to issue appropriate notification in this regard, within a period of two months from the date of receipt of a copy of this order. The private respondents are also directed to make sure that their employees are covered under the ESI Act as per law, making them entitled for the benefits under the Scheme.

14. Accordingly, the writ petition stands disposed of. No costs. (S . K . K . , C J . )  
(M.M.S., J.)

To

1. The Secretary,  
Ministry of Labour and Employment,  
Union of India,  
Shram Shakti Bhawan, Rafi Marg,  
New Delhi-110 001.
2. The Secretary to Government,  
Department of Labour and  
Employment,  
State of Tamil Nadu,  
Fort St. George, Chennai-600 009.
3. The Commissioner of Labour,  
DMS Complex, Teynampet,  
Anna Salai, Chennai-600 006.
4. The Secretary, Tamil Nadu  
Construction  
Workers Welfare Board,  
No.8, Valluvar Kottam High Road,  
Nungambakkam, Chennai-600 034.
5. The Provident Fund Commissioner,  
Employees Provident Fund Organisation,  
Regional Office, Chennai and  
Puducherry, 37, Royapettah High Road,  
Chennai-600014.
6. The Directorate of Industrial Safety and  
Health (DISH), Chennai 600 006.

The Hon'ble The Chief Justice  
and M.M.Sundresh, J.  
(raa)  
W.P. No.3120 of 2014

**DO'S AND DONT'S FOR INDIAN EMIGRANTS**

Compiled by: Susanta Dash, Advocate

- Emigrants are advised to retain their original passports as they are non-transferable Government of India documents. Passport should not be handed to RA/FE for emigration clearance before being selected.
- Please ensure that you are not carrying any edible items with you.
- Possession of drugs and narcotics may result to life imprisonment or even death sentence in some countries.
- Kindly ensure that you have employment Visa as going for employment. Any other visa will render you an illegal emigrant in the country if you are found to have been employed there.
- The moment one reaches the destination, please leave two names and telephone numbers of local contacts residing there with your family in India along with the OWRC Helpline number.
- If you are going as unskilled or domestic worker, kindly ensure that your employment documents are pre-attested by the Indian Mission in the country of your proposed employment. Ladies below the age of 30 years going as housemaids are not eligible for employment abroad in ECR countries.
- If you are going abroad, leave a photocopy-set at home, of all your travel and employment documents.
- Be sure of your Recruiting Agent. Ask him to show his Registration Certificate issued by the Protector General of Emigrants, Govt. of India. Do not deal with him unless he is registered and the registration is valid. In case of doubt, check with any of the offices of the Protectors of Emigrants (POEs) or the Protector General of Emigrants (PGE).
- DO NOT deal with sub-agents as they are not permitted under the Emigration Act, 1983 and Rules.
- Ask the Recruiting Agent to show to you the Demand Letter and Power of Attorney from the foreign employer.
- Also carefully go through the Employment Contract detailing the salary/wage levels and other service conditions.
- DO NOT pay more than the equivalent of wages for forty five days as offered under the employment contract, subject to maximum of Rupees Twenty Thousand in respect of services provided and take a receipt of this payment.
- Pay preferably by Demand Draft or Cheque and obtain a receipt. Complaints of overcharging or cheating can be lodged with the concerned POE or with the Protector General of Emigrants (PGE).

**CHECK BEFORE DEPARTURE**

- Please ensure that designation/

category is same on your visa for which you have been recruited.

- Before departure the emigrant should collect all the numbers of Indian Missions of the country where he/she is going.
- Ensure you have a valid Passport at least for 06 months. A valid Visa must be either stamped on or accompany your Passport. Always keep a photocopy of your Passport and Visa.
- You must possess a copy of the Employment Contract signed by you and your foreign employer duly attested by the registered recruiting agent.
- Insist on a copy of Employment Contract in English duly authenticated by the recruiting agent.
- Open a Saving Bank N.R.E. Account in one of the Banks in India to enable you to send your remittances from abroad.

Acquaint yourself with local labor laws, working and living conditions of the country of employment. Keep complete address of the Indian Embassy with you.?

#### IN THE COUNTRY OF YOUR EMPLOYMENT

- Obtain a Resident Permit or Identity Card, Labor Card or IQUAMA. DO NOT part with your Passport and copy of Employment Contract signed by you in India, at any cost.
- DO NOT sign any other Employment Contract or any blank paper. DO NOT strike work or resort to agitations. These are illegal under local labor laws. You could be arrested,

imprisoned and also deported.

- AVOID all contacts that may result in AIDS - a dreaded disease.
- Keep in touch with the nearest Indian Mission and report any complaints about non-payment or delayed payment of wages or compensations or any other problem to the Indian Mission.

#### CUSTOMS FORMALITIES

- Personal baggage - Customs checking is VERY STRICT. Kindly co-operate with the Customs staff at the International Airport. Ensure that you do not carry any narcotics or alcoholic drinks. Alcohol is strictly prohibited. Its consumption is a serious offence attracting severe punishment.
- DO NOT accept any unchecked parcel from any one. If you have to take a parcel for someone, check thoroughly that it does not contain alcohol or narcotics. Otherwise, it may land you in serious difficulties on arrival in the country of employment.

#### RELIGION

- The State religion of all countries in the Gulf and in Malaysia is ISLAM. Public practice of any other religion is strictly prohibited.

#### PRECAUTIONS

- You must make and keep a photocopy of all the pages of your Passport. DO NOT lose your Passport or its photocopy. Make sufficient photocopies and keep them with you always.

- By chance if you misplace your Passport, inform the nearest Indian Mission immediately giving them details, i.e. Passport number, date and place of issue, your name and date of your entry in the country of employment. You can give these details only if you keep a photocopy of your Passport.
- DO NOT lose your copy of Employment Contract. Make sufficient photocopies and keep them with you always.
- You must have a full name, address, telephone/fax number of your foreign employer, before you leave India.
- If you have difficulty in locating your foreign employer, contact the nearest Indian Mission immediately.
- DO NOT accept temporary or

permanent employment with another person or establishment other than that the sponsoring Company/ establishment/ person. Employment with persons other than your original sponsor is strictly prohibited and attracts severe punishment.

- Before the Visa or Employment Contract expires, get them renewed. If you are returning to India for a short while during the tenure of your Employment Contract abroad, ensure that the validity period of Visa does not expire before you return to the country of employment.
- Also ensure that your Passport is valid. At least six months before it is about to expire, get it revalidated from the concerned Indian Mission abroad or from the Regional Passport Office (RPO) in India.

## ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ ପାଇଁ ଲେଖା ଆବଶ୍ୟକ...

ରାଜ୍ୟ ଶ୍ରମ ସଂସ୍ଥାନ, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର ଆନୁକୁଲ୍ୟରେ ପ୍ରକାଶିତ ହେଉଥିବା ଷାଣ୍ଟାସିକ ପତ୍ରିକା 'ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ' ପାଇଁ ଲେଖକ / ଲେଖିକାମାନଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ ନିଜସ୍ୱ ଲେଖା ଆବଶ୍ୟକ କରୁଛି । ଶ୍ରମ ଆଇନ ସଂପର୍କିତ ଲେଖା, ଆଇନର ବିଶ୍ଳେଷଣ ସମ୍ପର୍କିତ ଲେଖା ଏଥିରେ ପ୍ରକାଶ ହେବ । ଯାହା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଅପ୍ରକାଶିତ ହୋଇଥିବା ଆବଶ୍ୟକ । ହାତଲେଖା କିମ୍ବା ଡିଟିପି ହୋଇଥିବା ଲେଖା ସହିତ ଲେଖକ / ଲେଖିକାଙ୍କର ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଠିକଣା ଓ ମୋବାଇଲ୍ ନମ୍ବର ଥାଇ ନିମ୍ନ ଠିକଣାରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିବା ଆବଶ୍ୟକ । ଚୟନ ହୋଇଥିବା ଲେଖାଗୁଡ଼ିକ ପ୍ରକାଶ ପାଇବା ପରେ ଲେଖା ବାବଦକୁ ଲେଖକ/ ଲେଖିକାଙ୍କୁ ଟ. ୫୦୦ଙ୍କା (ପାଞ୍ଚଶହ ଟଙ୍କା) ପାରିତୋଷିକ ଦେୟ ଟେକ୍ ଆକାରରେ ପ୍ରଦାନ କରାଯିବ ।

### ସର୍ତ୍ତାବଳୀ:

୧. ମନୋନୀତ ହୋଇନଥିବା ଲେଖା କୌଣସି ପରିସ୍ଥିତିରେ ଫେରସ୍ତ ହେବ ନାହିଁ ।
୨. ଏଥିରେ ରାଜ୍ୟ ଶ୍ରମ ସଂସ୍ଥାନ ଚୟନ କମିଟିର ବିଚାର ଓ ନିଷ୍ପତ୍ତି ହିଁ ଚୂଡ଼ାନ୍ତ ।

### ଯୋଗାଯୋଗ:

ରାଜ୍ୟ ଶ୍ରମ ସଂସ୍ଥାନ, ଜନପଥ, ଖାରବେଳ ନଗର, ଯୁନିଟ୍-୩, ଗୁରୁଦ୍ୱାର ପାର୍ଶ୍ୱ, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର- ୭୫୧୦୦୧

email: slibbsr@yahoo.co.in, sliorissa@gmail.com

Phone No. 0674- 2395275, FAX : 0674- 2535275

## FAQ ON ISSUES OF INTENDING EMIGRANTS

### How do I check if my R A is registered?

You can check the details of registered Recruiting Agents on eMigrate portal (<https://emigrate.gov.in>).

### I have been recruited directly by an employer in an ECR country. How do I apply for emigrant registration?

Initial registration has to be done in eMigrate system (<https://emigrate.gov.in/>) directly from any computer with internet facility.

### I have got an offer letter from a particular company abroad. How do I check if the offer letter is genuine?

Contact the foreign company directly to confirm if this letter is genuine.

### My recruiting agent has duped me and I have lost money. What should I do?

You can lodge a complaint in eMigrate system ([www.emigrate.gov.in](http://www.emigrate.gov.in)) or call up OWRC on 1800 41 3090 for further assistance.

### I want to lodge a complaint against a Recruiting Agent (RA). What are the steps to be followed?

The complaint can be registered on the online portal of the ministry eMigrate (<https://emigrate.gov.in/>) or sent to the Protector General of Emigrants, MOIA along with details for taking necessary action.

### Is there a walk in counseling/ Information centre or Call Centre where I can discuss my doubts?

To provide useful information, guidance and counselling to Indian workers who are employed abroad or want to seek jobs abroad and to address the other related issues faced by them, the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs has set up a call centre called the Overseas Workers Resource Centre (OWRC)

in Gurgaon, India. The OWRC operates round the clock 365 days a year to provide need based information in 11 languages (English, Hindi, Punjabi, Kannada, Malayalam, Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, Gujarati, Marathi, Odia) through the toll free number 1800113090 in India and through regular landline +91-124-2341002. You can seek information or register your complaints on the website of OWRC viz., [www.owrc](http://www.owrc).

in on issues like:

- authenticity of recruiting agents;
- emigration clearance procedure;
- procedure to go abroad;
- legal/financial assistance in problems cases of NRI Marriages;
- exploitation by recruiting agencies;
- withholding of passports and related documents by employers;
- visa status;
- transporting mortal remains;
- withholding and delaying of wages and other entitlements by foreign employers;
- problems of detention, removal and so on.

You can also seek information on OWRC's email [helpline@owrc.in](mailto:helpline@owrc.in)

The Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs has also setup Migrant Resource Centres (MRC) in India at Kochi, Hyderabad and Gurgaon where you can visit the centre for information regarding:

The procedure for legal migration and precautions to be taken while migrating, Status of Recruiting Agents and other service providers,

Kinds of difficulties that can be faced abroad by Indian workers interested in going abroad.



The address, telephone nos. and email addresses of these centres are as below:

Details

1. MRC Kochi  
MRC 3rd Floor Putherickal Building,  
Market Road, Emakulam Kerala-682035  
Phone 04842372040  
Email mrckochi@owrc.in
2. MRC Hyderabad  
ITI Campus, Mallepally,  
Hyderabad-50005  
Phone: 04023300686  
mrchyd@owrc.in
3. MRC Gurgaon  
Plot No. 218 2nd Floor,  
Udyog Vihar Phase IV,  
Gurgaon, Haryana 122016  
Phone 0124-4420215  
helpline@owrc.in

All the above Migrant Resource Centres are linked to the OWRC call centre. So you can avail the facility of getting all the information provided by OWRC and also register your grievances.

**What are the documents required for getting emigration clearance for ECR workers?**

All persons, having Emigration Check Required (ECR) endorsed passports and going to any of the 17 ECR countries for taking up employment require emigration clearance which can be obtained from POEs. Persons who do not have the ECR stamp on their passports do not require emigration clearance.

A person could take up employment in a foreign country either through a registered recruiting agent or directly through a foreign employer or a project exporter. The Protector of Emigrants, after satisfying himself about the accuracy of the particulars mentioned in the application and other documents submitted along with the application, grant emigration clearance

in the prescribed manner and form. In case there is any deficiency, the POE intimates the same by an order in writing to the applicant or, as the case may be, the Recruiting Agent or employer, through whom the applications have been made.

Information about the registered as well as active Recruiting Agents (RA) is available at the Ministry's website <http://www.emigrate.gov.in>

**Documents Required for Skilled/Semi-Skilled Workers (Individuals)**

Semi-skilled individuals who seek emigration clearance directly from the Protectors of Emigrants (and not through Recruiting Agents) are required to produce the following documents in original for scrutiny and return:

- Passport valid for a minimum period of six months with valid visa.
- Employment Contract from foreign employer.
- Challan towards deposit of prescribed fee.
- Insurance Policy under Pravasi Bhartiya Bima Yojana.

**Documents Required for Unskilled/Women Workers (Individuals)**

Unskilled workers and women (not below 30 years of age) seeking employment abroad shall continue to furnish (in original) the following documents at the time of obtaining emigration clearance:

- Passport valid for a minimum period of six months with valid Visa.
- Employment contract from the foreign employer duly attested by the Indian Embassy or Permission letter from the concerned Indian Embassy / Consulate.
- Challan towards deposits of prescribed fee.
- Insurance policy Under Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana (PBBY).

**Documents required for skilled/semi-**

skilled workers (Through Recruiting Agents) Recruiting agents who seek emigration clearance for skilled/semiskilled workers are required to produce:

- Passport of the worker valid for a minimum period of 6 months with valid visa.
- Original Employment contract, demand letter and power of attorney from the foreign employer.
- Deposit of prescribed fee.
- Insurance Policy- Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana.

Documents required for Unskilled/ Women Workers (Through Recruiting Agents)

In addition to the requirements for skilled/semiskilled workers, all employment documents mentioned in (ii) above have to be duly attested by the Indian Embassy.

- The specimen employment contract lays down the basic terms and conditions of employment including salary, accommodation, medical cover, transport, etc.
- In the case of vulnerable categories of workers i.e. unskilled Labor and **Where are the POE offices located?**

There are 10 Protector of Emigrants (POE) offices across India. The details are as below:

Sr. No.	Location	Address	Contact Number
1	Mumbai	Building "E" Khira Nagar, S.V. Road, Santacruz (West) Mumbai-400 054	022-2614 7393
2	Kolkatta	Room No. 18, A Wing, MSO Building, 3rd Floor, DF Block, Salt Lake, Kolkatta-700064	033-2334 3407
3	Chennai	Tamil Nadu Housing Board Complex, Ashok Nagar, Chennai-600 083	044-24891337
4	Delhi	Jaisalmar House, Canteen Block, Man Singh Road, New Delhi	011-23382472
5	Kochi	Mercy Estate, 4th Floor, Ravi Puram, MG Road, Cochin-682015	0484-2360187
6	Hyderabad	8th Floor, Chandra Vihar Complex, Opp. Exhibition Ground, M.J. Road, Hyderabad	040-24652557
7	Thiruvananthapuram	Suganth, 24/846 (I), Thycaud, Trivandrum-695 014	0471-2324835
8	Chandigarh	Kendriya Sadan, 5th Block, Ground Floor, 9Sector-9-A, Chandigarh	0172-2741790
9	Jaipur	Hall No. 3, RIICO CFC Building, Sitapura Industrial Area Sitapura, Jaipur-302022	0141-2771528
10	Rae Bareli	1st Floor, Rudra Plaza, Hospital Road, Rae Bareli	0535-2211122

housemaids/domestic workers, in respect of six countries viz. Yemen, Lebanon, Libya, Jordan, Sudan, and Kuwait, these employment documents are required to be attested by the concerned Indian Embassy / Consulate (s).

Emigration clearance to women to work abroad as housemaids/domestic servants etc.

On the recommendations of the National Commission for Women, a ban was imposed on grant of emigration clearance to women below the age of thirty (30) years for all kind of employment in any ECR country.

- Such women who have come on leave to India and wish to go back to the same foreign employer are not subject to the said ban and the POEs have been empowered to grant a 'no objection certificate' to such women applicants to facilitate clearance by Immigration Authorities at the International Airports in India.
- The said ban is not applicable to (i) women holding passports without ECR (Emigration Check Required) endorsement; and (ii) women going to any of the ECNR countries.

**I have ECR stamp on my passport and have got a job offer in UAE. How do I register myself in the e-Migrate system?**

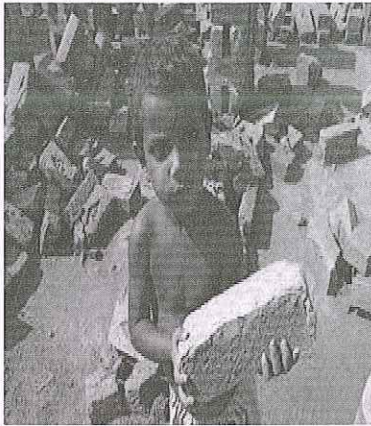
Initial registration has to be done in the emigrate system (<http://www.emigrate.gov.in>) directly from any computer with internet facility.

**Do non ECR category workers need to register in the e-Migrate system? - No**

**What is meant by notified countries?**

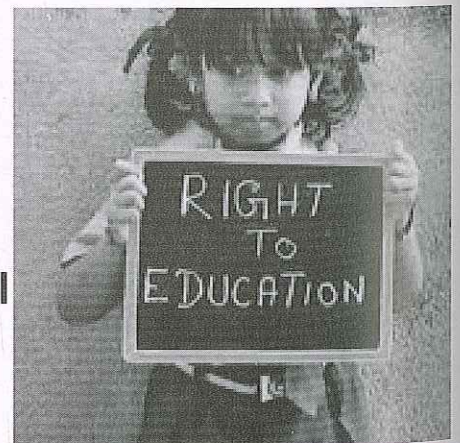
Emigration Act, 1983 provides that no citizen of India shall migrate unless he obtains emigration clearance from Protector of Emigrants. Similarly, it has been recognized that certain countries (currently 18) do not have strict laws regulating the entry and employment of foreign nationals. They also do not provide avenues for

grievance redressal. Thus they have been categorized as Emigration Check Required (ECR) countries. Hence, all persons, having ECR endorsed passports and going to any of the 17 ECR countries for taking up employment require emigration clearance. However, ECR passport holders going to any ECR country for purposes other than employment do not require emigration clearance. No specific mention of ECNR is made on the passports and the ones not endorsed as ECR, automatically belong to ECNR category. The 18 ECR countries are: Afghanistan, Bahrain, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Qwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Oman, Qatar, South Sudan, North Sudan, Syria, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.



ଶିଶୁ ସିନା ଏକ କର୍ମଳ କଢ଼ି,  
ଅନ୍ଧ ବୟସେ କାମ ନ କରାଇ ।

ତା ହାତେ ଦିଅ ସିଲଟ ଖଢ଼ି,  
ନ ହେଲେ ସେ ପଢ଼ିବ ଅକାଳେ ଝଢ଼ି ॥



# କୁଳି ଇତିହାସ ପୃଷ୍ଠାରୁ ଚେନାଏ

## ଡକ୍କର ସୌରାବଂଧୁ କର

ଜାହାଜ ସମୁଦ୍ର କୁଳରେ ଲାଗିଲା । ଉଷୁକତାର ସହିତ ଚାହିଁଥିଲେ କିଛି ଗୋରା ଲୋକ । ବହୁଦୂରରୁ ପକ୍ଷୀ ପରି ଦେଖାଯାଉଥିବା ଜାହାଜଟି ଯେତେବେଳେ ଇତିଂଚନ ବନ୍ଦରରେ ଲାଗିଲା, ଉପସ୍ଥିତ ଗୋରା ଲୋକମାନେ କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା ହେଲେ, ‘ଏହା କେଉଁଠୁ ଆସିଲା ?’ ଜାହାଜ ଦୂରରେ ଲଙ୍ଗର ପକାଇଲା । କୁଳକୁ ଆଣିବା ପାଇଁ ଡଙ୍ଗା ଲାଗିଲା । ଯାତ୍ରୀ ମାନେ ଓହ୍ଲାଇବେ । ଦୂରରୁ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ବେଶ ପୋଷାକ ବଡ଼ ବିଚିତ୍ର ଦେଖାଯାଉଥିଲା । ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ଲମ୍ବ ଲମ୍ବ ଓଢ଼ଣା । ଭାଷା କେହି ବୁଝିପାରୁନଥିଲେ ।

ଗୋରା ମାନେ ବିଚିତ୍ର ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖୁଥିଲେ ।

ସରକାରୀ ଲୋକ ସେଠାରେ ଉପସ୍ଥିତ ଥିଲେ । କେହି ଜଣେ କହିଲା, ‘ଏହି ଜାହାଜର ନାମ ଚୁରୋ ।’

‘ହଁ, ହଁ, ଲେଖା ହୋଇଛି ଏହା ମାତ୍ରାସରୁ ଆସିଛି ।’

‘ମାତ୍ରାସରୁ ?’

‘ହଁ, ଏଜେଣ୍ଟ ଠାରୁ ଖବର ଆସିଥିଲା ଭାରତରୁ ଚୁରୋ ଜାହାଜରେ କୁଳି ମାନଙ୍କୁ ପଠାଯାଉଛି ।’

‘ଯାହା ହେଉ ଭଲ ହେଲା, କାମ ଚଳିବ । ଏଇ ଲୋକମାନେ ସ୍ଥାନୀୟ ଶ୍ରେତ କୁଳି ମାନଙ୍କଠାରୁ ଭଲ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରିବେ ଓ କଥାମାନି କାମ କରିବେ ।’

‘ହଁ, ନୂଆ ଜାଗା, ଭରିବେ ।’

‘ଭରିବେନି ଯଦି ସମୁଦ୍ରରେ ଫିଙ୍ଗି ଦିଆଯିବ ।’

‘ପହଁରି ପହଁରି ଘରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଯିବେ ନଚେତ୍ ଏକାଥରେ ଉପରକୁ ।’

ସମସ୍ତେ ହସିବାକୁ ଲାଗିଲେ, ହୋ ହୋ ହୋଇ ।

ସେଦିନ ଥିଲା ୧୮୭୦ମସିହା ଅକ୍ଟୋବର ୧୫ତାରିଖ ଶୁକ୍ରବାର ।

ଜାହାଜରୁ ଓହ୍ଲାଇବାକୁ ଥିବା ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କ ମନରେ ଆଶଙ୍କା ଭର୍ତ୍ତି ହୋଇଯାଇଥିଲା । ସତରେ କ’ଣ ସେମାନେ ଆଉ ଫେରିବେ ନିଜ ଦେଶକୁ ? କିମ୍ବା ଏଇ ମାଟିରେ ମରିଯିବେ ?

ଜାହାଜ ବନ୍ଦରରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଥିଲା । କୁଳିମାନଙ୍କୁ ଆଣିଥିବା ନେଟାଲି ଏଜେଣ୍ଟ ଏତମଣ୍ଡ ସେଠାରେ ଉପସ୍ଥିତ ନଥିଲା ।

ସରକାରୀ ଲୋକମାନେ ଭାବି ପାରୁ ନ ଥିଲେ ସେମାନେ କ’ଣ କରିବେ ?

ସବୁ କାଗଜପତ୍ର ତ ଏତମଣ୍ଡ ପାଖରେ ।

ଏ ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖି ଗୋରା ମାନଙ୍କ ମନରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଭୟ ସଂଚାର ହୋଇଯାଇଥିଲା ।

କ’ଣ ଯେ ଧରି ଏ ଲୋକେ ନ ଆସିଥିବେ କିଏ ଜାଣେ ? ମୃତ୍ୟୁ, ବେମାରୀ, ଜୀବାଣୁ ?

ନୂଆ ଲୋକ, ନୂଆ ରୋଗ ।

ଫିଲିପ ଏଲନ୍ କେବଳ ସେଠାରେ ଉପସ୍ଥିତ ଥିଲା ।

ଏଲନ୍ ଗୋରା ଥିଲା କିନ୍ତୁ ସରକାର ଉପରେ ତା’ର କାଟତି ଥିଲା ।

ସେ ଏଲୋକମାନଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖି କ’ଣ କରିବ, ପ୍ରଥମେ ମନେ ମନେ ବିଚାର କଲା ।

ଏଇମିତି ସମୟରେ ଏତମଣ୍ଡ ନରହିବାଟା ତାକୁ ଭଲ ଲାଗୁନଥିଲା ।

ଏ ଲୋକମାନେ ରହିବେ କେଉଁଠି ? ଯିବେ କୁଆଡ଼େ ?

ସେ ବନ୍ଦର ନିକଟର ଖାଲି ସ୍ଥାନରେ ଅସ୍ଥାୟୀ ଶିବିର ତିଆରି କରିବାର ଯୋଜନା ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ କଲା । ଜାହାଜରୁ ଓହ୍ଲାଇବା ପରେ ଏଇ ଅସ୍ଥାୟୀ ଶିବିରରେ ରହିବେ । ଗୋରା ଜମି ମାଲିକମାନେ ଆସି କିଣାକିଣି କରି ଏହି କୁଳିମାନଙ୍କୁ କ୍ରୀତଦାସ ଭାବେ କିଣି ନେବେ । ସେ ଯାଏଁ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଏଇଠି ରହିବାକୁ ହେବ ।

ଏଲନ୍ ଗୋଟେ ଲୋକକୁ ଏତମଣ୍ଡକୁ ଡାକିବାକୁ ପଠାଇ ଦେଲା ।

ଏତମଣ୍ଡ ରହୁଥିଲା ପିଟରମେରିଟଜ୍‌ବର୍ଗରେ । ନୋଟାଲ ର ରାଜଧାନୀ ପିଟରମେରିଟଜ୍‌ବର୍ଗ ।

ଡର୍ବୀନ ଓ ମେରିଟଜ୍‌ବର୍ଗ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ସରୁରୀ ଅଣି ମାଇଲ ବ୍ୟବଧାନ । ଟ୍ରେନ ଗାଡ଼ିର ବେଶୀ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ନାହିଁ । ନିଜ ଘୋଡ଼ା ଗାଡ଼ିରେ ତାକୁ ଆସିବାକୁ ହେବ ।

ଏତମଣ୍ଡ ଜାଣିଥିଲା ଚୁରୋ ଜାହାଜ ଏତେ ଶୀଘ୍ର ଆସି ପହଞ୍ଚିବ ନାହିଁ ନଚେତ୍ ସେ ତ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରି ରହିଥାନ୍ତା ।

କିନ୍ତୁ ଚୁରୋ ଆସି ପହଞ୍ଚିଗଲାଣି, ଏ ଖବର ପାଇ ଏତମଣ୍ଡ ପୁରାପୁରି ହତବତେଜ ଗଲା ।

ତା ଘୋଡାଗାଡ଼ିରେ ସେ ଖୁବ୍ ଜୋରରେ ଆସିବାକୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କଲା । ହୁଷ୍ପୁଷ୍ପ ଘୋଡା ଦୌଡ଼ିବାକୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କଲା ।

କିନ୍ତୁ ବାଟ କ’ଣ କମ୍ କି ? ସମୟ ତ ଲାଗିବ । ରାସ୍ତାରେ ପୁଣି ଖାଇବା ପିଇବା ପାଇଁ ବିଶ୍ରାମ । ବାଟରେ ଆସିବା ବେଳେ ଏତମଣ୍ଡ କୁ ଦୁଇଟି କଥା ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଚିନ୍ତିତ୍ କରି ପକାଇଥିଲା । ଏତେ ସଂଖ୍ୟକ ଅଶ୍ୱେତ କୁଲି ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଜାହାଜରୁ ଓହ୍ଲାଇବାକୁ ହେବ, ଜଣା ନାହିଁ କେମିତି ସେମାନେ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରିବେ ? ଏତେ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ନାମ କେମିତି ମନେ ରଖାଯାଇପାରିବ ? ସେମାନେ କ’ଣ ଖାଉଥିବେ ? ସେମାନଙ୍କର କଥା କେମିତି ବୁଝାପଡ଼ିବ ? କିଏ ଜାଣେ କେଉଁ ଭାଷାରେ ସେମାନେ କଥା ହେଉଥିବେ ? ଏକା ଏକା ସେ କେମିତି ଏମାନଙ୍କୁ ସମ୍ବଳିବ ? ତା’ ପାଖରେ ଷ୍ଟାଫ୍ ନାହାନ୍ତି, ଅଫିସ ନାହିଁ, କୌଣସି ଆସବାବପତ୍ର ନାହିଁ । ଏତେ ଲୋକଙ୍କର ପରିଚୟ ଲେଖିବା ମଧ୍ୟ ମୁଷ୍କିଲ । ସେମାନଙ୍କର ନାଁ, ଗାଁ, ଠିକଣା ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ନ ଲେଖି ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଚିହ୍ନିବା ବଡ଼ କଷ୍ଟକର ବ୍ୟାପାର ହେବ ନାହିଁକି ? ତା’ ପାଖରେ କେବଳ ସେମାନଙ୍କର କୁଲି ଲାଇସେନ୍ସ ବ୍ୟତୀତ ଅନ୍ୟ କିଛି ନାହିଁ । ସେଥିରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଆଜୁଠି ଚିହ୍ନ । କେତେକ କୁଲିମାନଙ୍କର ଦସ୍ତଖତ ରହିଛି, ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଲେଖା ଅତି ବିଚିତ୍ର ।

ଏଇମିତି ନାନାକଥା ଚିନ୍ତା କରି ଏତମଣ୍ଡ ବନ୍ଦର ନିକଟରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଲା । ଏଇନ ସେଠାରେ ଉପସ୍ଥିତ ଥିଲା । ଏତମଣ୍ଡକୁ ଦେଖିବା ମାତ୍ରେ ସେ କହିଲା, ‘ହ୍ୟାଲୋ ଏତମଣ୍ଡ ! ତୁମେ ଆସିବାରେ ଏତେ ଡେରି କରିଦେଲ । ସେହି ଲୋକମାନେ ଏଯାଏଁ ଜାହାଜରେ ରହିଛନ୍ତି । ମଝିରେ ମଝିରେ ବଡ଼ ପାଟିରେ ଚିକ୍କାର କରୁଛନ୍ତି । ମୁଁ ତ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ସଂପର୍କରେ କିଛି ହେଲେ ଜାଣିନି ।’

‘ମୁଁ ମଧ୍ୟ କଣ ଜାଣିଛି ଯେ ? ମୋ ପାଖରେ ସେମାନଙ୍କର କୁଲି ଲାଇସେନ୍ସ ବ୍ୟତୀତ ଅନ୍ୟ କିଛି ନାହିଁ ।’

‘ଜାହାଜ ପ୍ରଥମେ କ୍ୱାଇନଟାଇନ ଯିବ, ତେବେ ଯାଇ ସେମାନେ ଓହ୍ଲାଇ ପାରିବେ ।’

‘ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ବିଭାଗର ଲୋକମାନେ କଣ ଏ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଆସିନାହାନ୍ତି ?’

‘ସେମାନେ ତ କାଲିଠାରୁ ଏଠାରେ ଜଗି ରହିଛନ୍ତି, ଜଣେ ହେଲେ କାହାରିକୁ ଓହ୍ଲାଇବାକୁ ଦେଉନାହାନ୍ତି ?’

‘ହଁ, ଜାହାଜରୁ ଓହ୍ଲାଇବାବେଳେ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ବିଭାଗର ସାର୍ଟିଫିକେଟ୍ ଲୋଡା ।’

କିନ୍ତୁ ପ୍ରଥମେ ତ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଓହ୍ଲାଇବାକୁ ହେବ; ତେବେ ସିନା ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଯାଞ୍ଚ ହେବ । କିଏ ଜାଣେ କେତେ ଲୋକ ଜାହାଜ ଭିତରେ ଅଛନ୍ତି ? କେଉଁ ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ ଅଛନ୍ତି ? ମୋ ମତରେ ପ୍ରଥମେ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଜାହାଜରୁ ସ୍ଥଳଭାଗକୁ ଆଣିବା ଦରକାର ।

ମୋ ପାଖରେ ଯେଉଁ ସଂଖ୍ୟା ରହିଛି ଏହା କୁଲିମାନଙ୍କର ଲାଇସେନ୍ସକୁ ନେଇ ତିନିଶ ବୟାଳିଶି ଲୋକଙ୍କର କୁଲି ଲାଇସେନ୍ସ ରହିଛି । ହୁଏତ ରାସ୍ତାରେ କେହି ମରିଯାଇଥିବେ ସେ କଥା କିଏ ଜାଣେ । ମୁଁ ଶୁଣିଛି ଏ ଲୋକମାନେ ଯେତେବେଳେ ମରନ୍ତି, ମୂଷାଙ୍କ ପରି ପଲ ପଲ ମରନ୍ତି ।

ଏଇନ ଓ ଏତମଣ୍ଡ ପରସ୍ପର ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଏମିତି କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା କରି ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ବିଭାଗର ଅଧିକାରୀ ମାନଙ୍କ ପାଖକୁ ଗଲେ । ସେମାନଙ୍କ ବିନା ଅନୁମତିରେ ଜାହାଜରୁ ଲୋକ ଆସି ପାରିବେ ନାହିଁ । ଏତମଣ୍ଡ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ନିକଟରେ କାକୁଡ଼ିମିନତି କରି କହିଲା, ‘କେତେ କଷ୍ଟରେ ମୁଁ ଏହି କୁଲିମାନଙ୍କୁ ଏଠାକୁ ଆଣିବାର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରିଛି । ଆମ ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କର ଚାଷବାସ, ଘରକାମ କରିବାକୁ ଲୋକର ଘୋର ଅଭାବ । ଯାତ୍ରୀ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରଥମେ ଓହ୍ଲାଇବାର ଅନୁମତି ଦିଅନ୍ତୁ । ତା’ପରେ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ଯାଞ୍ଚ କରିବେ । ଜାହାଜରେ ଖାଦ୍ୟ ସରିଗଲାଣି । ସେମାନେ ନ ଓହ୍ଲାଇଲେ ପୋକ ମାଛି ପରି ମରିଯିବେ ।’

ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ବିଭାଗ ଚୁରୋ ଜାହାଜରେ ଥିବା ଯାତ୍ରୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ଓହ୍ଲାଇ ଦେବାର ଅନୁମତି ଦେଲେ । ଗୋଟିଏ ହେଲେ ଯାତ୍ରୀ ଇଆଡେ ସିଆଡେ ଯିବେନି ବୋଲି ଇତମଣ୍ଡ ପ୍ରତିଶ୍ରୁତି ଦେଲା । ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର ଯାଞ୍ଚ ହେବା ପରେ ଏତମଣ୍ଡ ସେହି ଯାତ୍ରୀ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ନେବ । ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ବିଭାଗର ସମସ୍ତ ସର୍ଜ୍ସ ଏତମଣ୍ଡ ସ୍ୱୀକାର କରିଥିଲା । ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ବିଭାଗ ସମ୍ମତି ଦେବା ପରେ ଏତମଣ୍ଡ କୁଳରୁ ଜାହାଜ ପାଖକୁ ନାଆ ପଠାଇଲା । ନାଆ ସବୁ ଜାହାଜ ତଳେ ଲାଗିଲା । ଜାହାଜରୁ ନାଆ ଉପରକୁ ଦଉଡ଼ି ଫିଙ୍ଗାଗଲା । ପାଣି ନଥାଇ ଯଦି ମାଟି ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତା, ତେବେ ପଟା ଖୋଲି ଦିଆଯାଇଥାନ୍ତା । ଦଉଡ଼ିକୁ ଧରି ଯାତ୍ରୀମାନେ ତଙ୍ଗାକୁ ଆସିବେ । ଛୋଟ ପିଲା, ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଲୋକ ଓ ତା ସହିତ ପୁରୁଷମାନେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଥିଲେ । ଦଉଡ଼ି ସାହାଯ୍ୟରେ ତଙ୍ଗାକୁ ଓହ୍ଲାଇବା କଥା ଯେତେବେଳେ ସେହି ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କୁ କୁହାଗଲା, ସେମାନେ କାନ୍ଦିବାକୁ ଲାଗିଲେ । ଭୋ ଭୋ ରତ୍ତି ପକାଇଲେ । ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଲାଗିଲା ଯେପରି ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ସମୁଦ୍ରରେ ବୁଡ଼ି ମରିବାର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରାଯାଇଛି । ସେମାନେ ଏମିତି ଅସ୍ତବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହୋଇ କାନ୍ଦିଲେ ଯେ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ବୁଝାଇବା କଷ୍ଟକର ହୋଇପଡ଼ିଲା ।

ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଲୋକମାନେ କମରରେ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ବାନ୍ଧି ଦଉଡ଼ିରେ ଲଟକି ରହିଥିଲେ । ପୁରୁଷମାନେ ବଡ଼ ପିଲାଙ୍କୁ ବାନ୍ଧି ଧରିଥିଲେ ।

ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଲାଗୁଥିଲା ଦଉଡ଼ି ଛାଡ଼ି ଦେବା ମାତ୍ରେ ସେମାନେ ସମୁଦ୍ରରେ ଡୁବି ଯିବେ । ଦଉଡ଼ିରେ ଓହ୍ଲାଇବାବେଳେ ସେମାନେ ବିକଟାଳ ଶବ୍ଦ କରୁଥିଲେ । ସମଗ୍ର ବାତାବରଣ ଯେମିତି ଲୁହର ସମୁଦ୍ର ପାଲଟିଯାଇଥିଲା । ଯେମିତି ଲାଗୁଥିଲା ସମୁଦ୍ର ପାଣିଠାରୁ ଏହି ଲୁହର ପାଣି ଅଧିକ । କୁଳରେ ଛିଡ଼ା ହୋଇଥିବା ଲୋକମାନେ ଏହାକୁ ବେଶ୍ ଉପଭୋଗ କରୁଥିଲେ ଏବଂ ନାଟକର ରିହଲସିଅଲ ହେଉଛି ବୋଲି ତାଙ୍କୁ ଲାଗୁଥିଲା । ଭଲରେ ଭଲରେ ଓହ୍ଲାଇଥିବା ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଲୋକ ଓ ପିଲାମାନେ ଭୟରେ ଥରୁଥିଲେ । ସେମାନେ ପରସ୍ପରକୁ ଜାଣିବାପାଇଁ କାନ୍ଦୁଥିଲେ । ନିଜ ଭିତରେ ଯୈର୍ଯ୍ୟ ମଧ୍ୟ ରଖୁଥିଲେ ।

ନୌକାଗୁଡ଼ିକ କୁଳରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିବା ପରେ ବିଚିତ୍ର ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ଥିଲା । ଅନେକ ଗୋରା ଲୋକ ଓ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଶ୍ଵେତ କୁଲି କୁଳରେ ଉପସ୍ଥିତ ରହି କୌତୁହଳର ସହିତ ଏହି ନୌକାମାନଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖୁଥିଲେ । ନୌକା ମାନଙ୍କରୁ ବିଚିତ୍ର ବିଚିତ୍ର ଜନ୍ତୁମାନେ ବାହାରିବେ, ଏହା ସେମାନେ ଜହନା କରିଚାଲିଥିଲେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ନୌକାରୁ ଯେଉଁମାନେ ଓହ୍ଲାଇଲେ, ସେମାନେ ଏମାନଙ୍କ ପରି ମଣିଷ ଥିଲେ, ଜନ୍ତୁ ନଥିଲେ ।

ତାଙ୍କରୀୟାଞ୍ଚ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହେଲା । ଜଣକ ପରେ ଜଣେ । ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଏଲନ୍ ଦ୍ଵାରା ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ହୋଇଥିବା ଅସ୍ତ୍ରାୟୀ ଶିବିରରେ ରଖାଗଲା । ଛୋଟ ବଡ଼ ଗୋରା ଜମି ମାଲିକ ଏକାଠି ଦଳ ବାନ୍ଧି କୁଲି ମାନଙ୍କୁ ପସନ୍ଦ କରି କିଣିନେବାକୁ ସେଠାରେ ଆସି ପହଞ୍ଚିଲେ । ପଶୁ ମେଳା ମାନଙ୍କରେ ମଣିଷମାନେ ଯେପରି ହାତୀ, ଘୋଡ଼ା, ଓଟ, ଦୁହାଁଳିଆ ପଶୁମାନଙ୍କୁ ପସନ୍ଦ କରି କିଣନ୍ତି ସେଇମିତି ଆରମ୍ଭ ହୋଇଗଲା ଏଇ ମଣିଷ କୁଲି ମାନଙ୍କର କିଣା ବିକା ।

ଦିନେ ଗୋଟିଏ ଗୋରା ଜମି ମାଲିକ ଆସି ପହଞ୍ଚିଲା । ତା ସହିତ ଥିଲା ଏଜେଣ୍ଟ । ସେ ପ୍ରଥମେ ଦେବାରାମ କୁଲିକୁ ଦେଖିଲା । ଦେବାରାମ ଥିଲା ବେଶ୍ ହୁଷ୍ଟପୁଷ୍ଟ ଓ ବଳିଷ୍ଠ । ଉଚ୍ଚତା ଟିକିଏ ଛୋଟ ଥିଲା । ସେହି ଗୋରା ଜମି ମାଲିକର ନାଁ ଥିଲା ମିଷ୍ଟର କ୍ରାମ୍ପଟନ । ଏଜେଣ୍ଟର ଲୋକ ଦେବାରାମର ଏମିତି ପ୍ରଶଂସା କରୁଥିଲା ଯେପରି କୌଣସି ପଶୁକୁ ବିକ୍ରୀ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ଦେଖାଉଛି । ସାହେବ ଦେଖନ୍ତୁ, ଏହାର ଗୋଡ଼ ଗୁଡ଼ିକ କେତେ ମଜଭୁତ । ସେ ଗୋଟେ ମହଣ ବୋଝ ନେଇ ମିଲକୁ ଯାଇପାରେ । ଏହାର ଅଷ୍ଟା ମୋଟା, କାନ୍ଧ ଚଉଡ଼ା, ବାହୁ ଦୁଇଟି ପହିଲମାନଙ୍କ ପରି । ଏମିତି ଚାଲାକ ଚତୁର ଯେ ନକହିଲେ ଭଲ ।

ମିଷ୍ଟର କ୍ରାମ୍ପଟନ ଦେବାରାମକୁ ଦୌଡ଼ିବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛିତ କଲେ । ଯେ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ କ୍ରାମ୍ପଟନ ତାକୁ ଫେରିବା ପାଇଁ ନ କହିଛନ୍ତି ସେ ଦୌଡ଼ି ଚାଲିଲା । ନିଃଶ୍ଵାସ ଧଇଁସଇଁ ହୋଇଗଲା । ଝାଳରେ କୁଡୁକୁଡୁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ତାର ଗୋଡ଼ ଦୁଇଟି ଆଦୋ ବେତଙ୍ଗା ଜଙ୍ଗରେ ପଡ଼ିଲା ନାହିଁ ।

ମିଷ୍ଟର କ୍ରାମ୍ପଟନ ପିଲାଙ୍କ ବିଷୟରେ ପଚାରିଲା, ‘ଏମାନଙ୍କର ଓଜନ କେତେ ?’

‘କେବେ ମାପି ନାହୁଁ ।’

କ୍ରାମ୍ପଟନ ଗୋଟେ ଗୋଟେ ପିଲାଙ୍କୁ ଟେକିକରି ଦେଖିଲା । ଓଜନିଆ ବା ହାଲୁକା । ଉଃ ଆଃ କରୁନାହାନ୍ତି ତ ?

‘ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ଲୋକଙ୍କର ଖାଇବା କେତେ ?’

ଦେବାରାମ ଧୀରେ ଧୀରେ କହିଲା, ‘କେତେ ଖାଇବେ ଖାଇଲେ ସିନା ଜଣା ପଡ଼ିବ’

ଏଜେଣ୍ଟର ଲୋକ ଗୋରା ସାହେବଙ୍କୁ ବୁଝାଇ ଦେଲା । ସେ ହସିଲା । ପୁଣି କହିଲା, ‘ପିଲାଙ୍କର ଓଜନ ବେଶ୍ ଅଛି । ଖାଇବା ମଧ୍ୟ ବହୁତ ଥିବ ।’

“ନାଁ, ସାହେବ, ଗରିବ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କର ହାତ ଶକ୍ତ । ନଚେତ୍ ବଞ୍ଚିବେ କିପରି ?”

“ଏମାନଙ୍କର ଖାଇବା ପାଇଁ ଭାତ ଦରକାର ! ପାଞ୍ଚଜଣ ଥରକେ କେତେ ଭାତ ଖାଇବେ ?”

ଦେବାରାମ ଅତି କାକୁଡ଼ି ମିନତି କରି କହିଲା, ‘ଏଲିଜାବେଥ ଏବେ ତ ମା କ୍ଷିର ପିଉଛି । ଏମିତି ଏହି ଛୋଟ ଛୁଆ ମାନେ କେତେ ଖାଇବେ ?’

“ଆଜି ଛୁଆ ଅଛନ୍ତି, ବର୍ଷକ ପରେ ସେମାନେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଏତେ ଖାଇବେ ଯେତେ ତୁମେ ଖାଉଛ ।

କ୍ରାମ୍ପଟନ ହସି ପକାଇଲା ।

କ୍ରାମ୍ପଟନ ସମଗ୍ର ପରିବାରକୁ ତେୟାଲିଶ ପାଉଣ୍ଡ ଅଠାଇଶ ଶିଲିଂ ଦେଇ କିଣି ନେଲା । ଦେବାରାମ ଖୁସି ମନରେ ଏହାକୁ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରି ମିଷ୍ଟର କ୍ରାମ୍ପଟନଙ୍କର କିଣା କୁଲି ହୋଇଗଲା ପରିବାର ସହିତ ।

ଦେବାରାମ ଯେଉଁ ଘରେ ରହିଲା ସେ ଥିଲା ଛାତ ଥିବା ବାରାକ୍ କୁଲି ଲାଇନ୍ରେ । ସବୁ କୁଲି ସେଇଠି ରହୁଥିଲେ ।

ଦେବାରାମ, ତା ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ନଗିୟା ଓ ତିନି ଗୋଟି ଛୁଆ ଯେଉଁ ଘରେ ରହୁଥିଲେ, ତୁଲି ଜଳିବା ମାତ୍ରେ ଧୁଆଁ ଘର ସାରା ଭର୍ତ୍ତି ହୋଇଯାଉଥିଲା ସେଇଠି ଶୋଇବା, ଖାଇବା, ଗାଧୋଇବା, ପରିସ୍ରା କରିବା ।

ଚାରିଆଡ଼େ ଦୁର୍ଗନ୍ଧ, ମଶା ଭଣ ଭଣ ।

ଧିରେ ଧିରେ ଅଭ୍ୟାସରେ ପଡ଼ିଗଲା । ମଶା ଓ ଦୁର୍ଗନ୍ଧ ନଥିଲେ ଘର ପରି ଲାଗୁ ନ ଥିଲା ।

ଦେବାରାମ ଓ ତା’ ପରିବାର ବିଲରେ ବାର ଘଣ୍ଟା କାମ କରୁଥିଲେ । ନିଜର ଭାଗ୍ୟକୁ ନିନ୍ଦା କରୁଥିଲେ ।

ଭଗବାନଙ୍କର ଇଚ୍ଛା କହି ଦିନ କାରୁଥିଲେ ।

ଦକ୍ଷିଣ ଆଫ୍ରିକାରେ ଗୋଟିକ ପରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ଜାହାଜରେ ଆସିଥିବା ଏଇମିତି ହଜାର ହଜାର କୁଲିଙ୍କର ଜୀବନ ପଥର ତଳେ ଚାପି ହୋଇଗଲା ।

ଆଇନ ଜାଲରେ ସେମାନେ ଛନ୍ଦି ହୋଇ ପଶୁ ପରି ବଞ୍ଚୁଥିଲେ, ପଶୁ ପରି ମରୁଥିଲେ । ଆହା କରିବାକୁ କେହି ନ ଥିଲେ । ସାହା ଭରସା କେହି ନ ଥିଲେ । ଦିନ ରାତି ଗଧ ପରି ଖଟଣି, ଘୋଡ଼ା ଚାରୁକରେ ମାଡ଼, ଅପରିଷ୍କାର ବସତି ମଧ୍ୟରେ ବଞ୍ଚିବା ଯେପରି ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଦେହସୁହା ହୋଇଗଲା । ସେଠାରୁ ପଳାଇ ଯିବାର ଯୁ ନଥିଲା । ପାଟି କରିବାର ଶକ୍ତି ନଥିଲା ।

ସେଇଠି କିଛି ବର୍ଷ ପରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଲେ ବାରିଷର ମୋହନ ଦାସ କରମ ଚାନ୍ଦ ଗାନ୍ଧୀ ।

ତାଙ୍କର ପରିଚିତି ହେଲା କୁଲି ବାରିଷର । ବାରିଷର ହେଲେ କ'ଣ ହେବ ତାଙ୍କ ଉପରେ କୁଲି ପରି ବ୍ୟବହାର କରାଗଲା ।

ମୋହନ ଦାସ ସବୁ ସହିଗଲେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ତାଙ୍କର ଅନ୍ତରାତ୍ମା ବିଦ୍ରୋହ କରିବାକୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କଲା । ମଣିଷର ମଣିଷ ଉପରେ ଅତ୍ୟାଚାର ବିରୁଦ୍ଧରେ ସ୍ଵର ଉତ୍ତୋଳନ କରିବାକୁ ସେ ସଂକଳ୍ପ କଲେ । କୁଲି ମାନଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଆତ୍ମ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟୟ ଜାଗ୍ରତ କରିବାକୁ ସେ ଆରମ୍ଭ କଲେ ସତ୍ୟ ଓ ଅହିଂସାର ପ୍ରୟୋଗ ।

ସମୟ କ୍ରମେ ରଥ ଚକ ଲେଉଟିଗଲା । ସ୍ଵାଧୀନତାର ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଦକ୍ଷିଣ ଆଫ୍ରିକାର ସମୁଦ୍ର ଉପରେ ଉଦିତ ହେଲେ । କୁଲି ମାନଙ୍କର ବିଜୟ ହେଲା । ତାହା ହୋଇଗଲା ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନର ଇତିହାସ । କୁଲି ମାନଙ୍କର ସ୍ଵାଧୀନତାର ଇତିହାସ । ଦେବାରାମ ପରି କୁଲି ମାନଙ୍କର ବଞ୍ଚିବାର ଇତିହାସ ।

ଗଜପତିନଗର

ଭୁବନେଶ୍ଵର-୭୫୧୦୦୫

# STOP CHILD LABOUR

## ଶିଶୁ ଶ୍ରମିକ ପ୍ରଥା ଏକ ସାମାଜିକ କଳଙ୍କ

- ୧୪ ବର୍ଷରୁ କମ୍ ବୟସର ଶିଶୁଙ୍କୁ ବିପଦପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟରେ ନିୟୋଜିତ କରିବା ଏକ ଧର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ଅପରାଧ ।
- ଏଥିପାଇଁ ୨ ବର୍ଷ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଜେଲଦଣ୍ଡ ଏବଂ ୨୦ ହଜାର ଟଙ୍କାରୁ ୫୦ ହଜାର ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଜୋରିମାନା ହୋଇପାରେ ।
- ଆସନ୍ତୁ ମିଳିମିଶି ଶିଶୁ ଶ୍ରମିକ ପ୍ରଥାକୁ ବନ୍ଦ କରିବା ।

# ରତ୍ନକାଳୀନ ଆବାସିକ ଛାତ୍ରାବାସ ଏବଂ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ

ଅଜୟ କୁମାର ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ

ଆମ ରାଜ୍ୟର ଶ୍ରମିକ ନିଜେ ନିଜେ କିମ୍ବା କୌଣସି ମଧ୍ୟସ୍ଥି, ଠିକାଦାର, ଏଜେଣ୍ଟମାନଙ୍କ ଜରିଆରେ ଅନ୍ୟ ରାଜ୍ୟକୁ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ଯାଇଥାନ୍ତି । କେତେକ ଘରୋଇ ପରିସ୍ଥିତିର ବାଧ୍ୟବାଧକତା, ଆର୍ଥିକ ଅନାଚନ ଏବଂ ଅନ୍ୟ କେତେକ ଅନ୍ୟ ରାଜ୍ୟରେ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ରାହିଦା ଏହି ପ୍ରବାସର ମୁଖ୍ୟ କାରଣ ଅଟେ । ଉପକୂଳ ଅଂଚଳରେ ଶ୍ରମିକମାନେ ଏକାକୀ ଏବଂ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟାୟ ଅଂଚଳର ଶ୍ରମିକମାନେ ସପରିବାର ପ୍ରବାସ କରିବାକୁ ପସନ୍ଦ କରିଥାନ୍ତି । ପର୍ଯ୍ୟାୟ ଅଂଚଳ ଶ୍ରମିକମାନେ ଯଥା - ବରଗଡ଼, ବଲାଙ୍ଗୀର, ନୂଆପଡ଼ା, କଳାହାଣ୍ଡି, ସୁରକ୍ଷପୁର ପ୍ରତିବର୍ଷ ନୂଆଖାଇ କିମ୍ବା ନଭେମ୍ବର ଠାରୁ ଜୁନ୍ ମାସରେ ଏହି ପ୍ରବାସ କରି ଅନ୍ୟ ରାଜ୍ୟରେ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ସାମାଜିକ ରତ୍ନକାଳୀନ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଯଥା - ଇଟାଭାଟି ଏବଂ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ନିର୍ମାଣ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟରେ ନିଯୋଜିତ ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତି । ଅନ୍ୟପକ୍ଷରେ ଉପକୂଳବର୍ତ୍ତୀ ଜିଲ୍ଲାମାନଙ୍କର ଶ୍ରମିକମାନେ ଅନ୍ୟ ରାଜ୍ୟର ସଂଘଟିତ ଶିଳ୍ପ କଳକାରଖାନାମାନଙ୍କରେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କରନ୍ତି ଏବଂ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଯିବାଆସିବା ବର୍ଷସାରା ଲାଗିଥାଏ । ଆମ ରାଜ୍ୟର ଖଲ୍ଲିକୋଟ, ବାଲୁଗାଁ ଅଂଚଳର ଶ୍ରମିକମାନେ ସାଧାରଣତଃ କୋଠାବାଡ଼ି ଓ ଗ୍ରାମର ଶ୍ରମିକମାନେ ସୁରଟରେ କପଡ଼ା ଶିଳ୍ପରେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କରୁଥିଲାବେଳେ କେନ୍ଦ୍ରାପଡ଼ାର ଶ୍ରମିକମାନେ ପାଇପ୍ ମିଷ୍ଟା ଭାବେ ସାରା ଭାରତର ବିଭିନ୍ନ ପ୍ରାନ୍ତକୁ ଏକା ଏକା କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ଯାଇଥାନ୍ତି । ଏହି ଶ୍ରମିକମାନଙ୍କର ଯିବାଆସିବା ବର୍ଷସାରା ଲାଗିରହିଥାଏ; କିନ୍ତୁ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟାୟ ଅଂଚଳ ଶ୍ରମିକମାନେ ନଭେମ୍ବର ମାସରୁ ଯାଇ ଏକାଥରକେ ମଇ-ଜୁନ୍ ମାସ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ନିଜ ରାଜ୍ୟକୁ ଫେରି ଆସିଥାନ୍ତି ।

ପ୍ରବାସିକ ଶ୍ରମିକମାନଙ୍କର ସାମାଜିକ ସୁରକ୍ଷା, ଶ୍ରମ ମଙ୍ଗଳ, ନିୟୁକ୍ତି ନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରଣ, ମଜୁରୀ ଆଦି ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ସୁରକ୍ଷିତ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଶ୍ରମ ଆଇନରେ ବ୍ୟାପକ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ରହିଛି । ଏହି ଆଇନଗୁଡ଼ିକ କେନ୍ଦ୍ର ସରକାରଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା ପ୍ରଣୀତ ହୋଇଥିବାରୁ ଏହାକୁ ସମସ୍ତ ରାଜ୍ୟରେ ସମାନ ଭାବରେ ଲାଗୁ କରାଯାଇଥାଏ । ସାଧାରଣତଃ ଠିକାଦାର, ଏଜେଣ୍ଟ, ସର୍ଦ୍ଦାରମାନଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ ଅଗ୍ରୀମ ଟଙ୍କା ନେଇ ଅନ୍ୟ ରାଜ୍ୟକୁ ଚାଲାଣ ହୋଇଥିବା ଶ୍ରମିକମାନଙ୍କୁ ଦାଦନ ଶ୍ରମିକ ବୋଲି କୁହାଯାଏ । କାରଣ ଦାଦନ ଶ୍ରମିକର ଅର୍ଥ ହେଉଛି ଅଗ୍ରୀମ ।

ଅଗ୍ରୀମ ଅର୍ଥ ହେଲା ବଇନା । ଏହାକୁ ସ୍ଥଳବିଶେଷରେ ଯାଜନ ବା ଦାଦନ କୁହାଯାଏ । ଏହି ଶ୍ରମିକମାନଙ୍କ କଲ୍ୟାଣ ନିମନ୍ତେ ଆନ୍ଧ୍ର ରାଜ୍ୟ ପ୍ରବାସିକ ଶ୍ରମିକ (ନିୟୁକ୍ତି ନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରଣ ଓ ସେବାସର୍ତ୍ତ) ଆଇନ, ୧୯୭୯ ପ୍ରଣୟନ କରାଯାଇଛି । ଏହି ଆଇନ ୫ ବା ତଦୁର୍ଦ୍ଧ ଶ୍ରମିକ, ଠିକାଦାର, ଏଜେଣ୍ଟ ବା ସର୍ଦ୍ଦାରଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା ନିୟୁକ୍ତ ହୋଇ ଗୋଟିଏ ରାଜ୍ୟରୁ ଯାଇ ଅନ୍ୟ ରାଜ୍ୟରେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କରୁଥିବା ସଂସ୍ଥା ଓ ଠିକାଦାର, ଏଜେଣ୍ଟ ବା ସର୍ଦ୍ଦାରଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି ଲାଗୁ ହୋଇଥାଏ । ଆନ୍ଧ୍ର-ରାଜ୍ୟ ପ୍ରବାସିକ ଶ୍ରମିକମାନଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି ଆନ୍ଧ୍ର-ରାଜ୍ୟ ପ୍ରବାସିକ ଶ୍ରମିକ (ନିୟୁକ୍ତି ନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରଣ ଓ ସେବାସର୍ତ୍ତ) ଆଇନ, ୧୯୭୯ ବ୍ୟତୀତ ପ୍ରାୟତଃ ଏକ ଡକ୍ଟରରୁ ଉର୍ଦ୍ଧ୍ୱ ଆଇନ୍ ମଧ୍ୟ ଲାଗୁ କରାଯାଇଥାଏ । ନିଜେ ନିଜେ ଠିକାଦାର ବା ମଧ୍ୟସ୍ଥିଙ୍କ ବିନା ସହାୟତାରେ ପ୍ରବାସି ହେଉଥିବା ଶ୍ରମିକମାନଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି ଆନ୍ଧ୍ର-ରାଜ୍ୟ ପ୍ରବାସିକ ଶ୍ରମିକ (ନିୟୁକ୍ତି ନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରଣ ଓ ସେବାସର୍ତ୍ତ) ଆଇନ, ୧୯୭୯ ଲାଗୁ ହୁଏନାହିଁ । ପର୍ଯ୍ୟାୟ ଅଂଚଳର ଶ୍ରମିକମାନେ ସାଧାରଣତଃ ତେଲେଙ୍ଗାନା, ଆନ୍ଧ୍ରପ୍ରଦେଶ, କର୍ଣ୍ଣାଟକ ଆଦି ରାଜ୍ୟକୁ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଠିକାଦାରଙ୍କ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ସପରିବାରରେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କରିବାକୁ ଯାଇଥାନ୍ତି । ଠିକ୍ ଖରିଫ୍ ଫସଲର ଅମଳର ପରେ ପରେ ଏବଂ ନୂଆଖାଇ ପର୍ବ ଶେଷ ହେବା ପରେ ଏମାନଙ୍କର ଅନ୍ୟ ରାଜ୍ୟକୁ ଯିବା କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହୋଇଥାଏ । ଯେହେତୁ ଏମାନେ ପରିବାର ସହିତ ଯାଆନ୍ତି, ସାଧାରଣତଃ ସ୍ୱାମୀ-ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଏବଂ ଡାକ୍ତର ନିଜ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ନିଜ ସାଥରେ ନେଇ ଅନ୍ୟ ରାଜ୍ୟକୁ ଯାଆନ୍ତି; ମାତ୍ର ଘରର ବୟସ୍କ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ପିତାମାତାଙ୍କୁ ଗାଁରେ ଛାଡ଼ିକି ଯାଆନ୍ତି । କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ସ୍ଥଳରେ ଅସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟକର ପରିବେଶ, ଖାଇବା ପିଇବାର ଅସୁବିଧା, ରହଣି ସ୍ଥଳର ଅଭାବ ଓ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତତା ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଏହି ପରିବାରର ଛୋଟ ପିଲାମାନେ ବହୁ ଦୁଃଖକଷ୍ଟ ଏବଂ ଅବହେଳାର ଶିକାର ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତି । ଯାହାଫଳରେ ଏମାନେ ବହୁ ରୋଗ ଏବଂ ଅପପୁଷ୍ଟିର ଶିକାର ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତି । ଏତଦ୍‌ବ୍ୟତୀତ, ଛଅ ମାସର ଶିକ୍ଷାରୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ବଞ୍ଚିତ ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତି ।

ଆମ ରାଜ୍ୟ ସରକାରଙ୍କର ସ୍କୁଲ ଏବଂ ଗଣଶିକ୍ଷା ବିଭାଗ ଏବଂ ଶ୍ରମ ବିଭାଗର ମିଳିତ ପ୍ରଚେଷ୍ଟାରେ ପ୍ରଥମ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟାୟରେ ବରଗଡ଼, ବଲାଙ୍ଗୀର, ନୂଆପଡ଼ା ଓ କଳାହାଣ୍ଡି ଜିଲ୍ଲାରେ ରତ୍ନକାଳୀନ ଆବାସିକ ଛାତ୍ରାବାସ ଖୋଲାଯିବା ପାଇଁ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରାଯାଇଛି । ୨୦୧୫-



୧୭ ମସିହାରେ ୨୩୪ଗୋଟି ଆବାସିକ ଛାତ୍ରାବାସ ଖୋଲାଯାଇ ୮୯୧୭ ପିଲାଙ୍କୁ ଆବାସିକ ହଷ୍ଟେଲରେ ରଖାଯାଇଥିବାବେଳେ, ୨୦୧୬-୧୭ ମସିହାରେ ୧୮୯ ହଷ୍ଟେଲ ଖୋଲାଯାଇ ୬୯୯୮ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ରଖାଯାଇଥିଲା, ଯେଉଁଥିରେ କି ପ୍ରବାସି ଶ୍ରମିକ ତାଙ୍କର ପିଲାଙ୍କୁ ଏହି ହଷ୍ଟେଲରେ ଛାଡ଼ି ସୁଛନ୍ଦରେ ଯାଇ ଅନ୍ୟ ରାଜ୍ୟରେ ସୁରୁଖୁରୁରେ କାମ କରିପାରିବେ । ରତ୍ନଭିତିକ ହଷ୍ଟେଲରେ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ପାଠପଢ଼ା ସହିତ ମାଗଣାରେ ଜଳଖିଆ, ମଧ୍ୟାହ୍ନଭୋଜନ, ରାତ୍ରଭୋଜନ, ଡ୍ରେସ୍ ଏବଂ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ଆନୁସଙ୍ଗିକ ସୁବିଧାମାନ ଯୋଗାଇ ଦିଆଯାଉଛି । ଏହି ରତ୍ନଭିତିକ ଆବାସିକ ହଷ୍ଟେଲର ମୂଳ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ହେଉଛି ପ୍ରବାସି ଶ୍ରମିକର ପରିବାରର ଛୋଟ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କର ଶିକ୍ଷାଦାନରେ ବ୍ୟାହତ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ନ କରିବା ଏବଂ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଦୁଷ୍ଟିତ

ପରିବେଶ ଭିତରୁ ଦୂରେଇ ରଖିବା ତତ୍ ସଂଗେ ସଂଗେ ଅପପୁଷ୍ଟିରୁ ବଂଚିତ କରିବା । ଯଦିଓ ପିଲାମାନେ ନିଜ ବାପ ମା'ଠାରୁ ଦୂରରେ ରହୁଛନ୍ତି କିନ୍ତୁ ନିଜ ଗ୍ରାମରେ, ନିଜ ଘର ପାଖରେ ରହି ନିଜର ଭବିଷ୍ୟତକୁ ସୁରକ୍ଷିତ ରଖିପାରୁଛନ୍ତି । ଏହାଦ୍ୱାରା ଆମେ କେବଳ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଉନ୍ନତି କରିବା ସଂଗେସଂଗେ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତର ଶିଶୁ ଶ୍ରମିକ ନ ହେବାପାଇଁ ଏବଂ ଏକ ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ର ଏବଂ ରାଜ୍ୟର ଉତ୍ତମ ନାଗରିକ ଭାବେ ଗଢ଼ି ତୋଳିବା ପାଇଁ ଏହି ରତ୍ନଭିତିକ ଆବାସିକ ହଷ୍ଟେଲ ବହୁ ମାତ୍ରାରେ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରୁଛି ।

ଏମ୍ - ୮୩, , ବରମୁଣ୍ଡା ହାଉସିଂବୋର୍ଡ଼ କଲୋନୀ, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର. ମୋବାଇଲ୍ : ୯୪୩୭୦୮୧୪୪୭

## ଶିଶୁଙ୍କୁ ଶ୍ରମିକ ଭାବେ କାମରେ ନିୟୋଜିତ କରାଉଥିବା ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ସ୍ରାବଧାନ

- ଆପଣ ଜାଣିବାରେ ଯଦି କୌଣସି ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ୧୪ ବର୍ଷରୁ କମ୍ ବୟସର ପିଲାଙ୍କୁ କାମରେ ନିୟୋଜିତ କରିଛନ୍ତି କିମ୍ବା ୧୫ ବର୍ଷରୁ ୧୮ ବର୍ଷ ମଧ୍ୟରେ କିଶୋରଙ୍କୁ ବିପଦସଙ୍କୁଳ ବୃତ୍ତି ବା ପକ୍ରିୟାରେ ନିୟୋଜନ କରିଛନ୍ତି ତେବେ ଅବିଳମ୍ବେ ନିଜ ଜିଲ୍ଲାର ଶ୍ରମ ଅଧିକାରୀ ଜିଲ୍ଲା ଶିଶୁ ସୁରକ୍ଷା ଅଧିକାରୀ କିମ୍ବା ଜିଲ୍ଲାପାଳଙ୍କୁ ଅବଗତ କରାନ୍ତୁ । ଏତଦ୍‌ବ୍ୟତୀତ, ବିଶ୍ୱର ଶ୍ରମିକ ସହାୟତା ହେଲପ୍‌ଲାଇନ୍ ନଂ. ୧୫୫୩୭୮ ଏବଂ ଝଲଲୁ ଲାଇନ୍ ନଂ. ୧୦୯୮କୁ ଯୋଗାଯୋଗ କରନ୍ତୁ ।

## ଶିଶୁ ଶ୍ରମ ମୁକ୍ତ ଓଡ଼ିଶା - ଆମର ସଂକଳ୍ପ

ଶ୍ରମ ଓ ରାଜ୍ୟ କର୍ମଚାରୀ ବୀମା ବିଭାଗ  
ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର

# ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ: ସମସ୍ୟା ଓ ସମାଧାନ

ନରହରି ମିଶ୍ର

ଯେଉଁ ଶ୍ରମିକମାନେ ଆମ ରାଜ୍ୟରୁ ଯାଇ ଆମ ଦେଶ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଅନ୍ୟ ରାଜ୍ୟରେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କରନ୍ତି, ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ କୁହାଯାଏ । ଏହି ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକମାନଙ୍କର ନିରାପତ୍ତା ଓ ଉନ୍ନତ ବିଧାନ ପାଇଁ ଆନ୍ତର୍ଜାତୀୟ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ (ନିୟୁକ୍ତି ନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରଣ ଓ ସେବା ସର୍ଭ) ଆଇନ, ୧୯୭୯ କେନ୍ଦ୍ର ସରକାରଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା ପ୍ରଣୀତ ହୋଇଛି । ଆମ ରାଜ୍ୟ ସରକାର ଏହି କେନ୍ଦ୍ରୀୟ ଆଇନକୁ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକାରୀ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ନିୟମାମାନ (ରୁଲସ୍) ପ୍ରଣୟନ କରିଛନ୍ତି ଏବଂ ଏହା ଶ୍ରମ ବିଭାଗ ଦ୍ୱାରା ତଦାରଖ କରାଯାଇଛି ।

ଏହି ଆଇନ୍ ମୁତାବକ ଯଦି ଜଣେ ଠିକାଦାର ଆମ ରାଜ୍ୟରୁ କିଛି ଶ୍ରମିକମାନଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ ଅନ୍ୟ ରାଜ୍ୟରେ କୌଣସି କାର୍ଯ୍ୟରେ ଲଗାଇବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଛନ୍ତି, ତେବେ ଉକ୍ତ ଠିକାଦାର ବିଧିବଦ୍ଧ ଭାବରେ ଜିଲ୍ଲା ଶ୍ରମ ଅଧିକାରୀଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ଆବଶ୍ୟକୀୟ କାଗଜାତ ସହିତ ଅର୍ଥ ପୈଠ କରି ଲାଇସେନ୍ସ ପ୍ରାପ୍ତ ହେବା ନିହାତି ଜରୁରୀ, ବିନା ଲାଇସେନ୍ସରେ ଯଦି କୌଣସି ଠିକାଦାର ବା ଦଳାଲ କିଛି ଶ୍ରମିକଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ ଅନ୍ୟ ରାଜ୍ୟରେ କାମ କରାଏ, ତେବେ ଏହା ବେଆଇନ୍ ସାବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହୁଏ । ତେଣୁ କୌଣସି ଶ୍ରମିକ ଠିକାଦାରଙ୍କ ବିନା ଲାଇସେନ୍ସରେ ବାହାର ରାଜ୍ୟକୁ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଅନୁଷ୍ଠାନରେ ଯିବା ଆଦୌ ଉଚିତ ନୁହେଁ । ଆଇନର ଖୁଲାସା କଲେ କଠୋର ଦଣ୍ଡର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ରହିଛି ।

ଅନେକ ସମୟରେ ଏହା ଦୃଷ୍ଟିଗୋଚର ହୁଏ ଯେ ଅନେକ ଶ୍ରମିକ ଅଧିକ ଅର୍ଥ ରୋଜଗାର ଲାଭସାରେ ଠିକାଦାରର ଛଳନାପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ବ୍ୟବହାରରେ ବଶବର୍ତ୍ତୀ ହୋଇ ବିନା କାଗଜପତ୍ର / ବିନା ପଞ୍ଜିକରଣରେ ଅନ୍ୟ ରାଜ୍ୟକୁ ଯାଉଛନ୍ତି । ଲାଇସେନ୍ସ ନଥିବା ଠିକାଦାରଙ୍କୁ ଦଳାଲ କହିଲେ ଅତ୍ୟୁକ୍ତି ହେବ ନାହିଁ । ଏହି ଦଳାଲମାନେ ନିରାହ ଶ୍ରମିକମାନଙ୍କୁ ଶୋଷଣ କରୁଥିବାର ଖବର ସାରା ରାଜ୍ୟରେ ବେଳେବେଳେ ଚହଳ ପକେଇ ଦିଏ । ଏଥିପାଇଁ ରାଜ୍ୟ ସରକାର ବିଧିବଦ୍ଧ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ମାନ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ସେଥି ମଧ୍ୟରୁ କିଛି ମୁଖ୍ୟ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ଗୁଡ଼ିକ ହେଉଛି -

୧. ଆନ୍ତର୍ଜାତୀୟ ଶ୍ରମ ସଂଗଠନ ସହାୟତାରେ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକଙ୍କ ମଙ୍ଗଳ ନିମନ୍ତେ ୨୦୧୩ ମସିହାରେ ବଲାଙ୍ଗିର ଜିଲ୍ଲାରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ପାଇଲଟ୍ ପ୍ରୋଜେକ୍ଟ କରାଯାଇଥିଲା । ଏହି ଜିଲ୍ଲା ଅନ୍ତର୍ଗତ ଗ୍ରାମପଞ୍ଚାୟତ ସ୍ତରରେ ସଚେତନତା ଶିବିର ଆୟୋଜନ କରାଯାଇଥିଲା । ଏହି ଶିବିରଗୁଡ଼ିକରେ ପ୍ରବାସୀ

ଶ୍ରମିକଙ୍କ ସୁରକ୍ଷା ଓ ଅଧିକାର ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧୀୟ ପ୍ରଚାରପତ୍ର ଓ ପୁସ୍ତିକା ବଣ୍ଟନ କରାଯାଇଥିଲା । ଏହା ବ୍ୟତୀତ ଜିଲ୍ଲାସ୍ତରୀୟ ଅନ୍ୟ ବିଭାଗ ଗୁଡ଼ିକର ଅଧିକାରୀ ମାନଙ୍କର ଏକ ସମନ୍ୱୟ ବୈଠକ ଅନୁଷ୍ଠିତ ହୋଇଥିଲା ।

୨. ୨୦୧୪ ମସିହାରେ ବେଆଇନ୍ ଦାଦନ ଶ୍ରମିକଙ୍କ ନିୟାନ୍ତନା ବିଷୟରେ ସମାଦପତ୍ର ଗୁଡ଼ିକରେ ଖବର ପ୍ରକାଶିତ ହେବାରୁ ରାଜ୍ୟ ସରକାରଙ୍କ ତରଫରୁ ସୁଦୃଢ଼ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥାମାନ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରାଗଲା । ଏଥିପାଇଁ ଷ୍ଟେଟ୍ ଆକ୍ସନ ପ୍ଲାନ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ କରାଗଲା । ବେଆଇନ୍ ଦାଦନ ଚଳାଣ ଜିଲ୍ଲା ଯଥା - ବଲାଙ୍ଗିର, ବରଗଡ଼, ନୁଆପଡ଼ା, କଳାହାଣ୍ଡି, ଗଞ୍ଜାମ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ଜିଲ୍ଲାମାନଙ୍କରେ ଜିଲ୍ଲାସ୍ତରୀୟ, ବ୍ଲକ୍ସ୍ତରୀୟ ଓ ପଞ୍ଚାୟତ ସ୍ତରୀୟ ସଚେତନତା କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମ ମାନ ଅନୁଷ୍ଠିତ ହେଲା । ବିନା ପଞ୍ଜିକରଣରେ କୌଣସି ଶ୍ରମିକ ନିଜ ରାଜ୍ୟ ଛାଡ଼ି ଅନ୍ୟ ରାଜ୍ୟକୁ ନଯିବା ପାଇଁ ବ୍ୟାପକ ପ୍ରଚାର ପ୍ରସାର କରିବା ପାଇଁ ଜିଲ୍ଲା ପ୍ରଶାସନ ମୁଖ୍ୟ ଭୂମିକା ଗ୍ରହଣ କଲେ । ପଞ୍ଚାୟତ ସ୍ତରରେ ପଞ୍ଜିକରଣକୁ ବାଧ୍ୟତାମୂଳକ କରାଗଲା ।

୩. ସମସ୍ୟାର ସମାଧାନ ପାଇଁ ଦାଦନ ଶ୍ରମିକ ଚଳାଣ ପ୍ରବଣ ଜିଲ୍ଲାପାଳ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଆର୍ଥିକ ଅନୁଦାନ ପ୍ରଦାନ କରାଯାଇଛି । ବେଆଇନ୍ ଶ୍ରମିକ ଚଳାଣ ରୋକିବାକୁ ବସ୍ତାଖଣ୍ଡ, ରେଳଷ୍ଟେସନ୍, ହାଟ, ବଜାର ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ସ୍ଥାନ ମାନଙ୍କରେ ପୋଲିସ୍ ପ୍ରଶାସନ ସର୍ବଦା ସଜାଗ ରହିବା ପାଇଁ ସରକାରୀ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶନାମା ନିର୍ଗମନ ହୋଇଛି, ଜିଲ୍ଲା ଆରକ୍ଷା ଅଧିକ୍ଷକ ଏଥିପାଇଁ ମଧ୍ୟ ପୋଲିସ୍ ମୁତୟନ କରୁଛନ୍ତି । ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକଙ୍କ ସହାୟତା ପାଇଁ ଏକ ନିଃଶୁଳ୍କ ସହାୟତା ଟେଲିଫୋନ୍ ନମ୍ବର - ୧୫୫-୩୯୮- ପ୍ରତ୍ୟହ ସକାଳ ଛଅ ଘଣ୍ଟାରୁ ରାତ୍ର ୧୦ ଘଟିକା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଶ୍ରମ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶାଳୟରେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କରୁଛି । ଶ୍ରମ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶାଳୟରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ ସେଲ୍ ସ୍ଥାପନ କରାଯାଇଛି ।

୪. ରାଜ୍ୟ ସରକାରଙ୍କ ନିଷ୍ପତ୍ତି ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ଓଡ଼ିଶା କୋଠାବାଡ଼ି ଓ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ନିର୍ମାଣ ଶ୍ରମିକ କଲ୍ୟାଣ ବୋର୍ଡ଼ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ନିର୍ମାଣ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟରତ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକମାନଙ୍କୁ ହିତାଧିକାରୀ ଭାବରେ ପଞ୍ଜିକୃତ କରି ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଯୋଜନା ଅନ୍ତର୍ଗତ ଆର୍ଥିକ ସହାୟତା ପ୍ରଦାନ କରାଯାଇଛି ।

୫. ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକମାନଙ୍କର ସୁରକ୍ଷା ଓ କଲ୍ୟାଣ ପାଇଁ ରାଜ୍ୟ ସରକାର ଆନ୍ତ୍ରପ୍ରଦେଶ, ତେଲେଙ୍ଗାନା, କର୍ଣ୍ଣାଟକ, ତାମିଲନାଡୁ ଓ ଦିଲ୍ଲୀ ସରକାରଙ୍କ ସହିତ ରୁଚ୍ଛିପତ୍ର ସ୍ୱାକ୍ଷର କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଏହି ସବୁ ରାଜ୍ୟର ଶ୍ରମ ବିଭାଗ ସହଯୋଗରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ଲେଖା ହେଲ୍ପ ଡେସ୍କ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା କରିବା ପାଇଁ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରିଛନ୍ତି । ସେଠାରେ ଯେଉଁ ଲିଆସନ୍ ଅଫିସ୍ ଅଛନ୍ତି ବା ରହିବେ । ସେମାନେ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଶ୍ରମିକଙ୍କର ସ୍ୱାର୍ଥର ସୁରକ୍ଷା ପାଇଁ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କରିବେ । ଉଚ୍ଚ ରାଜ୍ୟମାନଙ୍କରେ ଥିବା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଆସୋସିଏସନ୍ ମାନଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟ ଯୋଗସୂତ୍ର ରକ୍ଷା କରି ଶ୍ରମିକଙ୍କ କଲ୍ୟାଣ ପାଇଁ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କରିବେ ।

୬. ରାଜ୍ୟ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ ଓ ଗଣଶିକ୍ଷା ବିଭାଗ ସହିତ ସହଯୋଗିତା ଓ ସହଭାଗିତା ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକଙ୍କ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଉଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ରତ୍ନକାଳୀନ ଛାତ୍ରାବାସରେ ରହିବା ନିମିତ୍ତ ଶ୍ରମ ବିଭାଗ ତରଫରୁ ଆର୍ଥିକ ସହଯତାର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରାଯାଇଛି ।

୭. ବାର୍ଷିକ ଆକସନ ପ୍ଲାନର ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକାରୀତା ଉପରେ ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱାରୋପ କରାଯାଇଛି । ଏଥିପାଇଁ ରାଜ୍ୟସରକାର ବଜେଟରେ ଅର୍ଥ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରୁଛନ୍ତି ।

୮. ବେଆଇନ ଶ୍ରମିକ ଗଠନାଣ ରୋକିବାକୁ ସଂପୃକ୍ତ ଜିଲ୍ଲା ମାନଙ୍କରେ ଶ୍ରମ ବିଭାଗ ତରଫରୁ ଶ୍ରମମନ୍ତ୍ରୀଙ୍କ ଅଧକ୍ଷତାରେ ସଭା-ସମ୍ମିଳନୀ ମାନ ଅନୁଷ୍ଠିତ ହେଉଛି । ଏଥି ସହିତ ଯେଉଁ ରାଜ୍ୟକୁ ଶ୍ରମିକମାନେ ଯାଉଛନ୍ତି, ସେସବୁ ରାଜ୍ୟ ସରକାରଙ୍କ ସହିତ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟକ୍ଷ ଆଲୋଚନା ମଧ୍ୟ କରାଯାଉଛି ଏବଂ ସମସ୍ୟାର ସମାଧାନ କରାଯାଇପାରୁଛି ।

୯. ବେଆଇନ ଶ୍ରମିକ ଗଠନାଣ ରୋକିବାକୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ଚଳିତ ବର୍ଷ

ରାଜ୍ୟ ସରକାର ଟାଟା ଟ୍ରଷ୍ଟ ସହିତ ରୁଚ୍ଛିପତ୍ରସ୍ୱାକ୍ଷର କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଦାଦନ ପ୍ରବଣ ଜିଲ୍ଲାରେ କିଭଳି ଶ୍ରମିକମାନେ ଆତ୍ମନିର୍ଭରଶୀଳ ହେବେ ଏବଂ ନିଜ ଜିଲ୍ଲାରେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କରିବାର ସୁଯୋଗ ପାଇବେ ସେଥିପାଇଁ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ବିଭାଗ ସହିତ ସଂପର୍କ ସ୍ଥାପନ କରାଯାଇ ଦୀର୍ଘସୂତ୍ରୀ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମମାନ ରାଜ୍ୟ ସରକାର ହାତକୁ ନେଇଛନ୍ତି ।

୧୦. ଏଥି ସହିତ ଅସଙ୍ଗଠିତ ଶ୍ରମିକମାନଙ୍କୁ ରାଜ୍ୟ ଅସଙ୍ଗଠିତ ଶ୍ରମିକ କଲ୍ୟାଣ ବୋର୍ଡ଼ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ପଞ୍ଜିକରଣ କରାଯାଇ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ସାମାଜିକ ନିରାପତ୍ତା ପ୍ରତି ଦୃଷ୍ଟିଦେବାକୁ ରାଜ୍ୟ ସରକାର ବଦ୍ଧପରିକର ଅଛନ୍ତି ।

ରାଜ୍ୟ ସରକାରଙ୍କର ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଶ୍ରମିକ କଲ୍ୟାଣ ଯୋଜନା ହେତୁ ଏବଂ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ବିଭାଗର ସହଯୋଗ ହେତୁ ଚଳିତ ବର୍ଷ ଦାଦନ ଶ୍ରମିକଙ୍କ ନିଯୋଗନା ଓ ଶୋଷଣ ଖବର ପ୍ରାୟ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିଗୋଚର ହୋଇନାହିଁ ।

ସରକାରୀ ସ୍ତରରେ ଯେଉଁ ଏନ.ଜି.ଓ. କିମ୍ବା ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଶ୍ରମିକ ସଂଗଠନ ମାନେ ଜିଲ୍ଲା ସ୍ତରରେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କରୁଛନ୍ତି, ସେମାନଙ୍କର ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ଓ ସହଯୋଗ ମଧ୍ୟ ଏକାନ୍ତ ଜରୁରୀ ମନେ ହେଉଛି । କାରଣ, ସରକାର ଯୋଜନା ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ କରନ୍ତି, ମାତ୍ର ଏହାର କାର୍ଯ୍ୟାନୁୟନ ସରକାରୀ ଓ ବେସରକାରୀ ସଂସ୍ଥାମାନଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା ସୁପରିଚାଳିତ ହେଲେ ଯୋଜନା ସଫଳ ହୋଇଥାଏ । ଏହା ବ୍ୟତୀତ ଜାତି, ଧର୍ମ, ଦଳାୟ ରାଜନୀତି ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ସାମାଜିକ ବାଧାବିଘ୍ନ ଗୁଡ଼ିକୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ଗୌଣ ମନେ କରିବା ଉଚିତ୍ । ସରକାରଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଜନସାଧାରଣ ସହଯୋଗ କଲେ କଳଙ୍କିତ ଦାଦନ ସମସ୍ୟାର ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ସମାଧାନ ହେବ । ଏଥିରେ ଦୃମତ ନାହିଁ ।

ଶ୍ରମବିଭାଗ, ମୋ: ୯୭୭୮୮୭୯୭୮୧

**ଆନ୍ତଃରାଜ୍ୟ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ,  
ଶ୍ରମ ଆଇନ୍‌ରେ ଥିବା ସୁବିଧା ସୁଯୋଗ  
ଓ  
ଅଧିକାରୀ ବିଷୟରେ ସଚେତନ ରୁହନ୍ତୁ ।**

**ଶ୍ରମ ଓ ରାଜ୍ୟ କର୍ମଚରୀ ବୀମା ବିଭାଗ,  
ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର**

# ମୋବାଇଲ୍, ମକାମିଲ୍ ଓ ଗୋଟିଏ ପାପୁଲି

ଡ. ବାସନ୍ତୀ ମହାନ୍ତି

ରୁକ୍ମଧର ନଇରୁ ଗାଧୁଆ ସାରି ଆସି ଦେଖିଲା ମାଆ ଫେରିନାହିଁ । ଦିନେ ଦିନେ ମାଆ ଏମିତି ଡେରି କରେ । ସେଦିନ ରୁକ୍ମଧରକୁ ହାତରେ ବାଡ଼ି ଖାଇବାକୁ ପଡ଼େ । ରୁକ୍ମଧର ପଖାଳ ହାଣ୍ଡିରୁ ଭାତଟିକେ ଝିଲ୍ କ'ଣାଟାରେ ଛାଣି ଆଣିଲା । ରାତିର ଶୁଖୁଆ ତରକାରୀ ଟିକେ ଗିନାଟିରେ ଘୋଡ଼େଇ ତୁଲି ପାଖରେ ରଖୁଥିଲା ମାଆ । ସେତକ ଆଣି ସେ ଖାଇ ବସିଲା । ଦୁଇଗୁଣ୍ଠା ଭାତ ପାଟିକି ନେଇଛି କି ନାହିଁ ବାହାରେ ଡମ୍ବରୁର ପାଟି ଶୁଭିଲା ।

“ରୁକ୍ମଧର ! ବେଳ ହେଲା, ବେଗି ବେଗି ବାହାର ।” ରୁକ୍ମଧର ବାହାରକୁ ଚାହିଁଲା । ସୁରୁଜ ମହାପୁରୁ ସରଗି ଗଛ ଅଗ ଟପିଲେ ସ୍କୁଲ ବେଳ ହୁଏ । ଏ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ପାହାଡ଼ ତଳର ଟିକେ ଉପରକୁ ଉଠିଛି ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ । ସ୍କୁଲ ବେଳ ଏବେ ଆହୁରି ଅନେକ ବାକି ଅଛି । ରୁକ୍ମଧର ଭାତ ପାଟିରେ ଶୁଖୁଆ ଟିକେ ଭର୍ତ୍ତି କରିଦେଇ ଗାଉଁ ଗାଉଁ ହେଇ କହିଲା- “ରହ ରହ, ଆଉ ଟିକେ, ହେଇ ମୁଁ ଯାଉଛି ।” ଡମ୍ବରୁର କଣ୍ଠସ୍ଵର ତାକୁ ଅସ୍ଥିର କରିଦେଲା ।

ଆଉ ଖାଇପାରିଲା ନାହିଁ ରୁକ୍ମଧର । ଭାତ କ'ଣା ପାଖରୁ ଉଠିପଡ଼ିଲା । ମାଆ ରଖୁଥିବା ପାଣି ହାଣ୍ଡିରୁ ଢାଙ୍କୁଣି ଖୋଲି ସେଇ ହାଣ୍ଡିରେ ଅଇଁଠା ହାତଟା ଚୁର୍ କରି ବୁଡ଼େଇଦେଲା । ସେଇ ଭିଜିଲା ହାତଟାକୁ ଆଣି ମୁହଁରେ ମାରିଦେଲା । ପାଟିରେ ଥିବା ଭାତ ଓ ଶୁଖୁଆକୁ ଚୋବୋଉ ଚୋବୋଉ ସେ ତା' ବହିବସ୍ତାନି ବେଗଟି କାନ୍ଧରେ ଝୁଲେଇଦେଲା ଓ କବାଟରେ ତାଲା ପକେଇ କଳାସୂତା ଖଣ୍ଡକରେ ବନ୍ଧା ହେଇଥିବା ଚାବିଟିକୁ ଚାଳରେ ଗୁଞ୍ଜିଦେଲା । ମା' ଆସିଲେ ନେବ । ସ୍କୁଲ ନ ଯାଇ ମକାମିଲକୁ ଯାଇଛି ଜାଣିଲେ ମାଆ ରାଗିବ । ମାଆଟା ସିନା ପାଠ ପଢ଼ିନି ହେଲେ ରୁକ୍ମଧରକୁ ସେ ମୁଖି କରିବନି । ପାଠ ପଢ଼େଇ ମଣିଷ କରିବାକୁ ଲାଗିପଡ଼ିଛି । ବାବୁଘର ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ପରି ତାକୁ ବଡ଼ ମଣିଷ କରିବାର ସ୍ଵପ୍ନ ଦେଖୁଛି ।

ଚାଲିଲେ ରୁକ୍ମଧର ଓ ଡମ୍ବରୁ ଦୁହେଁ ଏଥର । କାନ୍ଧରେ ବହି ବସ୍ତାନି ଅଛି । ସ୍କୁଲ ଯୁନିଫର୍ମ ପିନ୍ଧିଛନ୍ତି । ଦୁହେଁ କିନ୍ତୁ ସ୍କୁଲର ବିପରୀତ ଦିଗରେ ଚାଲିଛନ୍ତି । ସ୍କୁଲ ପ୍ରାୟ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହେବାକୁ ଆହୁରି ଅଧଘଣ୍ଟା ଘଣ୍ଟାଏ ଅଛି । ତେଣୁ ଗୁରୁଜୀ କିମ୍ପା ପିଲା କେହି ଆଖିରେ ପତୁନାହାଁନ୍ତି । ପୂର୍ବ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଧାରିତ ଯୋଜନା ଅନୁସାରେ ସେମାନେ ଦୁହେଁ ପହଞ୍ଚିଲେ

ମକାମିଲରେ । କୁଲି ସର୍ଦ୍ଦାର ଲତମନ୍ କହିଛି ଦିନକୁ ପଚାଶ ଟଙ୍କା ଲେଖାଁ ଦେବ । ରବିବାରକୁ ଛାଡ଼ି ଗୋଟାଏ ସପ୍ତାହକୁ ତିନିଶହ ଟଙ୍କା । ଆଗରୁ ଅନେକ ଥର ହିସାବ କରିଥିଲେ ବି ପୁଣି ଥରେ ମନେ ମନେ ହିସାବ କଲା । ଗୋଟାଏ ସପ୍ତାହକୁ ତିନିଶହ ଟଙ୍କା ହେଲେ ହଜାରେ ଟଙ୍କା ପାଇଁ ତିନି ସପ୍ତାହ କାମପରେ ଆଉରି ଶହେ ଟଙ୍କା ମିଶେଇବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ । ଆଉ ଶହେ ଟଙ୍କା କୋଉଠୁ ଆଣିବ, ଚିନ୍ତା କରି ବସିଲା ରୁକ୍ମଧର । ମାଆକୁ ମାଗିଲେ ସେ ଜମା ଦବ ନାହିଁ । ମାଆ ବି କୋଉଠୁ ଆଣିବ ଯେ ! ବାବୁ ଘରେ କାମ କରି ଯାହା ଆଣୁଛି, ସେଥିରେ ତ ମାଆ ପୁଅ ଦୁଇବେଳା ଦୁଇଟଙ୍କାର ପେଟପୁରା ଖାଇବାକୁ ହୁଏ ନାହିଁ । କେତେବେଳେ ପାଞ୍ଚଟଙ୍କା ଦଶ ଟଙ୍କା ମାଗିଲେ ମାଆ ସେଇଥିରୁ କେତେ କଷ୍ଟରେ ଦେଇଥାଏ । ସେଇଥିପାଇଁ ତ ତା' ହାତଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ ପାଇଁ ସେ ମହୁଲ ଗୋଟାଏ, ସରଗିଫୁଲ ଗୋଟାଏ, ଭାଲିଆ ବାଡ଼କୁ ଯାଏ । ଏଥିରୁ ଯାହା ଆଣେ ସେ ସବୁ ତାର । ମାଆ ସେଥିରୁ କିଛି ନିଏ ନାହିଁ । ଏସବୁ ପାଇଁ ସ୍କୁଲ ମାରା ହୁଏ ନାହିଁ । ମହୁଲ ଫୁଲ ଗୋଟେଇବା ପାଇଁ ଭୋରୁ ଭୋରୁ ଯିବାପାଇଁ ହୁଏ । ସରଗି ଫୁଲ ପାଇଁ ସ୍କୁଲରୁ ଆସିଲାପରେ । ମାଆ କିଛି କହେ ନାହିଁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ମକାମିଲ କାମ କରିବାକୁ ହେଲେ ସ୍କୁଲ ମାରା କରିବାକୁ ପଡ଼େ । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ତା' ମା ଆଦୌ ଅନୁମତି ଦେବନାହିଁ । ମୋବାଇଲଟା କିଣିବ କେମିତି ? ବୈଶାଖୁ ସେଇ ପୁରୁଣା ମୋବାଇଲଟାକୁ ୧୦୦୦ଟଙ୍କା ହାଙ୍କୁଟି । ଟଙ୍କାଟିଏ ବି କାଟିବ ନାହିଁ । ନୂଆ ମୋବାଇଲଟିଏ କିଣିବା ସାମର୍ଥ୍ୟ ତା'ର ନାହିଁ । ସେଇ ପୁରୁଣା ଫୋନ୍‌ଟି କିଣିବାପାଇଁ ମନସ୍ଥ କଲା ପରେ ସେ ପଇସା ଯୋଗାଡ଼ କରିବାରେ ଲାଗିପଡ଼ିଛି । ବୈଶାଖୁ ତାକୁ ପ୍ରତିଶ୍ରୁତି ଦେଇଛି ସେ ତାକୁ ହିଁ ଫୋନ୍‌ଟି ଦେବ ଆଉ କାହାକୁ ନୁହେଁ । ଅଧିକ ପଇସା ଯାଚିଲେ ବି ନୁହେଁ । ବୈଶାଖୁ ତା'ର ଭଲ ସାଙ୍ଗ ।

ତାକୁ ଯେମିତି ହେଲେ ମୋବାଇଲଟା ଦରକାର । ନ ହେଲେ ତା' ବାପା ସହ ସେ ଯୋଗାଯୋଗ କେମିତି କରିବ ? ବାପା ସହ କଥା କେମିତି ହେବ ?

ରୁକ୍ମଧରର ହେତୁ ହେଇ ନଥିଲା, ତା'ବାପା ଯାଇଛି ଆନ୍ଧ୍ରା ଇଟା ଗଡ଼ି । ମାଆ କହୁଥିଲା ସେ ସାନ ଥିଲାବେଳେ ତା' ବାପା ତାକୁ

କାନ୍ଧରେ ବସେଇ ହାଟକୁ ନଉଥିଲା । ତା' ପାଇଁ ବେଲୁନ୍ କିଣି ଦେଉଥିଲା । ଖଜାପିଠା କିଣି ଦେଉଥିଲା । ମଷେଇ ହାଟରେ ନାଟ ଦେଖାଉଥିଲା । କେତେ ନୂଆ ନୂଆ ଖେଳନା କିଣି ଦେଉଥିଲା । ଏବେ କିନ୍ତୁ ମାଆ ତାକୁ କିଛି କିଣିଦେଉନି । ବାପାଟା କାହିଁକି ଆନ୍ଧ୍ରା ଗଲା କେଜାଣି ? ଯଦି ବା ଗଲା ମାଆ ପୁଅ ଦୁଇଟାଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖିବାପାଇଁ ଟିକେ ଆସନ୍ତାନି ? ରହିଗଲା ସିଆଡ଼େ । ବାପ ପ୍ରତି ତା' ମନ ବିଦ୍ରୋହୀ ହୋଇଉଠେ । ମୋବାଇଲଟିଏ କିଣିବା ପାଇଁ ତାକୁ ନିଜେ ପଇସା ସଂଚିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ୁଛି । ମୋବାଇଲ କିଣି ସେ ସେଥିରେ ବାପ ସହ କଥା ହେବ । ବାପାଙ୍କୁ ଫେରି ଆସିବାକୁ କହିବ । ମାଆ କେମିତି ପର ଘରେ ପାଇଟି କରି ତାକୁ ବଞ୍ଚେଇଛି ସେ କଥା ବି କହିବ । ମାଆ ସଙ୍ଗେ ବି କଥା କରେଇଦବ । ତା'ର ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ତା' ବାପା ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ଫେରିଆସିବ । ଯେତେ ଦୂରରେ ଥାଉ ପଛେ । ସେ ଫେରିଆସିବ ।

ସେ ମନେ ପକାଏ ବାପର ମୁହଁ । ଭଲ କରି ମନେ ପଡ଼େ ନାହିଁ । ଝାପୁସା ଝାପୁସା ଆଖିରେ ସେ କେବଳ ସ୍ମୃତି ରୋମନ୍ତନ କରେ । ବାପା ସଂପର୍କରେ ମାଆ କହିଥିବା କଥାଗୁଡ଼ାକ ସିନା ଆଖି ଆଗରେ ଠିଆ ହୁଏ, ତା' ନିଜସ୍ୱ ସ୍ମୃତି କିଛି ଆସୁନାହିଁ ଆଗକୁ । ସେ ଏଥର ଦୃଢ଼ ମନସ୍କ ହୁଏ । ତା'ର ବାପା ଦରକାର । ମଦୁଆ ହେଉ କି ଅଳସୁଆ । ମୂଲିଆ ହେଉ କି ସାଉକାର । ତା'ର ଦରକାର ବାପା । ସେ ମୋବାଇଲ କିଣିବ । ସେଇ ମୋବାଇଲରେ ଖୋଜିଆଣିବ ତା' ବାପାକୁ । ଦୁନିଆର ଯେଉଁ କୋଣରେ ଥାଉ ନା କାହିଁକି । ଏକ ଅସ୍ଥିର ଆବେଗରେ ତା' ପାଦର ଗତି ଆହୁରି ତୀବ୍ର ହୋଇପଡ଼େ । ସେ ଏକରକମ ଦୌଡ଼ି ଦୌଡ଼ି ଚାଲେ । ତା' ପଛେ ପଛେ ତମରୁ ।

ଦୁହେଁ ଚାଲୁଥିଲେ । ରାସ୍ତାର ଦୁଇ କଡ଼ରେ ଥୁଣ୍ଡା ମକା କ୍ଷେତ । ମକା ସବୁ ତୋଳି ନେଇଗଲାପରେ ନିରିମାଣ୍ଡ ହେଇ ଠିଆ ହେଇଛନ୍ତି ସନ୍ତାନ ହରା ମାଆ ପରି । ମଝିରେ ମଝିରେ ଧାନ କିଆରୀରୁ ଭାସି ଆସୁଛି ଧାନ ଫୁଲର ବାସ୍ନା । ସବୁଜ ଧାନ କ୍ଷେତ ଲହଡ଼ି ଭାଙ୍ଗୁଛି । ଅଦିନିଆ ମେଘଟା ଉଠେଇ ପାଗ କାଉଁଳିଆ କରି ରଖୁଛି । ବାତ୍ୟା ହେବ ବୋଲି ଚାରିଆଡ଼େ ହୁରିହାଟ ହୋଇଯାଇଛି । ଛୋଟ ବଡ଼ ଯେତେ ମକାଚାଷୀ ଅଛନ୍ତି ସମସ୍ତେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ । ମକା ସବୁ ମଞ୍ଜି ଛଡ଼େଇ ବସ୍ତାମାନଙ୍କରେ ରଖିବାପାଇଁ ଡର ନାହିଁ । ଥରେ ଯଦି ବର୍ଷା ହେଇଯାଏ, ଘରେ ବାହାରେ ଛାତ ଉପରେ ଚାଷ ଜମିରେ, ଜମା ହେଇଥିବା ମକାର ରଙ୍ଗ ବଦଳିଯିବ । ବେପାରୀମାନେ ରେଟ୍ ତାଉନ୍ କରିଦେବେ । ଦିନରାତି କାମ ଚାଲିଛି । ଟିକିଏ ବି ପୁରସତ ନାହିଁ । ସମସ୍ତେ ଯନ୍ତ୍ର ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଯନ୍ତ୍ର ହେଇଯାଇଛନ୍ତି ।

ରୁକ୍ତଧର ଓ ତମରୁ ପହଞ୍ଚିଗଲେ ମିଲ୍ ହତା ଭିତରେ । ପର୍ବତ ପ୍ରମାଣେ କୁଡ଼ କୁଡ଼ ଗଦା ହୋଇଛି ହଳଦୀ ଗୁରୁଗୁରୁ ଗୋଟା ମକାମାନ । ସେଗୁଡ଼ିକୁ ଛୋଟ ଛୋଟ ବସ୍ତାରେ ଭର୍ତ୍ତି କରୁଛନ୍ତି ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଓ ପିଲାମାନେ । ପୁରୁଷମାନେ ସେଗୁଡ଼ିକ ବୋହି ନେଇ ମିଲରେ ଭାଙ୍ଗୁଛନ୍ତି । ଘିର୍ ଘିର୍ ଶବ୍ଦ କରି ନିମିଷକ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ସେ ତା' ଗର୍ଭ ଭିତରକୁ ନେଇଯାଉଛି ଓ ଗୋଟିଏ ପଟରେ ମକା ଭୁଣ୍ଟି ବାହାର କରି ଦେଉଛି ଅନ୍ୟପଟେ ମକାଦାନା । କୁଲିମାନେ ମକାଦାନା ସବୁକୁ ବସ୍ତାମାନଙ୍କରେ ଭରୁଛନ୍ତି । ମକା ଭୁଣ୍ଟିକୁ ବୋହି ଗଦା କରୁଛନ୍ତି ଆଉ କିଛି କୁଲି । ରୁକ୍ତଧର ଓ ତମରୁକୁ ଦେଖି କୁଲି କଣ୍ଠାକୂର ଜୁଗୁନୁ ରାଓ ଚିହ୍ନିକି ଆସି କହିଲା- ଏତେ ତେରିରେ ଆସିଲେ ହେବ । ଦିନକୁ ପଚାଶଟଙ୍କା ଲେଖାଏଁ ଦେବି । ତମେ ଶଲେ ଆସିବ ଦିନ ୧୨ଟାକୁ । ରୁକ୍ତଧର କହିଲା-

“ବାରଟା କୋଉଠି ଆଜ୍ଞା । ସ୍କୁଲ ଘଣ୍ଟା ତ ବାଜିନି” । ରୁପ ବେ ଶାଲା ! ଯାଆ ଯାଆ, କାମରେ ଲାଗିପଡ଼ । ଜୁଗୁନୁ ରାଓ ବିରକ୍ତ ହେଇ କହିଲା ।

ତମରୁ ଓ ରୁକ୍ତଧର ଦୁହେଁ ବହି ବସ୍ତାନାକୁ ଗୋଟିଏ କୋଣକୁ ରଖିଦେଇ ଗୋଟାଏ ବଡ଼ କୁଡ଼ ପାଖରେ ହାମୁଡ଼େଇ ପଡ଼ି କାମରେ ଲାଗିଗଲେ । ଛୋଟ ଛୋଟ ସିମେଣ୍ଟ ବସ୍ତାରେ ଦୁହେଁ ଗୋଟାଏ ମକାମାନ ଭରିଚାଲିଲେ । ଏମାନଙ୍କ ପାଳି ଆସିବାରୁ ରୁକ୍ତଧର ସେଇ ବସ୍ତାଗୁଡ଼ିକୁ ଉଠେଇ ନେଇ ମେସିନ୍ ଭିତରକୁ ଭାଙ୍ଗିବାକୁ ଲାଗିଲା । ଘର୍ ଘର୍ ହେଇ ମେସିନ୍ ଚାଲିଲା ଓ ସେ ତା' କାମ ବିଶ୍ୱସ୍ତ ଭାବରେ କରି ଚାଲିଲା । ଦିନ ଆସି ତନିଟା ହେଲାଣି । ଭୋକରେ ଦୁହେଁଙ୍କ ପେଟ ଆଉଟ୍ ପାଉଟୁ ହେଲାଣି । ସ୍କୁଲରେ ଥିଲେ ଏତେବେଳକୁ ମଧ୍ୟାହ୍ନଭୋଜନ ହେଇ ସାରନ୍ତାଣି । ହଉ ପଛେ ପାଣିଆ ଡାଲମା ଆଉ ପୋକରା ଚାଉଳର ଭାତ, ଭୋକବେଳେ କିଏ ଏତେ କଥା ଦେଖୁଛି ? ଘରେ ତ ସେତକ ବି ମିଳେ ନାହିଁ । ଟମାଟ ଚଟଣି, କି ଶୁଖୁଆ ପୋଡ଼ାରେ ମା ପୁଅ ଦୁହେଁଙ୍କର ଘର ଚଳିଯାଏ । ମଧ୍ୟାହ୍ନଭୋଜନ କଥା ମନେ ପଡ଼ିଯିବାରୁ ତାର ଭୋକଟା ଆହୁରି ବଢ଼ିଗଲା । ଦେଶୀୟା କୁଲିମାନେ ନ ଖାଇ କାମ କରିପାରନ୍ତି । ସକାଳୁ ଯାହା ଘରୁ ଖାଇ ଆସିଥା'ନ୍ତି ସେତିକି । ମଧ୍ୟାହ୍ନଭୋଜନ ଉପରେ ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱ ନଥାଏ ସେମାନଙ୍କର । କେହି କେହି ଆଲୁମିନିୟମ୍ କ୍ୟାରେଜରେ ମାଣ୍ଡିଆ ପେଜ ଭରି ଆଣିଥାନ୍ତି କଦବା କୃଚିଟ୍ ଲୋକ ଭାତ ଆଣିଥାନ୍ତି । ଅନ୍ୟମାନେ ସେମିତି ନିତାଳ ରହି କାମ କରନ୍ତି । ଏକାଥରେ କାମ ସାରି ରାତ୍ରିଭୋଜନ । କିନ୍ତୁ ସବୁଦିନ ସ୍କୁଲରେ ମଧ୍ୟାହ୍ନଭୋଜନରେ

ଅଭ୍ୟସ୍ତ ରୁକ୍ମଧର ଶରୀରଟା ମଧ୍ୟାହ୍ନଭୋଜନ ସମୟ ଅତିକ୍ରାନ୍ତ ହେବାରୁ କ୍ଳାନ୍ତ ହୋଇପଡ଼ିଲା । କିଛି କ୍ଷୁଧା ଆଉ କିଛି ତୃଷ୍ଣାରେ । ପୁଣି ଗୋଟା ମକା ବସ୍ତାକୁ ଟେକି ଟେକି ନେଇ ମିଲରେ ଭାଲିବା ମଧ୍ୟ କମ୍ କଷ୍ଟକର କାମ ନୁହେଁ । ପାଞ୍ଚଟା ନ ବାଜିଲେ ସାଉକାର କାମରୁ ଛୁଟିଦେବ ନାହିଁ । ପେଟ ଭୋକକୁ ପେଟରେ ମାରିବା ପାଇଁ ହିଁ ପଡ଼ିବ । ରୁକ୍ମଧର ଭାବୁଥିଲା ଆଜି ସାଉକାର ପଇସା ଦେଲେ ଆସନ୍ତା କାଲି ବିସ୍ମୁର୍କ ପ୍ୟାକେଟଟିଏ ପକେଟରେ ପୁରାଇ ଆଣିବାକୁ ହେବ । ଭୋକ ହେଲେ ଦୁଇ ସାଙ୍ଗ ଦୁଇ ଦୁଇଟା ଚୋବେଇ ପାଣି ପିଇଦେବେ । ଏମିତି ଆକାଶ ପାତାଳ ଭାବୁଥିଲା ବେଳେ ରୁକ୍ମଧର ହାତରେ ଥିବା ମକାବସ୍ତାରୁ ମକାତକ ମିଲରେ ପଡ଼ିସାରି ଖାଲି ବସ୍ତାଟି ବି ପଶିଗଲାଣି ତା’ ଭିତରେ, ରୁକ୍ମଧର ଜାଣିପାରି ନାହିଁ । ସ୍ଵାଭାବିକ ଶବ୍ଦଠାରୁ ଆଉ ଗୋଟାଏ ବିକଟାଳ ଶବ୍ଦ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହେବାରୁ ତାର ଧ୍ୟାନ ଭଗ୍ନ ହେଲା । କିଂକର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ବିମୁତ୍ତ ହୋଇ ସେ ଡାହାଣ ହାତରେ ଚାଣିଧରିଲା ବସ୍ତାଟିକୁ । ଆଖି ପିଛୁଳାକେ ସେଇ ବସ୍ତା ସହ ରୁକ୍ମଧରର କଅଁଳ ନରମ କୁନି କୁନି ହାତ ପାପୁଲିଟାକୁ ବି ଚୋବେଇ ଖାଇଚାଲିଲା ସେଇ ନିଷ୍ଠୁର ଯନ୍ତ୍ର ଦାନବଟା । ରୁକ୍ମଧର ଧୀରେ ଧୀରେ ଚାଣି ହେଇ ଯାଉଥିଲା ସେଇ ଦାନବର ମୁଖଗହର ଆଡ଼କୁ । ପାପୁଲି, ପାପୁଲିର ମଣିବନ୍ଧ ମଣିବନ୍ଧରୁ କହୁଣି ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ । ଗୋଟାଏ ଝଟକାରେ ଏତେସବୁ କାଣ୍ଡ ଘଟିଗଲା ଯେ କିଛି ଜାଣିପାରିଲା ନାହିଁ ରୁକ୍ମଧର । ସେ କେବଳ ମରଣାନ୍ତକ ଚିତ୍କାରଟିଏ କରିଉଠିଲା । ଆଉ ଗୋଟାଏ ବସ୍ତାରେ ମକା ଧରି ଠିଆ ହୋଇଥିଲା ତମ୍ବରୁ । ରୁକ୍ମଧରର ଚିତ୍କାର ଶୁଣି ସେ ମକାବସ୍ତାଟା ତଳେ ଫିଙ୍ଗିଦେଲା । ରୁକ୍ମଧରର ଅଖାକୁ ଜାବୁଡ଼ି ଧରି ସିଏ ବି ଗୋଟାଏ ଅସ୍ଵାଭାବିକ ରଡ଼ି ଦେଲା ଓ ଯନ୍ତ୍ର ଦାନବର କରାଳ ମୁଖ ଗହରକୁ ଚାଣି ଆଣୁ ଆଣୁ ଦୁହେଁ ଛିଟିକି ପଡ଼ିଗଲେ ଚଟାଣରେ । ହୋଲି ଖେଳିବା ପରି ଦୁହିଁଙ୍କ ଶରୀର ରକ୍ତ ଜୁଡୁବୁଡୁ । ଚଟାଣ ସାରା ତାଜା ରକ୍ତର ପିଚ୍କାରୀ । ଦୁହିଁଙ୍କ ଚିତ୍କାରରେ ଯିଏ ଯେଉଁଠି ଥିଲେ ଧାଇଁ ଆସିଲେ । ସେତେବେଳକୁ ରୁକ୍ମଧରର ଚେତା ବୁଡ଼ିଗଲାଣି । ତାର ଚେତାଶୂନ୍ୟ ରକ୍ତାକ୍ତ ଶରୀରକୁ ଟେକାଟେକି କରି ମକାବୁହା ହେଉଥିବା ପିକଅପ୍ ଭ୍ୟାନରେ ଡାକ୍ତରଖାନା ନିଆଗଲା । କେବଳ ରକ୍ତପ୍ରବାହ ବନ୍ଦ କରିବା ବ୍ୟତୀତ ଏଠିକାର ଡାକ୍ତରମାନଙ୍କର ଆଉ କିଛି କରିବାର ନଥିଲା । ରୁକ୍ମଧରର ଡାହାଣ ହାତ ପାପୁଲି ପାଖରୁ କହୁଣି ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଯନ୍ତ୍ର ଦାନବଟା ଚୋବେଇ ଚୋବେଇ ଖାଇ ସାରିଥିଲା ।

ଚେତା ଫେରିବା ବେଳକୁ ରୁକ୍ମଧର ନିଜକୁ ଆବିଷ୍କାର କଲା ହସ୍ପିଟାଲ ବେଡ଼ରେ । ତା’ ଡାହାଣ ହାତଟାରେ ବ୍ୟାଣ୍ଡେଜ୍ ଗୁଡ଼ା

ହୋଇଛି । କହୁଣି ପାଖରୁ ତଳକୁ ଶୂନ୍ୟ, କିଛି ନାହିଁ । ତା’ ପାଟିରୁ କିଛି କଥା ବାହାରିଲା ନାହିଁ । କେବଳ ବିସ୍ମୟ ବିସ୍ଫାରିତ ନୟନରେ ଚାରିଆଡ଼କୁ ଚାହିଁଲା । ତା’ର କିଛି ମନେପଡ଼ିଲା ନାହିଁ । କେବଳ କୁଡ଼ କୁଡ଼ ହଳଦୀ ଗୁରୁଗୁରୁ ମକା, ପୁରୁଷ ଓ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ସଭିଙ୍କର ରାହୁରାଟ । ଯନ୍ତ୍ର ଦାନବର ଘିର୍ ଘିର୍ ନାଦ । ଆଜି ବୁଢ଼ା କଥାର ସେଇ ବିରାଟ ଗାଡ଼ିଥିବା ରାକ୍ଷସର ଗର୍ଭ ଭିତରକୁ ସବୁ କିଛି ପେଶୀ ହୋଇଯିବାର ବିକଟ ବିଭୀଷିକା । ସେ ପୁଣି ଥରେ ଚେତା ହରେଇଦେଲା ।

ଏଥରକ ଚେତା ଆସିଲା ପରେ ସେ ଦେଖିଲା ତା’ ପାଖରେ ବସିଛି ତା ମାଆ । ରୁକ୍ମଧରକୁ ଭାରି ଦୋଷୀ ଦୋଷୀ ଲାଗିଲା । ସିଏ ଯଦି ମକା ମିଲକୁ ଯାଉଛି ବୋଲି ମାଆକୁ କହିଥାନ୍ତା ମାଆ ତାକୁ ଆଦୌ ଛାଡ଼ି ନଥାନ୍ତା କି ତାକୁ ତାର ବଞ୍ଚିବାର ସାଧନ, ଡାହାଣ ହାତଟା ହରେଇବାକୁ ପଡ଼ି ନଥାନ୍ତା ।

ରୁକ୍ମଧର ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ହାତ ବୁଲେଇ ଆଣିଲା ତା’ ମାଆ । ତା’ ଦୁଇ ଆଖିରେ ବି ଧାରା ଶ୍ରାବଣର ବନ୍ୟା । ତା’ ପାଟିରୁ କିଛି କଥା ବାହାରୁ ନଥିଲା । ନର୍ସ ଦୁଇଜଣ ଆସିଲେ । ସାଲାଲନଟାକୁ ଚେକ୍ କରି ସେଥିରେ ଇଂଜେକ୍ସନଟାଏ ଦେଇ ଫେରି ଯାଉଯାଉ ଜଣେ ନର୍ସ ପଚାରିଲା- ବାବୁ! ଭଲ ଲାଗୁଛି ଚିକେ ।

ରୁକ୍ମଧର ନିରାହ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରେ ନର୍ସ ମୁହଁକୁ ଚାହିଁଲା । ତା’ ପାଟିରୁ କିଛି କଥା ବାହାରିଲା ନାହିଁ ।

ସେତେବେଳକୁ ପେନ୍‌କିଲରର ପ୍ରଭାବରେ ତା’ ହାତର ଯନ୍ତ୍ରଣା କମି ଆସିଥିଲା ସିନା ମନ ଯନ୍ତ୍ରଣା ବଢ଼ି ଚାଲିଥିଲା । ତାର ସବୁ ସ୍ଵପ୍ନ କଳ୍ପନା ଭାବନା ଭସ୍ମୀଭୂତ ହୋଇଯାଇଛି । ସେ ଆଉ କେବେ ବି ତା’ ବାପା ସହ କଥା ହେଇପାରିବନି କି ତାକୁ ଆଉ ଫେରେଇ ଆଣିପାରିବନି । ମା’ ମୁହଁରେ ସେ ଆଉ ହସ ଖେଳେଇ ପାରିବନି । ତା’ ପାଠପଢ଼ା ବନ୍ଦ ହେଇଗଲା । ରୋଜଗାର କରିବାର ସାମର୍ଥ୍ୟ ବି ତାର ନଷ୍ଟ ହେଇଗଲା । ତା’ ଜୀବନଟା ବ୍ୟର୍ଥ ହେଇଗଲା । ତା’ ଦୁଇ ଆଖି କୋଣରୁ ଦୁଇଧାର ଲୁହ ନିଗିଡ଼ି ଦୁଇ କାନ ମୂଳକୁ ଗଡ଼ିଗଲା । ମାଆର ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ସେତକ ଏଡ଼ିଗଲା ନାହିଁ । ତା’ ମଜଲା ଛିଣ୍ଡା ଲୁଗା କାନିଟାକୁ ତା’ ମୁହଁ ଉପରେ ବୁଲେଇ ଆଣିଲା ସିନା କ’ଣ କହି ପୁଅଟାକୁ ଆଶ୍ଵାସନା ଦେବ ସେ ଶବ୍ଦମାନେ ତା’ ଓଠକୁ ପଇଟିଲେ ନାହିଁ । ସିଏ ଜଳକାଙ୍କ ପରି ବସିରହିଲା । ଗୋଟାଏ ମୁହଁରୁରେ ତା’ ଦୁନିଆ ଓଲଟ ପାଲଟ ହେଇଯାଇଛି । ତା’ ବଞ୍ଚିବାର ଦମ୍ଭ ତୁଟିଯାଇଛି । ଯେଉଁ ସୂତାକୁ ନେଇ ସେ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ପାଇଁ ବୁଢ଼ାଆଣି ଜାଲ ବୁଣୁଥିଲା

ସେ ସୁତା ଛିଣ୍ଡିଯାଇଛି । ତା' ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଉପରେ ଆକାଶଟା ଛିଣ୍ଡିଯାଇଛି । ସେ ସେମିତି ତୁନୀ ହେଇ ବସିରହିଲା ।

ସଂଧ୍ୟା ସୁଦ୍ଧା ଖବରଟା ସାରା ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଖେଳି ଯାଇଥିଲା । ଦୂରଦର୍ଶନର ଚ୍ୟାନେଲ୍ ମାନଙ୍କରେ ମକା ମିଲରେ ଶିଶୁ ଶ୍ରମିକର ହାତ କଟିଯିବା ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧ ମୁଖ୍ୟ ଥିଲା । ଶିକ୍ଷକଙ୍କ ତାରିଦ୍ରେ ସ୍କୁଲ ଫିଏ ଓ ବହିଖାତା କିଣିବା ପାଇଁ ଶିଶୁ ଶ୍ରମିକ ମକା ମିଲରେ କାମ କରୁଥିବାବେଳେ ଦୁର୍ଭିକ୍ଷାଗ୍ରସ୍ତ ବୋଲି ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧପତ୍ରରେ ପ୍ରଚାରିତ ହେଲା । ସ୍କୁଲ ଫି ଦେଇ ନ ପାରିବାରୁ ଶ୍ରେଣୀ ଶିକ୍ଷକ କ୍ଲବରୁ ତଡ଼ି ଦେଇଥିଲେ । ସରକାରଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ ଛାତ୍ରଛାତ୍ରୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ମିଳୁଥିବା ପାଠ୍ୟପୁସ୍ତକ ମଧ୍ୟ ବନ୍ଧନ କରାଯାଇ ନଥିଲା । ତେଣୁ ପିଲାଟି ବହି ଖାତା କିଣିବାପାଇଁ ମିଲରେ କାମ କରୁଥିବା ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧମାନ ମଧ୍ୟ ଗଣମାଧ୍ୟମ ମାନଙ୍କରେ ପ୍ରସାରିତ ହେଲା । ଏନ୍.ଜି.ଓମାନେ ଧାଡ଼ି ଛୁଟିଲେ ରୁକ୍ମଧର ବେଢ଼ ପାଖକୁ । ବିରୋଧ ଦଳ ହଠାତ୍ ସକ୍ରିୟ ହୋଇଉଠିଲେ । ରୁକ୍ମଧରକୁ ଦେଖିବାପାଇଁ ଦଳଦଳ ହେଇ ଆସିଲେ ରାଜଧାନୀରୁ । ଶିଶୁ ଓ ମହିଳା ବିଭାଗ ବିଭାଗ ତପ୍ତ ହୋଇଗଲେ । ମାନବାଧିକାର କର୍ମୀମାନେ ପ୍ରତିବାଦ ସଭା କଲେ । ଶିଶୁ ଶ୍ରମିକ ନିରୋଧ ଆଇନ୍ ଅନୁସାରେ ମିଲ ମାଲିକକୁ ଆରେଷ୍ଟ କରାଗଲା । ସ୍କୁଲର ପ୍ରଧାନ ଶିକ୍ଷକ ଓ ଶ୍ରେଣୀ ଶିକ୍ଷକଙ୍କୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ନିଲମ୍ବିତ କରାଗଲା ।

ଦୂରଦର୍ଶନ ଓ ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧପତ୍ରମାନଙ୍କରେ ରୁକ୍ମଧର ଓ ତା' ମାଆର ଛବି ବାହାରିଲା । ଶୁଆ ପଡ଼ିଲା ପରି ସେ କହି ଯାଉଥିଲା ସ୍କୁଲ ଫିଏ ଓ ଖାତା କିଣିବା ପାଇଁ ସେ ମକା ମିଲରେ ଦୈନିକ ପଚାଶ ଟଙ୍କା ମଜୁରୀ ପାଇଁ କାମ କରୁଥିଲା ।

ଗଣମାଧ୍ୟମର ହିରୋ ସାଜିଥିଲା ରୁକ୍ମଧର । କେବଳ ରୁକ୍ମଧର ସାଙ୍ଗକୁ ତା' ମାଆର ନିଷ୍ପତ୍ତ ବୟାନ ତଥ୍ୟକୁ ଆହୁରି ବଳିଷ୍ଠ କରୁଥିଲା ।

ରୁକ୍ମଧରର ସମସ୍ତ ଚିକିତ୍ସା ଦାୟିତ୍ଵ ସରକାର ବହନ କରିଥିଲେ । ତା' ମାଆକୁ ଇନ୍ଦିରା ଆବାସ ଘର ଖଣ୍ଡେ ପ୍ରଦାନର ପ୍ରତିଶ୍ରୁତି ସରକାର ଦେଇଥିଲେ । ରୁକ୍ମଧରକୁ ନଗଦ ଏକଲକ୍ଷ ଟଙ୍କା ଦେବାପାଇଁ ମଧ୍ୟ ସରକାର ଘୋଷଣା କରିଥିଲେ । ଦୁଇତିନି ଦିନ ପରେ ସାରା ଓଡ଼ିଶାକୁ ଅସ୍ତବ୍ୟସ୍ତ କରିଦେଉଥିବା ଏ ସଂବାଦର ସାମ୍ବାଦିକମାନେ ତୁନୀ ପଡ଼ିଗଲେ । ଟିଭି ଓ ଖବରକାଗଜମାନେ ଅନ୍ୟ ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧ ଖୋଜିଲେ । ରାଜନେତାମାନେ ଅନ୍ୟ ପ୍ରସଙ୍ଗରେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ରହିଲେ । ପ୍ରଶାସନର ତପ୍ତତା ବି ଧିମା ପଡ଼ିଗଲା । ଯେଉଁଦିନ ସୁସ୍ଥ ହେଇ ରୁକ୍ମଧର ଘରକୁ ଫେରିଲା ପ୍ରଥମେ ତାକୁ ଭେଟିଥିଲା ବୈଶାଖୁ ।

ତାକୁ ଦେଖି ମନ ଦୁଃଖରେ ରୁକ୍ମଧର କହିଥିଲା- ତୁ ତୋ ମୋବାଇଲ୍‌ଟା ଆଉ କାହାକୁ ଦେଇ ଦେରେ । ମୁଁ ନେଇପାରିବି ନାହିଁ । ରୁକ୍ମଧରର କଣ୍ଠରୋଧ ହୋଇ ଆସୁଥିଲା । ତା' ଦୁଇ ଆଖିରୁ ଗଡ଼ିପଡ଼ିଲା ଦୁଇ ଧାର ଲୁହ ।

ବୈଶାଖୁ ଦରଦୀ କଣ୍ଠରେ କହିଲା- ଧେଉଁ! ମୁଁ ପରା ତତେ ମୋବାଇଲ୍‌ଟା ଦେବାପାଇଁ ଆସିଛି । ତୁ ମତେ କିଛି ପଇସା ଦେବା ଦରକାର ନାହିଁ ।

ବୈଶାଖୁ ତା' ପକେଟରୁ ମୋବାଇଲ୍ ବାହାର କଲା । ରୁକ୍ମଧରର ବାଁ ହାତଟାକୁ ଉଠେଇ ତା' ହାତରେ ଧରେଇଦେଇ କହିଲା- ଆଜିଠୁ ଏଇଟା ତୋର ।

କୋଟିନିଧି ପାଇଲା ପରି ଅନୁଭବ କଲା ରୁକ୍ମଧର । ତା' ଦେହ ମନ ଭିତରେ ଗୋଟାଏ ଅପୂର୍ବ ପୁଲକ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହୋଇଗଲା । ସେ ଦୁଇ ପାପୁଲିରେ ସେଇ ଅନାସ୍ଵାଦିତ ସ୍ଵାଦକୁ ଆସ୍ଵାଦନ କରିବାକୁ ଚାହିଁଲା । ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତକ ପାଇଁ ତା' ଉପର ଦେଇ ପ୍ରବାହିତ ହୋଇଥିବା ଖଣ୍ଡ ପ୍ରଳୟକୁ ସେ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ବିସ୍ମିତ ହୋଇଗଲା । ମୋବାଇଲ୍ ସୁଇଚ୍ ଅନ୍ କରି ତା' ବଟମ୍ ଗୁଡ଼ିକରେ ଅଙ୍ଗୁଳି ଚାଳନା କରିବାପାଇଁ ତା' ଡାହାଣ ହାତ ବ୍ୟଗ୍ର ହୋଇଉଠିଲା । ତା' ଡାହାଣ ହାତର ଉଚ୍ଛନ୍ନ ପାପୁଲି ବାଁ ହାତରେ ଥିବା ମୋବାଇଲ୍ ଉପରେ ଅଟକିଗଲା, ଆଃ-କାହିଁ ତାର ପାପୁଲି? କାହିଁ ତାର ଆଙ୍ଗୁଳି ଟିପ । ଏସବୁ ତ ଥିଲା କେବଳ ତାର ମିଛ ଭାବନା । ମିଛ କଳ୍ପନା । ସେ ଦୃଷ୍ଟି ନିକ୍ଷେପ କଲା ଡାହାଣ ହାତକୁ । କହୁଣି ପାଖରୁ ସରି ଯାଇଥିଲା ସେ ହାତ । ତଳକୁ ନା ପାପୁଲି ଥିଲା ନା ଆଙ୍ଗୁଳି । ସବୁ ଶୂନ୍ୟ ମହାଶୂନ୍ୟ । ତା' କଣ୍ଠ ଫଟେଇ ଗୋଟାଏ ଆର୍ତ୍ତନାଦ ବାହାରି ଆସିଲା । ତାକୁ ଦୁଇ ହାତରେ ଜାବୁଡ଼ି ଧରି ବୈଶାଖୁ ବି ଭେଁ କିନା ବୋବେଇ ଉଠିଲା ।

ଭୈରବ କଲେଜ, ଭାବୁଗାଁ, ନବରଙ୍ଗପୁର  
ମୋ: ୯୪୩୭୦୩୩୦୭୪

# ଶ୍ରମର ସ୍ୱାର୍ଥକତା

## ଅଧ୍ୟାପିକା ସୌଦାମିନୀ ବେହେରା

ରବିର ଲୋହିତ କିରଣ ଧିରେ ଧିରେ ଗଗନରେ ବ୍ୟାପିବାରେ ଲାଗିଲାଣି । ରଜନୀ ମେଦିନୀରେ ପାହୁଣ୍ଡ ପକାଇ ସଞ୍ଜବତୀକୁ ଆହ୍ୱାନ କରୁଅଛି । ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାର ବେଳାଟି ପବିତ୍ର ହୁଏ ଧୂପଦୀପ, ଶଙ୍ଖ ଘଣ୍ଟର ପବିତ୍ର ଧ୍ୱନୀରେ । ପୃଥିବୀ କଡ଼ ଲେଉଟାଇ ଅନ୍ଧାରକୁ କୋଳାଗ୍ରତ କରିବାକୁ ସବୁ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତି ପର୍ବ ସାରିଲାଣି । ହଠାତ୍ ପାଣିପାଗରେ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ । ଆକାଶରେ କଳାହାଣ୍ଡିଆ ମେଘମାଳାର ଚଞ୍ଚଳ ଝଲିଲେ ଅଣ୍ଡା କୋହଲା ପବନ ସୁରୁଇ ଦେଲାଣି, ଏଇ ବର୍ଷିବ ବୋଧେ । ଉଦଣ୍ଡୀ ନାରୀର ରୂପ ପରି ବାହାରେ ଭାଳିଝଲିଛି ବର୍ଷାର ଛନ୍ଦ ନୃତ୍ୟ । ଅଳ୍ପ ଛିଟିକା ମାରୁଛି ବର୍ଷା ପାଣି ଝରକାର ସଫର ଫାଙ୍କରେ ଓ ଭେଲଭେଟ୍ ପରଦାକୁ ଓଦା କରୁଛି ବର୍ଷା ତା ଚିରାଚରିତ ଜଙ୍ଗରେ ।

ଭ୍ରୂଇଁ ରୁମକୁ ପଶି ଆସିଲା ମାୟା । ହାତରେ ଏକ ଟ୍ରେରେ ଦୁଇ କପ୍ ଚା ଓ ଗରମ ଗରମ ଛଣା ହୋଇଥିବା କିଛି ପକଡ଼ି । ବେଶ, ଜମିବ, ଏ ଅଦିନିଆ ବର୍ଷାର ଥଣ୍ଡାମାନକୁ ଗରମ କରିବାରେ ହସି ହସି ମାୟା ଶୁଭଙ୍କର ନିକଟକୁ ଯାଇ ସୋଫାରେ ଲଥୁ କରି ବସିପଡ଼ିଲା । ଚି'ପଏ ଉପରେ ଟ୍ରେ କୁ ରଖି ଶୁଭଙ୍କର ମୁହଁକୁ ଚିକେ ଚାହିଁଲା । ଏତେ ସମୟ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ବୋଧେ ଶୁଭଙ୍କର ମାୟା ଆସିବାର ସୂଚନା ନଥିଲା । ଶୁଭ, ଏ ଶୁଭ ଦେଖିଲା । ଏ କ'ଣ ଏତେ ଅନ୍ୟମନସ୍କ । ଚା ବରଫ ହୋଇଗଲେ ବୋଧେ ପିଇବ । ଏହା କହି ମାୟା ଶୁଭଙ୍କର କାନ୍ଧକୁ ଚିକେ ହଲେଇ ଦେଲା । ହଠାତ୍ ଶୁଭଙ୍କର ଚମକି ପଡ଼ିଲା । କହିଲା ଏ କ'ଣ ହେଲା । ମୁଁ ସବୁ ଶୁଣିଛି । କ'ଣ ହେଲା । ମାୟା କହିଲା, କ'ଣ ଶୁଣିଲ, ଛେନାଗୁଡ଼ । ତୋର ଘରେ ପଶି କଳାକନା ବୁଲେଇ ଝଲିଗଲେ ବି ତୁମେ କିଛି ଜାଣିପାରିବ ନାହିଁ ।

ଶୁଭଙ୍କର କପାଳରୁ ହାତ କାଢ଼ି କହିଲା, ନା ସେ ସବୁ କିଛି ନୁହଁ । ମାୟା ଚିକେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହୋଇ ପଚାରିଲା, ତମର ସତରେ କ'ଣ ହୋଇଛି ଯେ ମନକୁ ଏତେ ଉଦାସ କରି ରଖୁଛ । ନା ଯେ, ମୁଁ ଅତୀତର ଅଗଣାକୁ ପଶିଯାଇଥିଲି ଶୁଭଙ୍କର କହିଲା, ହେଲେ ମୋ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନକୁ ଧୋଇଦେବ ଏ ଅଦିନିଆ ବର୍ଷାର ତାଣ୍ଡବ । ମାୟା ଥଙ୍ଗା କରି ଶୁଭଙ୍କରକୁ କହିଲା, ଦୁହେଁ ବେଶ୍ ହସିଥିଲେ, ମାୟା ସଫରଗୁଡ଼ିକ ବନ୍ଦ କରିବାକୁ ଗଲା । ଚା ପିଇ ପକଡ଼ିର ମଜା ନିଅ କହି ମାୟା ନିଜ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟରେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ରହିଲା । ମାୟା ଶୁଭଙ୍କର ଦୁହେଁ କଲେଜରେ ସହପାଠୀ ଥିଲେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ବିବାହ ବନ୍ଧନରେ ବାନ୍ଧି ହେବେ ବୋଲି ପରସ୍ପରଙ୍କ

ମଧ୍ୟରେ କଥା ଦିଆ ନିଆଁ ହୋଇଥିଲା । ଶୁଭଙ୍କରର ଦୃଢ଼ତା ଥିଲା ସେ ନିଜ ଗୋଡ଼ରେ ଛିଡ଼ା ହେବା ପରେ ମାୟାକୁ ନିଜର ଜୀବନସାଥୀ କରିବ ବୋଲି କଥା ଦେଇଥିଲା । ଶୁଭଙ୍କର ସାମ୍ନାରେ ଅତୀତର ଘଟଣାଗୁଡ଼ିକ ତା ଆଖି ଆଗରେ ନାଚିଗଲା କଳାଧଳାର ସିନେମାର ଗୋଟିଏ ଗୋଟିଏ ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ପରି ।

ବଣ, ପାହାଡ଼ ଘେରା ଏକ ଅଖ୍ୟାତ ପଲ୍ଲୀର ନେତରା ତା' ପରିବାକୁ ନେଇ ଚଳିଆସୁଥିଲା । ତା' ପୂର୍ବ ପୁରୁଷର ପବିତ୍ର ମାଟିକୁ ଯେତେ କଷ୍ଟ ହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ କେବେ ଛାଡ଼ିପାରିନି ନେତରା । ଦୁଇ ଝିଅ, ଗୋଟିଏ ପୁଅ ଓ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ସୁଲିକୁ ନେଇ ତା ସୁଖଦୁଃଖର ସଂସାର । ଗାଁ ବୋଇଲେ ୮/୧୦ ଟି ଝଲ କୁଡ଼ିଆକୁ ଛାଡ଼ିଦେଲେ ଜଙ୍ଗଲୀ ଜୀବଜନ୍ତୁଙ୍କ ଚଳପ୍ରଚଳ କହିଲେ ଭୁଲ ହେବନାହିଁ । ଛୋଟ ଛୋଟ ଭୁଙ୍ଗୁରୀ ଚଟାଣ ମାନଙ୍କରେ କୁଆଡ଼େ ଜଙ୍ଗଲୀ ଭାଲୁମାନଙ୍କର ପ୍ରାଦୁର୍ଭାବ । ହାତୀର ହୁଙ୍କାର କୁଆଡ଼େ ଗାଆଁର ନିରବତାକୁ ଭାଙ୍ଗିଥାଏ । ସାପମାନଙ୍କର ମାଳମାଳ ଝଲି, ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ସରୀସୃପ, ବିଭିନ୍ନ କିସମର ଚଢ଼େଇ ମାନଙ୍କର କିଚିରି ମିଚିରି ଶବ୍ଦରେ ଗାଆଁ ଫାଟି ପଡ଼େ । ଜଙ୍ଗଲୀ ପଶୁମାନେ ଯେମିତି ଲାଗନ୍ତି ନେତରା ଗ୍ରାମର ଗ୍ରାମବାସୀ । କେହି ଜୀବଜନ୍ତୁ ଗ୍ରାମବାସୀଙ୍କର କିଛି କ୍ଷତି କରିଛନ୍ତି ବୋଲି କେହି କହିପାରିବେ ନାହିଁ । ଯେମିତି ସେମାନେ ମଧ୍ୟ ମଣିଷ ପରିବାରର ଜଣେ ଜଣେ ସଦସ୍ୟ ଭଳି ।

ଜଙ୍ଗଲକୁ ଗାଆଁର ଅଧିବାସୀ ମାନେ ଠାକୁରାଣୀ ବୋଲି ପୂଜା କରନ୍ତି । ତୁ ଭରସା, ତୁ ରକ୍ଷାକର୍ତ୍ତା, ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଭଲରେ ଘଣ୍ଟା ଘୋଡ଼େଇ ରଖ ଲୋ ମାଆ, ଏହା ସମସ୍ତ ଗ୍ରାମବାସୀଙ୍କର ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା ହୋଇଥାଏ । ଜଙ୍ଗଲରୁ କାଠ, ଫଳ, ପତ୍ର, ଝୁଣା ଓ କୁଚୁରା, ହରିଣ, ହରିଡ଼ା, ବାରହା, ଜଙ୍ଗଲୀ, କୁକୁଡ଼ା, ହଂସ ପ୍ରଭୃତି ଜୀବଙ୍କୁ ଶିକାର କରି ଗାଆଁଲୋକେ ନିଜର ଖାଦ୍ୟର ଭରଣା କରୁଥିଲେ । ଖୁସିରେ କରୁଥିଲା ଗାଆଁର ଜୀବନ । ନେତରାର ପରିବାର ବେଶ୍ ଖୁସିରେ ରହୁଥିଲେ ।

ପାଣିପାଗ ବଦଳିବା ପରି ଗ୍ରାମବାସୀଙ୍କ ଜୀବନରେ ଘୋର ବିପଦ ମାଡ଼ି ଆସିଲା । ସବୁ ଦିନ ସମାନ ଯାଏ ନାହିଁ । ଜଙ୍ଗଲରେ କିଛି ଦୁଷ୍ଟ, ଖଲ ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କର ପ୍ରବେଶ । ଜଙ୍ଗଲରେ ପଶି ଜଙ୍ଗଲକୁ ଧ୍ୱଂସ ବିଧିସ୍ତ କରିବାକୁ ଉଦ୍ୟମ ଚାଲିଲା । ଶହ ଶହ ବନ୍ଧୁକ, ଗୋଳାବାରୁଦ, ବିଭିନ୍ନ ମାରଣାସ୍ତ୍ର ସେହି ଗହନ ବନରେ ଲୁଚାଇବାକୁ ଉଦ୍ୟମ ଚାଲିଲା । ସେମାନେ କୁଆଡ଼େ ମାଓବାଦୀ ନାମରେ ଅଖ୍ୟାତ



ଥିଲେ । ଥାନାକୁ ବିଦ୍ୟୁତ ବେଗରେ ଖବର ପ୍ରଚ୍ଛର ହୋଇଗଲା । ସାରା ଜଙ୍ଗଲକୁ ପୋଲିସ୍ ଛାଉଣୀ କରି ଜଙ୍ଗଲକୁ ଘେରି ପକାଇ ଥିଲା । ମାଓବାଦୀ ମାନେ ଗ୍ରାମବାସୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ଡରାଇ ଧମକାଇ ଗାଆଁ ଛାଡ଼ିବାକୁ କହିଲେ । କୁଡ଼ିଆଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଭାଙ୍ଗି ପକାଇଲେ । ନେତରା ଓ ସୁଲି ପିଲା ତିନୋଟିଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ ଜୀବନ ବିକଳରେ ଏକମୁହାଁ ଦୌଡ଼ିବାକୁ ଲାଗିଲେ । ପାଞ୍ଚଟି ଶରୀରର କ୍ଳାନ୍ତ ହୋଇ ପଡ଼ିଥାଏ । ଆଗକୁ ବାଟ ଚାଲିବାକୁ ପାଦ ଉଠୁ ନଥାଏ । ଦେଖାଗଲା କିଛି କ୍ଷୀଣ ଆଲୁଅର ଝଲକ । କ୍ଷୀଣ ଆଶା ସଞ୍ଚରିଗଲା ନେତରାର ଆଖିରେ । ଜଙ୍ଗଲ ବାହାରକୁ ଆସିବାର କେବେ ସୁଯୋଗ ପାଇ ନଥିଲା । ସହର କ’ଣ ବୋଲି ତାକୁ ଅଜଣା । ସହରର ପାଣି ପବନ, ଆଭିଜାତ୍ୟ, ଚକଣି, ସହରୀ ଜୀବନ ତ ତା ପାଇଁ ‘ଆକାଶ କଇଁଆଁ ଚିଲିକା ମାଛ ଭଳି’ ।

ସହରର ବିରାଟ ଅଜାଳିକା, ସାଜସଜ୍ୟା, ଚଉଡ଼ା ରାସ୍ତା, ଦୋକାନ ବଜାର ଦେଖି ନେତରାର ମୁହଁରେ ଉଜ୍ଜଳତା ଭରିଗଲା । ସହରରେ ସେ ମେହନତ କରିବ । ତା ପରିବାର ମୁହଁରେ ହସ ପୁଟାଇବ ଏ ସଂକଳ୍ପ ନେଇ ଆଗେଇଲା ।

ନେତରା ସହରରେ ଖୁବ୍ ମେହନତ କଲା । ଶ୍ରମ ଦେଇ କଠିନ ପରିଶ୍ରମ କରି ପରିବାର ଦୁଇବେଳା ଆହାର ଯୋଗାଡ଼ କରୁଥାଏ ପାଞ୍ଚ ପ୍ରାଣୀଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ।

ଦିନକର ଘଟଣା, ସହରରେ ଏକ ବିରାଟ ପଞ୍ଚ ତାରକା ହୋଟେଲ ନିର୍ମାଣ ଚାଲିଥାଏ । ନେତରା ମଧ୍ୟ ଶ୍ରମିକର ଭୂମିକାରେ ସେଠି କାମ କରୁଥାଏ । ହୋଟେଲ ତିଆରିରେ ଶହ ଶହ ଶ୍ରମିକ ଖଟିଥାନ୍ତି । ଚାରିଚକିଆ ଯାନର ଭିଡ଼ ଜମେ ସେଠି । ଦେହରେ ଦାମୀ ସୁଟ, ଚଷମା ଜୋତା, ହାତରେ କଣ ଗୋଟେ ଛୋଟିଆ ଯନ୍ତ୍ରଟିଏ ଧରି କାନରେ କଥା ହେଉଥାନ୍ତି ଯନ୍ତ୍ରୀବାବୁମାନେ । ନେତରା ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ କିନ୍ତୁ ବଡ଼ ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କର ଠାଣିମାଣିରେ ତାର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ଥାଏ । ନେତରା ଭାରୁଥାଏ, ମୋ ସୁବା (ଶୁଭକର) ଏମିତି ବଡ଼ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କ ଭଳି ହୋଇପାରନ୍ତା ସତେ । ମନେ ମନେ ମହାପୁରୁକୁ ଧ୍ୟାନ ଦେଉ ଦେଉ ଆଖି ତାର ଲୁହରେ ଜକେଇ ଥାସେ । ଗରିବ କୋତରା ଲଗାଇ ଏଡ଼େ ବଡ଼ଭାଗ୍ୟ କାହିଁ । କିନ୍ତୁ କାହିଁକି କେଜାଣି ମନକୁ ଆଶ୍ଚ୍ୟ କରି ପୁଅକୁ ପାଠ ପଢ଼େଇବାକୁ ମନସ୍ଥ କଲା । ଯେତେ ଟଙ୍କା ପଇସା ଖରଚ ହେଉ ପଛେ ସୁବା ମୋର ଏମିତି ବଡ଼ ଲୋକଟିଏ ହେବ । କେତେ ଆମ ଭଳି ଗରିବ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ରୋଜଗାରର ବାଟ ଦେଖାଇବ । ପ୍ରଭୁଙ୍କୁ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ମୁଣ୍ଡିଆଟେ ମାରି ନିଜ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟରେ ମନ ଦେଲା ।

ନେତରା ସୁଲିକୁ ବୁଝାଇଲା । ସୁଲି ଲୋ, ତୁ ଖାଲି ତିନି ପିଲାଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ କଷ୍ଟେ ମଷ୍ଟେ ଟିକେ ଚଳୁଥିବୁ । ମୁଁ ମନସ୍ଥ କରିଛି

ସହର ବାହାରେ ଆଉ ଗୋଟିଏ ବଡ଼ ସହର ଅଛି । ସେଠାକୁ ମୋ ସହିତ କାମ କରୁଥିବା ରାମୁଆ, ନଟ, ଭୀମକାନ୍ତ, ମଦାନା ଯାଇ ମୁଠାମୁଠା ଟଙ୍କା ରୋଜଗାର କରି ସେମାନଙ୍କ ପରିବାର ନିକଟକୁ ପଠଉଛନ୍ତି । ତେଣୁ ମୁଁ ମଧ୍ୟ ବାହାରେ ଦାଦନ ଖଟିଲେ ମୋ ପରିବାରର ଅବସ୍ଥା ସୁଧୁରିବ । ଝିଅ ରଙ୍ଗି ଆମର ନାଲି ରିବନ ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ବାନ୍ଧିବ । ସାନ ଝିଅ ଚମ୍ପାର ପୁଲ ପକା ଜାମା ଆସିବ । ସୁବାଟା ଆମର ଭଲ ପୋଷାକ ପିନ୍ଧି ବାବୁ ପିଲାଙ୍କ ପରି ଇସ୍କୁଲକୁ ଯିବ । ଆଉ ସୁଲି ତୋ ପାଇଁ ପେଣ୍ଟିପୁଲ ହଳେ କରି ଦେବି ଲୋ । କାନରେ ପିନ୍ଧି ମୋ ଆଗରେ କେତେ ପୁଲେଇ ହେଉଥିବୁ ଲୋ.. ଯା’... ତମର ସରଦ ପଣିଆ ରଖ । ମୁଁ ଦରବୁଡ଼ୀ ବୟସରେ ପେଣ୍ଟି ପିନ୍ଧିଲେ ତ ସ୍ୱର୍ଗକୁ ମୁଁ ଚାଲିଯିବ । ସୁଲିଟିକେ ଲାଜ ମିଶା ହସରେ କହିପକାଇଲା ।

ନେତରା ଗଲାଠାରୁ ଦୁଇଦିନ ହେବ ଘରେ ବୁଲି ଜଳି ନାହିଁ । କ’ଣ ଦିଗା ଥିଲା ସୁଲି ଗା ପିଲା ଦୁଣ୍ଡରେ ଦେଇ ଦୁଇ ଦିନ ହେଲା ସେ ପାଣି ପିଇ ଜୀବନ ରଖୁଛି । ସୁରୁଜ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଉପରକୁ ହେଲାଣି । ମୁଣ୍ଡଟା ସୁଲିର ବୁଲୁଛନ୍ତି । କଣ କରିବ ? ଅନ୍ଧାର ଦିଶୁଛି । ସେ ଅଚେତ ହୋଇଗଲା । ପିଲା ଗଟା କାନ୍ଦ ବୋବାଳି ପକାଇଲେ । ସୁବା କ’ଣ କରିବ ବୁଦ୍ଧି ଦିଶୁ ନଥାଏ । ବଜାରକୁ ଦୌଡ଼ି ଯାଇ ହାତ ପଡେଇ ଲୋକଙ୍କଠାରୁ ଭିକ୍ଷା ମାଗିବାକୁ ସ୍ଥିର କଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ତା ବା’ର ମୁହଁଟି ତା ଆଖି ଆଗରେ ନାଚିଗଲା । ସୁବାରେ ମରିଯିବୁ ପଛେ ଜୀବନରେ କର୍ମକୁ ଛାଡ଼ି କେବେ କାହାକୁ ଭିକ୍ଷା ମାଗିବୁ ନାହିଁ । ସୁବାର ଜ୍ଞାନୋଦୟ ହେଲା । ଗୁଲିରେ କିଛି ଆଲୁବସ୍ତା ବୋହି ସଜାଡ଼ି ରଖିଲା । କିଛି ପଇସା ମିଳନ୍ତେ ଦୋକାନରୁ କିଛି ଚୁଡ଼ା ଓ ଗୁଡ଼ କିଣି ଘରକୁ ଫେରିଲା କିଛି ସମୟ ପରେ ସୁଲିର ଚେତା ଫେରି ଆସିଲା ।

ଦିନ ଗଡ଼ିଚାଲେ । ନେତରାର ଖୋଜ ଖବର ସୁଲି ପାଏ ନାହିଁ । ଦିନୁ ଦିନ ସେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହେଉଥାଏ । କିନ୍ତୁ ପିଲାମାନେ ଦୁଃଖ କରିବେ ବୋଲି ସୁଲି ମୁହଁରେ କୃତ୍ରିମ ହସର ପ୍ରଲେପ ବୋକିଥାଏ । ଦିନସାରା ୩/୪ ଘରେ ଚକରାଣୀ କାମ କରି ପରିବାର ପୋଷୁଥାଏ । ମାଆର ଖଟଣିରେ ପିଲାମାନେ କାନ୍ଦୁଥାନ୍ତି । ପୁଅର ଇସ୍କୁଲ ପାଠପଢ଼ା ବନ୍ଦ ହେବ ନାହିଁ ଯେମିତି ନେତରା ସୁଲିକୁ ତାରିଦ କରି କହିଯାଇଛି । ତେଣୁ ସୁଲି ମଧ୍ୟ ସୁବାକୁ ସ୍କୁଲ ପଠାଇବାରେ କେବେ ଅବହେଳା କରିନାହିଁ ।

ସୁବା ସ୍କୁଲ ସାରି କିଛି ସମୟ ପାଇଁ ବଜାରରେ କିଛି କାମ କରି ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାରେ ଘରକୁ ଫେରେ । ମା ତାରିଦ କରି କହେ ଏତେ ସମୟ କୁଆଡ଼େ ଥିଲୁ । ମିଛୁଟାରେ କଣ ବାହାନା କରି ସୁବା ମାଆକୁ କହିପକାଏ ।

ଦିନକର ଘଟଣା । ସୁବା ବଜାରରେ ଆଜୁ ବୋଝ ବୋହୁଥିବାର ତାଙ୍କ ସ୍କୁଲର ସୁରେନ୍ଦ୍ର ସାରଙ୍କ ନଜରରେ ପଡ଼ିଲା । ତାପର ଦିନ ସାର ଅଫିସକୁ ସୁବାକୁ ଡାକିଲେ । ବୋଝ ବୋହିବାର କାରଣ ପଚାରିଲେ । ଜୀବନର ସମସ୍ତ ଦୁଃଖର ପେଡ଼ିକୁ ଆମ୍ବୁଲେନ୍ସ ସାରଙ୍କ ଆଗରେ ବର୍ଷନା କଲା । ସବୁ ଶୁଣିସାରିବା ପରେ ସୁର ସାରଙ୍କ ଆଖି ଛଳଛଳ ହୋଇଗଲା । ସୁବା ଏକ ମେଧାବୀ ଛାତ୍ର ଥିବାରୁ ସରକାରଙ୍କ ତରଫରୁ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ମେଧାବୀ ବୃତ୍ତି ସହିତ ନିଜସ୍ବ କିଛି ସମ୍ବଳରେ ତାକୁ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ର ହାତ ବଢ଼ାଇଲା । ସୁବା ପାଇଁ ଏକ କର୍ମ ସଂସ୍ଥାନର ମଧ୍ୟ ଯୋଗାଡ଼ କରି ଦେଲେ । ପ୍ରାତଃ ସକାଳରୁ ସୁବା ଘର ଘର ବୁଲି ହକକର ସାଜି ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଖବରକାଗଜ ପାଠକଙ୍କ ନିକଟକୁ ପହଞ୍ଚାଇବାର ଭୂମିକା ତୁଲେଇଲା । ସେଥିରୁ କିଛି ଅର୍ଥ ଆସିବାରୁ ଘରର ଅବସ୍ଥା ଟିକିଏ ସୁଧୁରିବାକୁ ଲାଗିଲା ।

ତେଣେ ନେତରା ରକ୍ତକୁ ପାଣି କରି ହାଡ଼ଭଙ୍ଗା ପରିଶ୍ରମ କରିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ଦଲାଲର କବଳରୁ ନିଜକୁ ମୁକ୍ତ କରିପାରିଲା ନାହିଁ । ପାରିଶ୍ରମିକ ବାବଦରେ ଯାହା ଅର୍ଜନ କରେ ଅଧାର ଅଧିକ ଦଲାଲର ପକେଟକୁ ଚାଲିଯାଏ । ତଥାପି ପୁଅକୁ ପାଠ ପଢ଼େଇବା ନିଶ୍ଚାରେ ଯାହା ମିଳେ ପରିବାର ନିକଟକୁ ପଠେଇଦିଏ । ଆଖି ସାମ୍ନାରେ ସୁନ୍ଦର ସକାଳର ସ୍ବପ୍ନ ଦେଖେ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତର ଆଇନାରେ । ଜୀବନର ସଂଗ୍ରାମକୁ ଜାରି ରଖେ । ଦେହ ବଳ ଠାରୁ ମନ ବଳକୁ ଲୁହା ପରି ଆଣି କରିଦିଏ ନେତରା । ସୁବା ମୋର ମଣିଷ ପରି ମଣିଷଟିଏ ହେବ । ସମାଜର ମଙ୍ଗଳରେ ନିଜକୁ ନିଯୋଜିତ କରିବ । ଈଶ୍ବରଙ୍କୁ ଯୋଡ଼ହସ୍ତ ଟେକି ଆକୁଳରେ ନିବେଦନ କରେ । ମଳିଚିଆ ଗାମୁଛାରେ ଆଖିରୁ ନିଗୁଡ଼ୁ ଥିବା ଅମାନିଆ ଲୁହକୁ ପୋଛି ପକାଏ ଓ ନିଜକୁ ବୋଧ କରେ ।

ଦିନ, ମାସ, ବର୍ଷ ଏହିପରି ନୀର ପରି ସମୟ ଗଢ଼ି ଚାଲିଥାଏ । ସୁବା ଏବେ ଭେଣ୍ଟିଆଟିଏ ହେଲାଣି । ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ସେ କଲେଜରେ ଜଣେ ମେଧାବୀ ଛାତ୍ରଟିଏ । ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟର ସର୍ବୋଚ୍ଚ ନମ୍ବର ରଖି ସାରା ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ପ୍ରଥମ ସ୍ଥାନ ଅଧିକାର କରିବାର ସୌଭାଗ୍ୟ ଅର୍ଜନ କରିଥିଲା । ସାରା ଓଡ଼ିଶା କୁହା କୁହିଁ ହେଲେ, ବାପ ମୂଲ ଲାଗିବାକୁ କେଉଁ ଅଜଣା ରାଇଜକୁ ଗଲା ଯେ ଫେରିନାହିଁ । ହେଲେ ପୁଅ ବାପାର ନାଆଁକୁ ଉଚ୍ଚା କରିପାରିଛି, ଧନ୍ୟ ନେତରା ଧନ୍ୟ ତାର ପୁଅ ସୁବା । ସ୍ବର୍ଣ୍ଣପଦକ ବେକରେ ଗଳାଇ ସୁବା ଖୁସିର ଫାଟିପଡ଼ିଲା ।

ନେତରା ପୁଅର ସଫଳତା ଶୁଣି କ୍ଷେତ୍ରନି ଏକ ନିଛାଟିଆ ଜାଗାକୁ ଯାଇ ମନ ଭରି ଜୋରରେ କଇଁ କଇଁ ହୋଇ ପିଲାଭଳି ଢେର ସମୟ କହିଥିଲା । ଛାତି ଭିତରେ ଅନେକ ଦିନର ବସାବାନ୍ଧି

ଥିବା ଲୁହକୁ ଆଜି ନେତରା ବୁହାଇ ଦେଲା ଓ ତାରରସ ସିକ୍ତ ପ୍ରାଣରେ ଆନନ୍ଦ ଖେଳିଯାଇଥିଲା । ସେ ଦୂର ରାଇଜରେ ଥାଇ ପୁଅକୁ ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ କଲା ଓ ମହପୁରୁଙ୍କୁ ମୁଣ୍ଡିଆଟିଏ ମାରିଥିଲା । ନେତରା ପରିବାର ନିକଟକୁ ଫେରିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଲା ନାହିଁ । ସୁଲି, ସୁବା, ରଙ୍ଗି, ଚମ୍ପା ଯେତେ ଖବର ଦେଲେ ବି ସେ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଦୂରରେ ଥାଇ ପ୍ରବୋଧନା ଦେଲା ଠିକଣା ସମୟରେ ସେ ନିଶ୍ଚିନ୍ତ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ନିକଟକୁ ଫେରିବ । ଏବେ ବି ନେତରାର କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଅସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ହୋଇରହିଛି । ନେତରା ଆଶ୍ବାସନା ଦିଏ ନିଜକୁ ନିଜେ କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ ବୁଝେଇପାରେ ନାହିଁ । ସେ ଭାବେ ତା ପରିବାରକୁ ଫେରିଗଲେ ତା ମନବଳ, ଦେହବଳ ଭାଙ୍ଗିଯିବ । କାମରେ ଆଉ ମନ ଲାଗିବ ନାହିଁ । ପଇସା କେଉଁଠାରୁ ଆସିବ । ସୁବା ପାଇଁ ଦେଖୁଥିବା ସ୍ବପ୍ନ ଅଧୁରା ହୋଇଯିବ । ଏହିପରି ମନ ଗୁଡ଼ାଏ କଷ୍ଟନାରେ ଛନ୍ଦି ହୋଇପଡ଼େ । ଧୀରେ ଧୀରେ ତା ଶରୀର କ୍ଷୀଣ ହେବାରେ ଲାଗିଲାଣି । ତଥାପି ମୁହଁରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ଶୁଖିଲା ହସଟିଏ କେବେ କେମିତି ଖେଳିଯାଏ ।

ଅନେକ ଦିନରୁ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରିଥିବା ଦିନଟି ସକାଳ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟର ସୁନେଲା କିରଣରେ କେମିତି ଆଜିଟିକେ ନିଆରା ଢଙ୍ଗରେ ଝଲସୁଛି । ଚଢ଼େଇ ମାନଙ୍କର ସ୍ବରରେ ମୁଗ୍ଧ ସଙ୍ଗୀତର ଲହରୀ, ମଳୟରେ କୁସୁମର ମିଠା ବାସ୍ନା, ଦେଉଳରୁ ଘଣ୍ଟାଧିନୀର ପର୍ବ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହୋଇଛି ଶୁଭ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତମାନଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ ।

ଶ୍ରୀଯୁକ୍ତ ଶୁଭଙ୍କର ମଳିକ, ରାଜ୍ୟ ଶ୍ରମ ବିଭାଗର ଅଧିକାରୀ ଭଜପଦସ୍ଥ ଅଫିସର । ହାତରେ ଥିବା ନିୟୁକ୍ତିପତ୍ରକୁ ଏକ ନିଶ୍ବାସରେ ସୁବା ପଢ଼ିଚାଲିଲା । ନିଜକୁ ବିଶ୍ବାସ କରିପାରିଲା ନାହିଁ । ଛଅ ମାସ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଶ୍ରମ ବିଭାଗ ତରଫରୁ ଲିଖିତ ପରୀକ୍ଷା ପରେ ସାକ୍ଷାତକାର ପରୀକ୍ଷାର ସମ୍ମୁଖୀନ ହୋଇଥିଲା । ସମସ୍ତ ପରିଶ୍ରମ, ନିଷ୍ଠା, ଯତ୍ନଶା, ଅଶ୍ରୁର କୁଡ଼ କୁଡ଼ ପାହାଡ଼ ତା ହାତପାପୁଲିରେ ରହିଛି ଏକ କାଗଜ ଖଣ୍ଡଟିଏ ହୋଇ । ତା'ର ରକ୍ତ ନିଗିଡ଼ା ମାଂସର ଚୁକୁଡ଼ା, ଆଖୁଳା ଆଖୁଳା ଅଶ୍ରୁଆଦି ପାଲଟିଛି ଶ୍ରମର ମହାରାଜା । ଆନନ୍ଦରେ ମା ସୁଲି ଓ ଦୁଇ ଭଉଣୀଙ୍କୁ କୁଣ୍ଡାଇ ପକାଇଲା ଓ କହିଲା ମା' ଆଜିଠୁ ଆମର ଦୁଃଖ ଗଲା ବୋଲି ଜାଣ । ଏତେ ଦିନରେ ଈଶ୍ବର ଆମ ଡାକ ଶୁଣଛନ୍ତି ।

ବା'କୁ ଏ ଶୁଭ ଖବର କେମିତି ଦେବ ବୋଲି ଖୁସିରେ ଗଦ୍ ଗଦ୍ ହୋଇଯାଉଥିଲା ସୁବା । ତା ବାପର ସ୍ବପ୍ନ ଆଜି ବାସ୍ତବ ରୂପ ନେଇଅଛି । ସେ ନିଜେ ଯିବ ବା ବା'ର ଘର ନିକଟରେ ରହୁଥିବା ନାରଣ ଫୋନ୍‌ରେ ବାପାକୁ ଜଣାଇବ । ଆଗକୁ ନାରଣ ମଉସା ଫୋନ୍‌କୁ ଜଣାଇଲେ ନେତରା ପରିବାରର ଭଲମନ୍ଦ ଖବର

ଜାଣିପାରେ । ସୁବା ଏମିତି ଭାବୁ ଭାବୁ ମନକୁ ଆଉ କାଲି ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଅଟକାଇପାରିଲା ନାହିଁ । ରାତି ୧୦ଟାରେ ବଜାରକୁ ଯାଇ ନାରଣା ମଉସାକୁ ଫୋନ୍ କଲା । ଏତେ ରାତିରେ ମଉସା ଫୋନ୍ କରିବାର କାରଣ ପଚାରିଲେ । ମଉସା ନେତରାକୁ ଫୋନ୍ ଆସିବା ବିଷୟ କହିଲା । ନେତରା ଛାଡ଼ିବା ଦାଉଁକିନା କଲା । ଏତେ ରାତ୍ରରେ ଫୋନ୍ । ହୃତପିଣ୍ଡର ସ୍ଵୟମ୍ ଦୁତ୍ତର ହେଲା । ନେତରା ଥର ଥର ହାତରେ ଫୋନ୍ ରିସିଭର ଧରି କାନକୁ ଆଉଜେଇଲା, ସୁବା କହିଲା ବା' ଭଲ ଅଛି । ନେତରା ସେତେବେଳେ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଅନ୍ୟମନସ୍କ ରହିଥିଲା । ହାଲୋ, ହାଲୋ ବା ମୁଁ ସୁବା କହୁଛି । ନେତରାର ଚେତା ଆସିଲା । ହଁ, ବାବୁରେ କଣ ଏତେ ରାତିରେ ମତେ ମନେ ପକେଇଲୁ । ସବୁ ଭଲନାଁ ନାହିଁ ? ନେତରାର ଗଳାରେ ଥରଥର ଭାବ । ବା' ବା' ସବୁ ଭଲ । ବା' ତମ ସ୍ଵପ୍ନ ଆଜି ସତ ହେଇଛି । ମୁଁ ଏବେ ଅଫିସର ବନିଯାଇଛି । ସୁବାର ସ୍ଵରରେ କାନ୍ଦ ମିଶା ହସର ସ୍ଵର ଭାସିଆସୁଥିଲା ରିସିଭରରୁ । ନେତରାର ମୁହଁରେ ବିସ୍ମୟ ଭାବ । ସେ ଫୋନ୍ ଥୋଇ ଦେଇ ଚଟାଣରେ ଲମ୍ବ କିନା ବସିପଡ଼ିଲା । ତା ପରେ ଉଠି କେଉଁ ଏକ ଅନ୍ଧାରୁଆ ଗଳିର ନିଛାଟିଏ ଜାଗାରେ ଜୋରରେ କାନ୍ଦିବାକୁ ଲାଗିଲା । ନେତରାର ସ୍ଵଭାବ ଏମିତି । ଦୁଃଖରେ କାନ୍ଦେ ଯେ କିନ୍ତୁ ଆନନ୍ଦରେ କାନ୍ଦିଛି ତାଠାରୁ ଅଧିକ । ପଛ ଦିନର ଘଟିଯାଇଥିବା ଦିନଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଆଜି ଭାସି ଆସୁଛି ତା ଆଖିରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ଗୋଟିଏ ଫଟୋ ଭଳି । ସେ କିଛି ଭୁଲିନାହିଁ । ନେତରାର ସ୍ଵରର ଶକ୍ତି ଆଜି ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ପ୍ରଖର ରହିଅଛି । ସେ ଏବେ ଫେରିଯିବ ତା ପରିବାରର ହସ ଖୁସିର ସଂସାରକୁ ନା ଆଉ ଡେରି କରିବ ନାହିଁ । ସେ ଫେରିବ, ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ଫେରିବ ।

ଶୁଭଙ୍କର ଗଭୀର ଭାବନାରୁ ହଠାତ୍ ମୁକୁଳି ଆସିଲା । ବର୍ଷା ଧାରେ ଧାରେ ଛାଡ଼ି ଆସିଲାଣି । ତା ଅଣ୍ଟା ପଡ଼ିଗଲାରି, ପକଡ଼ି ପ୍ଲେଟରେ ମଉଳିଗଲାଣି । ମାୟା ବୋଧେ ବା ଘରକୁ ଚାଲିଗଲାଣି ।

ପଶ୍ଚିମ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ସମ୍ବଲପୁରରେ ଶୁଭଙ୍କରର ପ୍ରଥମ ନିଯୁକ୍ତିସ୍ଥଳୀ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାରଙ୍କ ଶ୍ରମ ବିଭାଗର ଉଚ୍ଚପଦବୀରେ ଶୁଭଙ୍କର ଅବସ୍ଥାପିତ ହେବ । ତାର ଅନେକ ସ୍ଵପ୍ନ । ନିଦ ସରିବା ଆଗରୁ ଶୁଭଙ୍କରକୁ ଅଜସ୍ର ବାକିଥିବା ସ୍ଵପ୍ନକୁ ସାକାର କରିବାକୁ ବାକିଅଛି । ମନରେ ଏହିପରି ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଚିନ୍ତା ମାଡ଼ି ଆସୁଥାଏ । ଶ୍ରମ ବିଭାଗ ତରଫରୁ ବଙ୍ଗଳା ପରି ବିରାଟ ସରକାରୀ କ୍ଵାଟରଟିଏ ତାକୁ ମିଳିଅଛି । ସେ ଚିନ୍ତା କରୁଛି ଆଉ ଅଳ୍ପଦିନ ପରେ ବା, ମାଆ, ଦୁଇ ଭଉଣୀଙ୍କୁ ନିଜ ପାଖକୁ ନେଇ ଆସିବ । ପିତା ମାତା ତାଙ୍କ ଜୀବନ କାଳରେ କଷ୍ଟ ସ୍ଵୀକାର କରି ତାକୁ ମଣିଷ କରିବାର ଯେଉଁ ଦୃଢ଼ ସଂକଳ୍ପ ସେମାନେ ନେଇଥିଲେ, ସେ ଅବଶ୍ୟ ଶରୀରରେ ଟିକେ ଶାନ୍ତି

ଓ ଫୁର୍ତ୍ତର ବାତାବରଣ ଖେଳିଯାଉ, ଏହା ଥିଲା ଶୁଭର ହୃଦୟର କଥା ଓ ବ୍ୟଥା । ଉଦରରେ କୋହଗୁଡ଼ିକ କମ୍ପନ୍ ହେଉଥାନ୍ତି ।

ସକାଳ ହେଲା । ରାତିର ମଧ୍ୟ ଭାଗରେ ଶୁଭ ଆଖିରେ ନିଦ ଆସିଥିଲା । ଉଠିବାକୁ ଚିକେ ଡେରି ହେଲା । ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟର କଅଁଳିଆ ଖରା ଭ୍ରମରୁମ୍ବର ଝରକାକୁ ଭେଦ କରି ସାରିଥିଲା । ଘଡ଼ି ଦେଖୁ ସେ ଚମକି ଗଲା । ପ୍ରାୟ ସକାଳ ୮ଟା ହେବାକୁ ଗଲାଣି । ଧଡ଼ପଡ଼ ଉଠି ନିଜର ସମସ୍ତ ପ୍ରାଣ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ସମ୍ପନ୍ନ କରିଥିଲା । ଖୁବ୍ ତରତରରେ । ତାକୁ ଆଜି ବହୁତ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କରିବାର ଅଛି । ନିଜ କ୍ଵାଟରର ସାମ୍ନାରେ ଏକ ସମ୍ପାତ୍ତ ପାର୍ଟିର ଆୟୋଜନ କରିବାର ସେ ଯୋଜନା କରିଅଛି ।

ସରକାରୀ କ୍ଵାଟରଟି ଆଜି ନବବଧୂ ପରି ସଜେଇ ହେବ । କେତେ ରଙ୍ଗୀନ ଲିଫ୍ଟମାଲ, ବେଲୁନ୍ ରଙ୍ଗୀନ କାଗଜର ସୋଲ, ଗେଣ୍ଡୁ ରଜନୀ ଗନ୍ଧା ମଳ ପିନ୍ଧି ତେତେ ଫୁଲେଇ ହେବ ନବ ବିବାହିତା ବଧୂ ପରି । ଘର ସାମ୍ନାରେ ଟେଣ୍ଡର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା, ମଞ୍ଚର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା, ପ୍ଲ୍ୟୁଷ୍ଟ୍ ଚଉକିର ପସର । ଘରର ବାମ ପାର୍ଶ୍ଵରେ ଲନ୍ ଉପରେ ଅତିଥିମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଦାମିକିଆ ଖାଦ୍ୟର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା । ଆଧୁନିକ ଶବ୍ଦରେ ବୋଧେ ସିଷ୍ଟମ୍ । ଶୀତ ତାପ ନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରିତ ଗାଡ଼ିର ସେ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରିଅଛି । ନେତରା କିନ୍ତୁ ମନା କରିଛି ପୁଅରେ ମୁଁ ବସ୍ ଯୋଗେ ଏଠାକୁ ଆସିବି । ତେଣୁ ତୋ ମାଆ ଓ ଭଉଣୀକୁ ଗାଡ଼ିର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କଲେ ମୋର ଆପତ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଇଚ୍ଛା ସେଥିପାଇଁ ମାଆ ଓ ଭଉଣୀମାନେ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟା ୫ଟାରେ ଆସି ପହଞ୍ଚିଲେଣି । ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ବାପାଙ୍କ ବାଟକୁ ଶୁଭଙ୍କର ଚାହିଁ ରହିଛି । ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ଲାଗୁଥାଏ । ଏତେ ଆୟୋଜନ, ଏତେ ଆଡ଼ମ୍ବର ଯାହା ପାଇଁ ସେ ଏ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ପହଞ୍ଚି ପାରିନାହିଁ । ଧିରେ ଧିରେ ଭିଡ଼ ଜମିଲାଣି । ଲୋକମାନେ ପରସ୍ପର ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଆଲୋଚନା କରୁଥାନ୍ତି, କାହା ପାଇଁ ଏ ବଡ଼ ଧରଣର ଆୟୋଜନ । ସମସ୍ତେ ଏକ ରହସ୍ୟରେ ଥାଆନ୍ତି । ଶ୍ରମ ବିଭାଗର ଉଚ୍ଚ ପଦସ୍ଥ ଅଧିକାରୀ ଶୁଭଙ୍କର ମଳିକଙ୍କର ଏ ରହସ୍ୟମୟ ପାର୍ଟିର ଆୟୋଜନ କାହାପାଇଁ ।

ମାୟା କଣ୍ଠେଇଟିଏ ପରି ନିଜକୁ ସଜେଇ ପାର୍ଟିରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଗଲାଣି । ଅତିଥିମାନଙ୍କର ଭଲ ମନ୍ଦ ବୁଝୁଥାଏ । ଏହି ଭିତରେ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟା ୭ଟା ହେବାକୁ ବସିଲାଣି । ଶୁଭ ଅଧିକ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ଓ ବିକ୍ରତ ହୋଇ ପଡ଼ୁଥାଏ । ବାପା କାହିଁକି ଆସିନାହାନ୍ତି, ଏ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ । ମନରେ ପାପ ଛୁଉଁଛି ବେଳେବେଳେ । ଥରେ ଥରେ ଭାବୁଛି ବାପା ବୋଧେ ଆସିବେ ନାହିଁ । ଅତିଥିମାନେ ମଞ୍ଚାସିନ ହୋଇ ସାରିଲେଣି । ସମସ୍ତେ ଆସନ ଅଳଙ୍କୃତ କରି ସଭାର ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟକୁ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରିଛନ୍ତି ।

ରାସ୍ତାକୁ ଆଖି ପାଇବା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରେ ରଖି ଶୁଭ ଖୁସିରେ

ହଠାତ୍ ଚିକ୍କାର କରି ପକାଇଲା । ପିଲାଟି ପରି ରାସ୍ତା ଉପରକୁ ଦୌଡ଼ିଗଲା । ସମସ୍ତେ ଚକିତ କିଛି ବୁଝି ହେଉନଥାଏ ଘଟଣାଟି ପ୍ରକୃତରେ କ'ଣ । ସମସ୍ତେ ପଛକୁ କିଛି ଡାଟକା ହୋଇ ଅନେଇଛନ୍ତି । ଶୁଭଙ୍କର ମଲିକଙ୍କର କ'ଣ ହୋଇଗଲା ? ସେ କାହିଁକି ପାଗଳ ଭଳି ପ୍ରଳାପ କରି ରାସ୍ତାଉପରକୁ ଦୌଡ଼ିଗଲେ ? କିଛି ସମୟ ପରେ ଜଣେ ମଲି ମୁଣ୍ଡିଆ ଧୋତି ଓ ପାଦରେ ସାଧାରଣ ଚପଲ ପିନ୍ଧି ଏକ ବୟସ୍କ କଳା ଲୋକଟିକୁ ଶୁଭଙ୍କର ହାତ ଧରି ମଞ୍ଚ ଉପରକୁ ନେଇ ଯାଉଛନ୍ତି । ମଞ୍ଚରେ ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ଭାବରେ ଫୁଲରେ ସଜା ହୋଇଥିବା ଏକ ସିଂହାସନ ପରି ଚଉକିରେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ହାତ ଧରି ଆନନ୍ଦରେ ସେ ବସାଇ ଦେଲେ । ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ ଫୁସୁରୁଫାସର, ଏ ଅପରିଷ୍କାର ଦିନହାନ... ଲୋକଙ୍କର ସଂପର୍କରେ । ଶୁଭଙ୍କର ଦର୍ଶକଙ୍କ ସାମନାରେ ବାପାଙ୍କୁ ପୁଷ୍ପଗୁଚ୍ଛ ଦେଇ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଆଲିଙ୍ଗନ କରି ଭୋଭୋ ହୋଇ କାନ୍ଦିବାକୁ

ଲାଗିଲା । ଏ ହେଉଛନ୍ତି ମୋ ଦେବତା, ସବୁ କିଛି । ଜନ୍ମଠାରୁ ଆଜି ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଏ ସମ୍ମାନର ଅଧିକାରୀର ସମସ୍ତ ଶ୍ରେୟ ମୋ ବାପାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ । ଶୁଭ କାନ୍ଦୁଥାଏ ଓ କହୁଥାଏ । ସାତ ଜନ୍ମ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଏ ଧରାରେ ଜନ୍ମ ନେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ମୁଁ ମୋ ବାପାଙ୍କ ରଣ ଶୁଣି ପାରିବି ନାହିଁ । ଆଜି ନେତରାର ପୁଅ ଶୁଭଙ୍କର ମଲିକ ଶକ୍ତ ପଥର ପରି ହାତ ପାଇଁ ଏ ସମ୍ମାନର ଅଧିକାରୀ, ଶ୍ରମ ବିଭାଗର ଉଚ୍ଚ ପଦସ୍ଥ ଅଧିକାରୀ । ଦର୍ଶକଙ୍କର ଆଖିରେ ଆଖିଏ ଲୁହ । ସମସ୍ତେ ସ୍ତବ୍ଧ ରାତିର ନିରବତାରେ ଶୁଭଙ୍କରର ଦରଦୀ ସ୍ୱର ପବନରେ ଭାସି ଚାଲିଥାଏ ।

ରାଜବଜାର ଖୁଣ୍ଟିଆ ଗଳି,

ମୟୂରଭିଲ୍ଲା

ଜଟଣୀ, ଖୋର୍ଦ୍ଧା

ପିନ୍: ୭୫୨୦୫୦

ଦୂରଭାଷ: ୯୪୩୮୭୩୪୪୩୦

# ଶିଶୁ ଶ୍ରମ ମୁକ୍ତ ଓଡ଼ିଶା - ଆମର ସ୍ୱକଳ୍ପ

ଦେୟମୁକ୍ତ ଶ୍ରମିକ ସହାୟତା ହେଲପ୍ ଲାଇନ୍ ନଂ:

୧୫୫୩୨୮ ର ଉପଯୋଗ କରନ୍ତୁ ।

ଏହା ସକାଳ ୬ ଘଟିକା ଠାରୁ

ରାତ୍ର ୧୦ ଘଟିକା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କରେ ।

ଶ୍ରମ ଓ ରାଜ୍ୟ କର୍ମଚାରୀ ବୀମା ବିଭାଗ

ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର

# ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ: ଏକ ସାମାଜିକ ପ୍ରକ୍ରିୟା

ଯୋଗେନ୍ଦ୍ର କୁମାର ନାୟକ

ପୁଞ୍ଜିବାଦର ଚେର ସମଗ୍ର ବିଶ୍ୱରେ ମାଡ଼ି ମାଡ଼ି ଯାଉଥିବା ତଦନୁପାତରେ ଶ୍ରମିକ ସଂଖ୍ୟାରେ ପରି ବୃଦ୍ଧି ଘଟି ପୁଞ୍ଜିପତି ମାନଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ପ୍ରତିଯୋଗୀ ପଦକ୍ଷେପ ଆଦିକୁ ଗୁଣାନ୍ତି କରିବା ସଂଗେ ସଂଗେ ବିଶ୍ୱବାସୀଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଅୟୁତାୟକ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହୋଇସାରିଛନ୍ତି । ନାନାଦି ପ୍ରାକୃତିକ ଦୁର୍ବିପାକର ସମ୍ମୁଖୀନ ହୋଇ ଦୁଃଖ ଓ ଦାରିଦ୍ର୍ୟର ତାଡ଼ନାରେ ଖଟିଖୁଆ ତାର ଭିତାମାଟି ଛାଡ଼ିଛି । ନିଜର ତଥା ପରିବାରର ପ୍ରତିପୋଷଣ ଲାଗି, ପରିବାର ର ଆର୍ଥିକ ଦୂରବସ୍ତୁକୁ ସୁଧାରିବା ନିମିତ୍ତ ପରବାସ ଅବା ପରଦେଶ ଅଥବା ପର ରାଜ୍ୟକୁ ନିଜର ଜୀବନ ଓ ଜୀବିକା ସହ ଜଡ଼ିତ କରାଇବା ପୂର୍ବକ ଶ୍ରମିକମାନେ ଆଦରି ନିଅନ୍ତି ଏକ ନୂଆ ଭାଞ୍ଚାର ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ ଜୀବନ । ଅନେକ ଘାତପ୍ରତିଘାତର ସମ୍ମୁଖୀନ ହୋଇ ପୁଞ୍ଜିପତି, ସାହୁକାର ଅବା ନିୟୁକ୍ତିକର୍ତ୍ତାର ଅନ୍ୟାୟ, ଅତ୍ୟାଚାର ଓ ଶୋଷଣ ଆଦିକୁ ସହି ସେ ମାଡ଼ି ଚାଲି ଆଗକୁ ଆଗକୁ । ତା ଭିତରେ ପ୍ରତିବାଦ କରିବାକୁ କୁ' ନ ଥାଏ କି ସ୍ୱଇଚ୍ଛାରେ ଦେଶ ଛାଡ଼ି ଯାଉଥିବା ଶ୍ରମିକମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଏ ଦେଶର ସରକାରଙ୍କ କିଛି କଡ଼ୁଆଧନ ଉପରେ ନ ଥାଏ । ଦାଦନ ଖଟି ଶ୍ରମିକ କଣ୍ଠା ହୁଏ । ଭୁଲିଯାଏ ପିଲାଛୁଆର ସଂସାର ଗାଁ, ମାଟି, ଗାଁର ପାଣି ଓ ପବନ । ନା' ତାର ଆଗକୁ କେହି ଆଆନ୍ତି ନା' ପଛକୁ ।

ଆପଣା ଦେଶର କୁଶଳୀ ତଥା ଅଣକୂଶଳୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ ମାନେ ନିଜର ଜୀବିକା ପାଇଁ ଗୋଟିଏ ଦେଶରୁ ଅନ୍ୟ ଦେଶକୁ ଗମନ କରନ୍ତି, ନିଜ ରାଜ୍ୟ ଛାଡ଼ି ଅନ୍ୟ ରାଜ୍ୟକୁ ଚାଲିଯାଆନ୍ତି, ଗାଆଁ ଛାଡ଼ି ସହର, ଆଡ଼େ ପଳାୟନ କରନ୍ତି । ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଅର୍ଥଲୋଭି ଦଳାଳ ମାନଙ୍କ ହାବୁଡ଼ରେ ପଡ଼ି ସେମାନଙ୍କ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ଏଇ ଦିଶା ଖୋଜୁଥିବା ଦିଶାହୀନ ଶ୍ରମିକ ମାନେ ଶୋଷଣ, ଅନ୍ୟାୟ, ଅତ୍ୟାଚାର ଓ ପ୍ରତାରଣାର ଶିକାର ହୋଇ ନିଯାତିତ ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତି । ଗୋଟିଏ ରାଜ୍ୟରୁ ଅନ୍ୟ ରାଜ୍ୟକୁ ଚାଲିଯାଉଥିବା ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ ମାନଙ୍କର ବୃତ୍ତି, ଜୀବନ ଓ ଜୀବିକାର ସୁରକ୍ଷା ଲାଗି ଏବଂ ସୁବିଧା ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟରେ ଭାରତ ସରକାର, ଆନ୍ତର୍ଗରାଜ୍ୟ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ (ନିୟୁକ୍ତି ଏବଂ ସେବା ସର୍ଭର ନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରଣ), ଆଇନ, ୧୯୭୯ ପ୍ରଣୟନ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଏହି ଆଇନ ବଳରେ ଆନ୍ତର୍ଗରାଜ୍ୟ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକମାନେ ଅନେକ ସୁବିଧା ସୁଯୋଗ ପାଇପାରିବେ ଓ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଚଳିତ ନିୟୁକ୍ତି ସର୍ଭାବଳୀ ଏବଂ ତତସମ୍ବନ୍ଧୀୟ ଅନେକ ସୁବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ଆଦି ଉପଲବ୍ଧ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଏହି ସବୁ

ବିଷୟରେ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକମାନେ ସଦା ସର୍ବଦା ସଚେତନ ହେବାର ଦୃଢ଼ ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ରହିଛି । ଅନ୍ୟଥା ପୁଞ୍ଜିପତିମାନଙ୍କର ସ୍ୱାର୍ଥାନ୍ୱେଷୀ ମନୋଭାବ ଦ୍ୱାରା ଶ୍ରମିକମାନଙ୍କ ସ୍ୱାର୍ଥର ବିନାଶ ଘଟି ଦେଶର ଅଭିବୃଦ୍ଧି ନିମ୍ନମୁଖ ହୋଇ ସାମାଜିକ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ଭୁଷ୍ଟୁଡ଼ି ପଡ଼ିବାର ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ସମ୍ଭାବନା ରହିଛି ।

ଅର୍ଦ୍ଧଜାତୀୟ ଶ୍ରମ ସଂସ୍ଥା ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ସାରା ପୃଥିବୀରେ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକଙ୍କ ସଂଖ୍ୟା ୧୭୫ ନିୟୁତ ବୋଲି ଆକଳନ କରାଯାଇଅଛି, ଯାହା ପୃଥିବୀରେ ସମୁଦାୟ ଲୋକସଂଖ୍ୟାର ୩.୫ ପ୍ରତିଶତ ଅଟେ । ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିବିଶେଷ, ଅର୍ଥ, ବସ୍ତୁ ଓ ଦ୍ରବ୍ୟ ଆଦିର ଗତିଶୀଳତାକୁ ସାମ୍ପ୍ରତିକ ଜଗତୀକରଣ ପଦ୍ଧତି ଅଧିକ ମାତ୍ରାରେ ପ୍ରୋତ୍ସାହନ ଦେଇଆସିଛି ଏବଂ ଏହାଦ୍ୱାରା ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହେବା ଖୁବ୍ ସରଳ ଏବଂ ସହଜ ହୋଇଯାଇଛି । ଅର୍ଥ, କଞ୍ଚାମାଲ, ଦେଶର ଉତ୍ପାଦ, ଶ୍ରମ ଓ ତତ୍ ସଙ୍ଗେ ସଙ୍ଗେ ଶ୍ରମିକ ମାନଙ୍କର ଦେଶ ଦେଶ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଉନ୍ମୋଚ୍ଚ ପ୍ରବାହ ହୋଇପାରୁଛି । ଏହି ଜଗତୀକରଣର ପ୍ରଭାବରେ ଦେଶର ଜନସଂଖ୍ୟାର ବୃଦ୍ଧି ଘଟିବା ଅନୁପାତରେ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ ସଂଖ୍ୟାରେ ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ବୃଦ୍ଧି ଘଟିଛି । ଶ୍ରମିକମାନଙ୍କ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ପ୍ରକ୍ରିୟାରେ ଉଭୟ ପୁରୁଷ ଏବଂ ନାରୀ ସମୟାନୁକ୍ରମେ ସାମିଲ ହୋଇଆସିଛନ୍ତି । ନାରୀମାନେ ଏହି ସ୍ରୋତରେ ସାମିଲ ହେବାଠାରୁ ଏ ଯାବତ୍ ସ୍ୱଳ୍ପ ମଜୁରୀ ପ୍ରାପ୍ତ ନାରୀ ଶ୍ରମିକଙ୍କ ସଂଖ୍ୟା ଅଧିକ ହୋଇଛି ।

ଅଧିକତ୍ତ୍ୱ ଦରକାର ଠାରୁ ଅଧିକ ଅର୍ଥ ଉପାର୍ଜନ, ସହଜ, ସୁନ୍ଦର ଓ ଏକ ଆଶାବାଦୀ ତଥା ସୁଖମୟ ଜୀବନଯାପନ ଆଦିକୁ ଆଖି ଆଗରେ ରଖି ଅୟୁତାୟକ ଲୋକ ବଡ଼ ବଡ଼ ନଗରୀ ତଥା ଦେଶାନ୍ତରକୁ ଆଦରି ନେବାରେ ଆଦୌ କୁଣ୍ଠାବୋଧ କରନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । ଘରୋଇ ସଂସ୍ଥାରେ କାମ କରୁଥିବା ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକମାନଙ୍କ ତୁଳନାରେ ଅଧିକ ନିଯାତିତ ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତି ଏବଂ ଯଦିଓ ସାମୟିକ ସୁରକ୍ଷା ପାଆନ୍ତି ତାହା ଅତି ନିମ୍ନମାନର କାରଣ ସେଥିରେ ରାଜ୍ୟ କିମ୍ବା ସଂପୃକ୍ତ ପ୍ରବାସ ଦେଶର ସରକାର କୌଣସି ହସ୍ତକ୍ଷେପ କରିବାରେ ମନ କରନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । ଏହି ହେତୁରୁ ସେମାନେ ସର୍ବନିମ୍ନ ମଜୁରୀ, ନିୟମିତ ମଜୁରୀ ପ୍ରଦାନ, ସାମ୍ବାହିକ ଛୁଟି ଏବଂ ମଜୁରୀପ୍ରାପ୍ତ ହେଉଥିବା ଛୁଟି ଆଦିର ସୁବିଧା ସୁଯୋଗ ନ ପାଇଁ ନିଯାତିତ ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତି । ଦାଦନ ଶ୍ରମିକମାନେ ହାଡ଼ଭଙ୍ଗା ଖଟି ଖଟି କମ୍ ମଜୁରୀ ପାଇଁ ନିଷ୍ପେଷିତ ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତି । ଅନେକ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଦେଖା ଯାଇଛି ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକମାନେ ହତାଶା

ନିରାଶାର ବଶବର୍ତ୍ତୀ ନ ହୋଇ ସେମାନେ ନିଜର ପସନ୍ଦ ଅନୁସାରେ, ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଜୀବନକୁ ନିରାପଦ ମଣି ସମ୍ମତି ପୂର୍ବକ ନିଜର ଋହିତା ମୁତାବକ ଶ୍ରମ ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟରେ ପ୍ରବାସ ମନ କରିଥାନ୍ତି । ନିଜର ତଥା ଦେଶର ଆର୍ଥିକ ସମୃଦ୍ଧି ଘଟାଇବା ଲାଗି ହେଲେ ଏମାନଙ୍କର ସଂଖ୍ୟା ଉପରୋକ୍ତ ଶ୍ରମିକଙ୍କ ତୁଳନାରେ ଭେଦ କମ୍ । ଏହି ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକଙ୍କର ସାମାଜିକ ତଥା ନ୍ୟାୟିକ ଅଧିକାର ଆଦି ସାବ୍ୟସ୍ତ କରାଇବା ଏବଂ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ନ୍ୟାୟଭିତ୍ତିକ ଅଧିକାର ପ୍ରଦାନ କରିବା ନିମିତ୍ତ ଜାତୀୟ ତଥା ଆନ୍ତର୍ଜାତୀୟ ସ୍ତରରେ ସୁଦୃଢ଼ 'ସାଂଘିକ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ଓ ବ୍ୟାପକ ଜନ ସଚେତନତାର ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ରହିଛି ।

ସାମ୍ପ୍ରତିକ ପରିସ୍ଥିତି ଏବଂ ପରିବେଶ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ ହେବା ଏକ ଆନ୍ଦୋଳନରେ ପରିଣତ ହୋଇସାରିଛି । ଏହି ଆନ୍ଦୋଳନରେ ପେଟପାଟଣା ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟରେ ଏବଂ ନିଜର ଆର୍ଥିକ ଅଭିବୃଦ୍ଧି ଘଟାଇବା ଲାଗି ଶ୍ରମ ଖୋଜୁଥିବା ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିବିଶେଷ ମାନେ ମନ ଭିତରେ ଆଶା ଓ ଉଦ୍ଦୀପନା ରଖି ଝାସ ଦେଇଥାନ୍ତି । ଏଥିପାଇଁ ସେମାନେ ଗୋଟିଏ ସ୍ଥାନ ଛାଡ଼ି ଅର୍ଥ ଉପାର୍ଜନ ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟରେ ଅନ୍ୟତ୍ର ଗମନ କରିଥାନ୍ତି । ଏପରିକି ନିଜ ଗାଁ, ଭିଟାମାଟି, ସହର, ରାଜ୍ୟ ଅବା ଦେଶର ମାୟା ମମତା ତୁଟାଇ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଗମନରେ ଥାନ୍ତି । ସାମାଜିକ, ମାନସିକ, ପାରିବାରିକ ତଥା ଆର୍ଥିକ ଭିତ୍ତିଭୂମି ସୁଦୃଢ଼ ନ ଥିବା ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିବିଶେଷ ଖୋଜି ବସେ ଉଚ୍ଚମାନର ଏବଂ ବିଳାସ ଶୈଳୀର ଜୀବନଯାପନ । ସେ ବସବାସ କରୁଥିବା ସହର, ଗ୍ରାମ, ରାଜ୍ୟ ଅବା ଦେଶରେ ଯଦି ତାର ଆର୍ଥିକ, ଦୈନିକ, ସାମାଜିକ ତଥା ମାନସିକ

ଅବସ୍ଥାର ବିକାଶ ଲାଗି ସୁବିଧା ସୁଯୋଗ ନ ଥାଏ ସେହି ସୁବିଧା ଖୋଜୁଥିବା ଶ୍ରମିକ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିବିଶେଷ ଜଣକ ତା ଇଚ୍ଛାନୁସାରେ ଶ୍ରମର ଋହିତା ଅନୁଧ୍ୟାନ ପୂର୍ବକ ପ୍ରବାସ ଗମନ କରିଥାଏ । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଶ୍ରମିକମାନଙ୍କର ସ୍ଥାନାନ୍ତରଣ ଏବଂ ଦେଶାନ୍ତରଣ ଏକ ପ୍ରାକୃତିକ ପ୍ରକ୍ରିୟା ଯେଉଁଥିରେ ନଗର ସଭ୍ୟତା, ଆଧୁନିକତା ଏବଂ ଆଂଶିକ ବିକାଶ ଆଦି ସାମିଲ ହୋଇରହିଥାନ୍ତି । ବନ୍ୟା, ମରୁଡ଼ି ଓ ଭୂକମ୍ପ ଆଦି ପ୍ରାକୃତିକ ବିପର୍ଯ୍ୟୟ ଓ ଦୁର୍ଭିକ୍ଷ ଯୋଗୁ କିଛି ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଗାଆଁ ଛାଡ଼ି ସହରାଭିମୁଖ ହୁଅନ୍ତି ଏବଂ ପରେ ସେମାନେ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଶିଳ୍ପ, କଳ କାରଖାନା, ହୋଟେଲ ଏବଂ ନିର୍ମାଣ ଆଦି କାର୍ଯ୍ୟରେ ନିଯୋଜିତ ହୋଇ ନିଜର ଜୀବିକା ଅର୍ଜନ କରିଥାନ୍ତି । କିଛି ଶ୍ରମିକ ଅସ୍ୱାଭାବିକ ପରିସ୍ଥିତିର ବଶବର୍ତ୍ତୀ ହୋଇ ପୁଞ୍ଜିବାଦର ଶୃଙ୍ଖଳାୟୁକ୍ତ ପଞ୍ଚାରେ ଫନ୍ଦି ହୋଇ, ସାମାଜିକ ତଥା ଅର୍ଥନୈତିକ ତାଡ଼ନା ସହି ନ ପାରି ପେଟ ପାଟଣା ଲାଗି ଭିଟାମାଟି ଛାଡ଼ିଥାନ୍ତି । ଭୂମିହୀନ, ଦରିଦ୍ର ଓ ଅଶିକ୍ଷିତ ଆଦି ଏହି ଶ୍ରେଣୀରେ ଅନ୍ତର୍ଭୁକ୍ତ । ସାରା ଭାରତବର୍ଷରେ ନିୟମିତ ଭାବରେ କୃଷି, ଶିଳ୍ପ ଏବଂ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ଘରୋଇ ସଂସ୍ଥା ଆଦିରେ ରାଜ୍ୟ ତଥା ରାଜ୍ୟ ବାହାରକୁ ଦେଶ ତଥା ଦେଶ ବାହାରକୁ ଶ୍ରମିକମାନେ ଯାଇ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ ଆଖ୍ୟା ପାଇଛନ୍ତି । ଏହି ଶ୍ରମିକମାନଙ୍କର ସୁରକ୍ଷା ଏବଂ ସୁବିଧା ଆଦି ଲାଗି ବିଶ୍ୱ ସ୍ତରରେ ପ୍ରୟାସ ହେବାର ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ରହିଛି ।

ପ୍ଲଟ୍ ନଂ: ୩୬୯/୫, ବ୍ରହ୍ମେଶ୍ୱର କଲୋନୀ  
ଗଡ଼ ଗୋପୀନାଥ ପ୍ରସାଦ, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର-୨୫  
ଫୋ: ୯୪୩୭୩୦୧୫୨୭

ଶ୍ରମ ଓ ରାଜ୍ୟ କର୍ମଚାରୀ ବୀମା ବିଭାଗ,  
ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର

**ଶ୍ରମ ନୁହେଁ**

**ଶିକ୍ଷା ଚାହୁଁ**

**ଶିଶୁ ଶ୍ରମ ମୁକ୍ତ ଓଡ଼ିଶା - ଆମର ସଂକଳ୍ପ**

# ଦାଦନର ଦୁଃଖ

ଖଗେଶ୍ୱର ମହତାବ

କେତେ ଭଲ ଥିଲା ମୋର ଗାଁ' ଭୂଇଁ  
 ବିଲ, ବଣ, ଖେତ  
 କେଉଁ ଅପୋଷା ରହୁଥିଲା ପେଟ  
 ଘରୁ ଗୋଡ଼ କାଢ଼ିଲେ ଦେଖା ହେଉଥିଲେ  
 କେତେ ଆପଣାଲୋକ  
 ସାହି ଭାଇ, ପାଖ, ପଡ଼ିଶା, ସାଙ୍ଗ ସୁଖ  
 କେତେ ହସ କଉତୁକ  
 କାମରୁ ଘରକୁ ଫେରିଲେ ଝାଟିମାଟି ନଡ଼ା ଘର  
 ଲାଗୁଥିଲା ଯେମିତି ବୈକୁଣ୍ଠ  
 ଘରର ଶାଗ ପଖାଳ ଲାଗୁଥିଲା  
 ପାଟିକୁ ଅମୃତ ॥  
 କେଉଁ ଜଣା ଥିଲା ଛନ୍ଦ କପଟ  
 ମଣିଷ ଦଲାଲର ମିଠା କଥାରେ ଭଲି  
 ରୁଲି ଆସିଲି ସିନା ବିଦେଶ  
 ଭାବିଥିଲି ଭଲରେ ଖାଇପିଇ  
 ଦୁଇ ପଇସା ସଞ୍ଚୟ କରି  
 ଗାଁକୁ ଫେରିଲି ତୋଳିବି ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଗୁଞ୍ଜିବାକୁ ଘର  
 ଦୁଃଖି ଯିବ ବାପ ଗୋସାଇଁବାପ ଅମଳରୁ  
 ଭୋଗୁଥିବା ଦାରିଦ୍ର, ଦୁଃଖ  
 ଗାଁରେ ଯାହା ମଜୁରି ମିଳୁଛି  
 ଚଳିବା କଷ୍ଟ, ପେଟକୁ ନିଅଣ୍ଟ ।  
 ହେଲେ ଏଠି ମିଳିଲା କେଉଁ ସରାଗ କି ସୁଖ  
 ଦୁଇବେଳା ପେଟପୁରା ଭାତ  
 ମହରଗରୁ ବଳିଗଲା କାନ୍ଥାରର ଦୁଃଖ  
 ଖଟିଲି ସିନା ହାଡ଼ଭାଙ୍ଗି  
 ମିଳିଲା ନାହିଁ ମଜୁରି  
 ବେମାର ହେଲେ ମିଳିଲା ନାହିଁ  
 କାମରୁ ଛୁଟି କି ଔଷଧ ।

ଯେତେ ଖଟିଲେବି ଅମଣିଷ ମାଲିକର  
 ପଥର ଛାତି  
 କାମରେ ଚିକେ ଉଣା ହେଲେ  
 ନାଲି ଆଖି, ମାଡ଼ର ଧମକ

ମାଲିକ ବୁଝିଲାନାହିଁ ଦେହର ପାଢ଼ା, କଷଣ  
 ଯୁଆଡ଼କୁ ଅନେଇଲେ ଅଜଣା  
 ଅତିହ୍ନା ମଣିଷ ॥  
 କିଏ ବୁଝିବ କାହାର ଦୁଃଖ  
 କାହା ପାଟିରୁ ଆପଦ ବିପଦରେ  
 ବାହାରିବ ଆହାପଦ  
 ସହଜେତ ଆମେ ଅଭେକା ଅଶିକ୍ଷିତ  
 ଆମକୁ କେଉଁ ଜଣା  
 ଆଇନ କାନୁନ୍ର ପାଠ ।  
 ଘରୁ ଆସିଲାବେଳେ ଦେଖୁଥିବା  
 ସ୍ୱପ୍ନସବୁ ପାଲଟିଲା ଅଜ୍ଞାର, ପାଉଁଶ  
 ଶେଷରେ ବିନା ପାଉଣାରେ  
 ଭୋକ ଉପାସରେ ଜୀବନ ନେଇ  
 ଫେରିବାକୁ ହେଲା ଗାଁକୁ ଖଟିଖଟି  
 ଅକାମି ହେଲାପରେ ଗୋଡ଼ ହାତ ।

କାହାକୁ ସତ, କାହାକୁ ମିଛ  
 ମୁଁ ଏବେ ଅକର୍ମୀ ମଣିଷ  
 ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ପିଲାଛୁଆ ଉପରେ ବୋଝ  
 ମୋର'ତ ଏ ଅଙ୍ଗେ ନିଭେଇ ଥିବା କଥା  
 ଖଟିଖିଆ ଦାଦନର ଅସରନ୍ତି ଦୁଃଖ ॥

ଖାରବେଳ ନଗର, ଯୁନିଟ୍-୩, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର

**ଶିଶୁ ଶ୍ରମ ମୁକ୍ତ ଓଡ଼ିଶା - ଆମର ସ୍ୱକଳ୍ପ**

**ଶ୍ରମ ହୁଏତେଁ ଶିକ୍ଷା ଚାହୁଁ**

ଶ୍ରମ ଓ ରାଜ୍ୟ କର୍ମଚରୀ ବାମା ବିଭାଗ  
ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର

## ଆତ୍ମବିଶ୍ୱାସ

ଦିଲ୍ଲୀପ କୁମାର ବେହୁରା

ନିଜ ଗୋଡ଼େ ନିଜେ ଛିଡ଼ାହେବା ପାଇଁ ଦୂରେ ଦେଶେ ଯାଇ ସମୟକୁ ନେଇ  
 ମନରେ ଭିଡ଼ିଛି ଆଶା ଘାଣ୍ଟିକିଆଁ ହୁଏ ମନ  
 ସପନି ଆଖିରେ ଆଖିଏ ସପନ ଦୁଇ ବର୍ଷ ପାଇଁ କରିଥିଲା ବୁକ୍ତି  
 ମିଳେ ନି ପ୍ରକୃତ ଦିଶା ଫେରିବାର ହେଲା ବେଳ  
 ପାଠ ପଢ଼ାବେଳେ ଆଉ ପାରି ବାପା ପାରିଲାପଣରେ କରିଗଲା କାମ  
 ପଛେ ପଛେ ଗଲେ ମାଆ ସେ ଦେଶେ ମିଳିଲା ଫଳ  
 ଏଡ଼େ ବଡ଼ ଯେଣୁ ଦୁନିଆଟା ପରା ଭାରତ ମାଆର ଯୋଗ୍ୟ ସନ୍ତାନ  
 କିଏ ହେବ ତାକୁ ସାହା ଯେବେ ଥାନ୍ତେ ଏଠିରହି  
 ଚିତ୍ତସନ୍ କରି ପଢ଼ିଲା ପାଠ ସେ ନିଜ ଦେଶ ପାଇଁ ନିଜ ମାଆଁ ପାଇଁ  
 ରଖିଲା ଭଲ ନୟର କିଛିତ କରନ୍ତେ ଯାଇ  
 ପାଠ ପଢ଼ାପାଇଁ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ମିଳିଲା ଜଗତିକରଣ ବଡ଼ କଥା ନୁହେଁ  
 ମନ ନ ଧରଇ ଘର ବଡ଼ ଅଟେ ଆମ ଜାତି  
 ଦୁଃଖର ବେଦନା ସହୁଥିଲା ଦିନେ ଆମେ ହିଁ ଆମର ଦୁଃଖର କାରଣ  
 ବଦଳିଛି ଏବେ ଦିଗ ଭୁଲି ଯାଉ ଅଛେ ନୀତି  
 ବିଦେଶ ଯିବ ସେ କରିବାକୁ କାମ ପାଠ ପଢ଼ା ଦେଖି ଗୁଣକୁ ପରଖି  
 ମନରେ ଭାରି ସରାଗ ଦେଖନ୍ତା ଯେବେରେ ଦେଶ  
 ବିଦେଶୀ କଂପାନୀ ଭଲ ଦରମାରେ ପରଦେଶେ ଯାଇ ଆମରି ପ୍ରତିଭା  
 ବାଛି ବାଛି ଥାନ୍ତି ନେଇ ନ ହୁଅନ୍ତେ ଉପହାସ ।  
 ଘରଠୁ ବାହାରେ ସପନି ରହିବ ଦୂର ବିଦେଶରେ ଯାଇ  
 ଘର ନଂ: ୯/୧, ଏଫ୍ ଗାଲପ୍  
 ବେଳେ ବେଳେ ଭାବେ ପାଠ ପଢ଼ିଥିଲା ଯୁନିଟ୍-୯ ଫ୍ଲୋର, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର-୨୨  
 ଯେଉଁ ଦେଶେ ସିଏ ରହି ଦୂରଭାଷ : ୮୮୫୩୦୧୫୫୫  
 ତାକୁ ଛାଡ଼ି କିଆଁ ଅନ୍ୟ ଦେଶେ ଯାଇ  
 କାମ ମୁଁ କରିବି ଯାଇ  
 ଆମର ଦେଶରେ କାମ କରିବାକୁ  
 ନାହିଁକି ସୁବିଧାମାନ





## ତା ଭାଗ୍ୟରେ ଲେଖା ଯାହା

କିଶଳୟ ଶତପଥ

ନିଜର ରକତ ନିଗାଡ଼ି ନିଗାଡ଼ି  
ମୁଣ୍ଡ ବିକି ଦେଇଛି  
କେଇଟା ବରଷ ପାଇଁ  
ବଦଳରେ ପାଇବ ପାଉଣା  
ବଦଳି ଯିବ ତାର  
ଝାଟି ମାଟି ଘର  
ସୁଖରେ ଚାଲିବ ସଂସାର ।  
ପୁଅ ପଦନା ପାଠ ପଢ଼ିବ  
ମଣିଷ ହେବ  
ନିଜ ଗୋଡ଼ରେ ଛିଡ଼ା ହେବ  
କୁଡ଼ାକୁଡ଼ାକୁ ପରୁରିବ  
ବେଙ୍ଗୁଲୀ ବଡ଼ ହେଲାଣି  
ଭଲ ବର ଦେଖି  
ଟେକି ଦେବ କାହା ହାତରେ  
ଏମିତି କେତେ କଥା ଭାବି  
ନିଦରେ ହଜିଗଲା ନିଧୁଆ ।  
ଭଲ ଦି' ପଇସା ରୋଜଗାର ପାଇଁ  
ପ୍ରବାସୀ ପାଲଟିଛି ସେ  
ମଝିରେ ମଝିରେ ପଠାଏ ଟଙ୍କା  
ଘର ଲୋକେ ଅନାଇଛନ୍ତି  
କେବେ ସରିବ କଷ୍ଟ  
ଫେରିବ ନିଧୁଆ  
ନିଜ ଦେଶକୁ  
ନିଜ ଘରକୁ ।

ଗଜପତି ନଗର, ପଞ୍ଚବଟି, ଜଟଣୀ, ଖୋର୍ଦ୍ଧା  
ଦୂରଭାଷ: ୯୪୩୮୫୭୭୪୫୧

କେଉଁ ଭାଗ୍ୟନେଇ ଜନ୍ମ ନେଇଛି ସେ  
ସବୁ କଷ୍ଟ ସବୁ ଦୁଃଖ ତାରି ଭାଗରେ ପଡ଼େ  
ଜୀବନରେ ଅୟସ ଆନନ୍ଦ ତା ଭାଗ୍ୟରେ ନାହିଁ ।  
ଏତେ ବଡ଼ ପୃଥିବୀରେ ତାର କିଛି ନାହିଁ  
ଏତେ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଅଜାଳିକା, ମନୋରମ ଶସ୍ୟକ୍ଷେତ  
ସବୁ ତାରି ହାତରେ ଗଢ଼ା  
ସେସବୁ ତ ଆଉ କାହାର ଖାଲି ନିଜର ପରି ସବୁ ଲାଗୁଥାଇ  
ସେ ତ ଗରୀବ ଖଟିଖୁଆ  
ହତଭାଗ୍ୟ ମେହନତି ମଣିଷ  
କଠିନ ଶ୍ରମଦାନ ବଦଳରେ  
ବଡ଼େଇବ ହାତ କେଇଟା ଟଂକା ମଜୁରୀ ପାଇଁ  
ଯେଉଁଥିରେ ଯୋଗାଡ଼ିବ ମୁଠାଏ ଆହାର  
ତା ପରିବାର ପାଇଁ ।  
ଯେଉଁଦିନ କାମ ନାହିଁ ତା ରୁଲି ଜଳେ ନାହିଁ  
ବିକଳରେ ଚାଲୁଥିବେ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦୋଷ ପିଲାଛୁଆ  
ଭୋକିଲା ପେଟରେ  
ଖାଲି ନିରବରେ କାନ୍ଦୁଥିବ ଭାଗ୍ୟକୁ ନିନ୍ଦି  
ସେ ଅନାହାରର କଷ୍ଟ ଲାଘବ ପାଇଁ  
କେତେବେଳେ ବିକିଦିଏ ନିଜକୁ  
ଠିକାଦାର ପାଖେ  
ପ୍ରବାସୀ ହୋଇଯାଏ ଘରଦ୍ୱାର ଛାଡ଼ି  
ଛଅ ମାସ ପାଇଁ  
ସବୁଦିନ ଖଟିବାର ସୁଯୋଗ ମିଳିଲେ  
କି ଅପୁରୁଷ ଆନନ୍ଦ ତା ମନରେ  
କେତେ ଆଶା ନେଇ ଖରୁଥାଏ  
କାହିଁ କେତେ ଦୂରେ ।  
କେତେବେଳେ ଫରେ ଆଶା ମେଣ୍ଟେଇ  
ତ କେତେବେଳେ ହାରିଯାଏ  
ସବୁ ଆଶାକୁ ଜଳାଞ୍ଜଳି ଦେଇ  
ତଥାପି ତ ବାରମ୍ବାର ପ୍ରବାସୀ ହେଉଥାଏ  
ତା ପିଲାଛୁଆଙ୍କ ପେଟରେ ମୁଠାଏ ଦାନା ଦେଇ  
ମୁହଁରେ ଚିକେ ହସ ଫୁଟେଇବା ପାଇଁ ।

ସହକାରୀ ଶ୍ରମ କମିଶନର  
ମୋ: ୯୪୩୭୩୩୧୮୫୫

# ଦାଦନର ଚିଠି

ଅନିଲ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ଦାଶ

ମୁଁ ଦାଦନ ଲେଖୁଛି ଚିଠି...  
 ଏ କଂକ୍ରିଟ୍ ସହରର ଧୂଆଁରୁ ।  
 ଏଠି ଜୀବନ ଜଂଜାଳମୟ  
 ଏଠି ମଣିଷ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଅସହାୟ  
 ଏଠି ସଂପର୍କ ଜ୍ଵାଳାମୟ ।  
 ନାହିଁ ଏଠି ମମତାର ସ୍ଵର  
 ଚାରିଆଡ଼େ ନୁଖୁରା ମାଟିର କାନ୍ଦ  
 ଏବଂ ଆହୁରି ଅନେକ ଦୃଶ୍ୟ  
 ଓ କପଟୀର ଛଳନା ଓ ଛନ୍ଦ ॥

ମୁଁ ଦାଦନ ଲେଖୁଛି ଚିଠି...  
 ନିର୍ଧୁମ ଖରାରେ ସିଝି ଗଲାଣି ମୋ ପିଠି  
 କଳା ଚମଡ଼ା ଉପରେ ଜମି ଯାଇଛି  
 ପଥର ଗୁଣ୍ଡର ଆସ୍ତରଣ  
 ଏଠି ନାହିଁ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାଦୀପ ଠାକୁର ଜଣାଣ  
 ଚାରିଆଡ଼େ ଅତିହ୍ନା ମଣିଷର  
 ନିଷ୍ଠୁର ପାଦଚିହ୍ନ  
 ଏଠି ପ୍ରିତୀର ନୈବେଦ୍ୟ ନାହିଁ  
 ଅହଂକାରୀର କୁର ଆକ୍ରମଣ ॥

ମୁଁ ଦାଦନ ଲେଖୁଛି ଚିଠି...  
 ଏଠି ଜମା ଭଲ ଲାଗୁନି ମତେ  
 ମୋ ମାଆର ରକ୍ଷା ଭାତରେ  
 ଦେଖୁଥିଲି ଅନେକ ସ୍ଵପ୍ନ  
 ତାହାତ ମିଳିବନି ଏଠି  
 କେବଳ ବଞ୍ଚିବାର ଗଣଦୌଡ଼  
 ଦୋହଲି ଯାଉଛି ପିଞ୍ଜରାର ହାଡ଼  
 ଏବଂ ସ୍ଵାଧୀନତାର ସ୍ଵାଦ ଯିଏ ଚାଖିଛି  
 ତା ପାଇଁ ଦାଦନର ଜୀବନ ଶକ୍ତ ଲୁହାବାଡ଼ ॥

ମୁଁ ଦାଦନ ଲେଖୁଛି ଚିଠି...  
 ମୋ ଘର ତୁଳସୀ ଚଉଁରା ସଂଜୀବତୀ  
 ଗାଁ ଭାଗବତ ଘରର ଆକାଶ  
 ମୋ ଗାଁର ପାଳଗଦା ଆଉ ଜହ୍ନରାତି  
 କେତେ ସୁନ୍ଦର ! ଏ ପୃଥିବୀରେ,  
 ଆଉ ସେଇ ସୁନ୍ଦରତାର ପ୍ରତି ଛବିରେ  
 ନେସି ହୋଇଯିବି ସିନା ଆଉ ଥରେ ।  
 ଫେରିଯାଇ ମୋର ସେଇ ଭିଟାମାଟିର ଛାତିକୁ  
 ପଢ଼ିବା ପାଇଁ ସରୁଜ ଅକ୍ଷର  
 ଏବଂ ଲେଖିବା ପାଇଁ ସଂପ୍ରୀତର ସରଳ ହସ୍ତାକ୍ଷର ।  
 କେନ୍ଦୁଗୁଡ଼ା, ବୈପାରିଗୁଡ଼ା, କୋରାପୁଟ-୪୩

# ପ୍ରବାସୀ

ଶରତ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ସାହୁ

ଘରଦ୍ଵାର ଛାଡ଼ି  
 ବିଦେଶକୁ ଆସି  
 ଦିନରାତି ମିଶି  
 ଆଖି ଲୁହ ମୋର  
 ପେଟକୁ ମିଳେନି ଦାନା  
 ଭୋକ ଉପାସରେ  
 ବିଦେଶ ମାଟିକୁ ଚାଲି ମୁଁ ଆସିଲି  
 କାହାକୁ ପାରୁନି କହି  
 ଉଦ୍ଧାର କରିବ

ବିଦେଶ ଆସିଲି  
 ପେଟ ଯୋଷିବାର ପାଇଁ  
 ପ୍ରବାସୀ ହୋଇଲି  
 ପେଟ ମୋ ପୁରିଲା ନାହିଁ ॥୦॥  
 ନାହିଁ ମୁଁ କରୁଛି  
 ସହୁଛି କେତେ ଯତ୍ନଶା  
 ଆଖିରେ ଶୁଖୁଛି  
 ପାରୁନି ଆଉ ମୁଁ ସହି  
 ତଥାପି ଖରୁଛି  
 ପିଲାଛୁଆଁ ମୁହଁ ଚାହିଁ ॥୧॥  
 ମରିଚିକା ପଛେ ଧାଇଁ  
 ଏଇଠି ଆସି ଯାହା ମୁଁ ଦେଖୁଛି  
 ବସି ଭାରୁ ଅଛି ମୁହିଁ  
 କିଏ ମୋତେ ଏଠୁ  
 ଯିବି ମୋ ଦେଶକୁ ଧାଇଁ ॥୨॥

ପଥର ଚକଡ଼ା, (କଣ୍ଠିଲୋ)

ନୟାଗଡ଼, ୭୫୨୦୭୮,

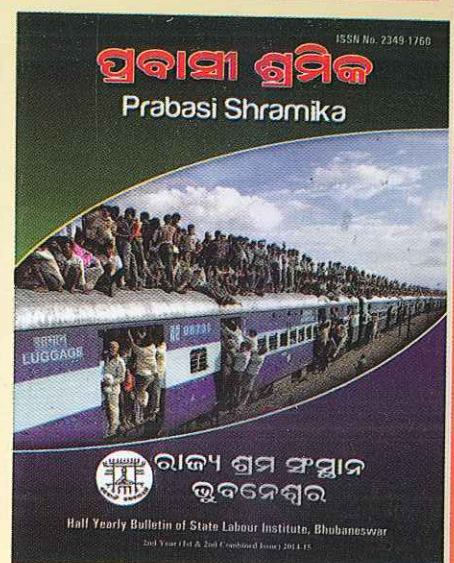
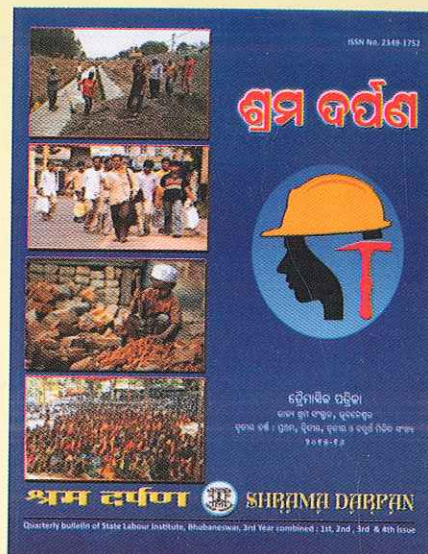
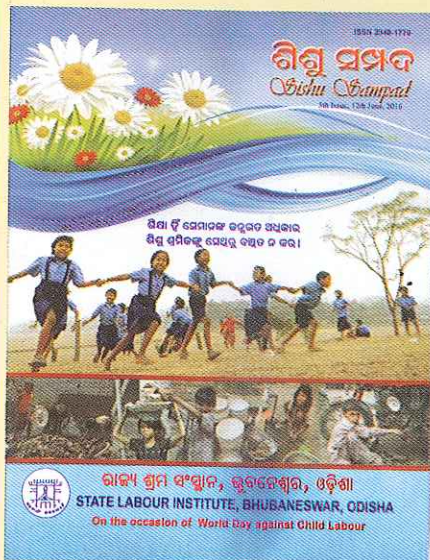
ଦୂରଭାଷ: ୯୪୩୮୩୨୩୩୦୪

## ଶିଶୁ ଶ୍ରମ ମୁକ୍ତ ଓଡ଼ିଶା - ଆମର ସ୍ଵକଳ୍ପ

ଦେଶମୁକ୍ତ ଶ୍ରମିକ ସହାୟତା ହେଲପ୍  
 ଲାଇନ୍ ନଂ: ୧୫୫୩୨୮ ର ଉପଯୋଗ  
 କରନ୍ତୁ । ଏହା ସକାଳ ୬ ଘଟିକା ଠାରୁ  
 ରାତ୍ର ୧୦ ଘଟିକା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କରେ ।

ଶ୍ରମ ଓ ରାଜ୍ୟ କର୍ମଚାରୀ  
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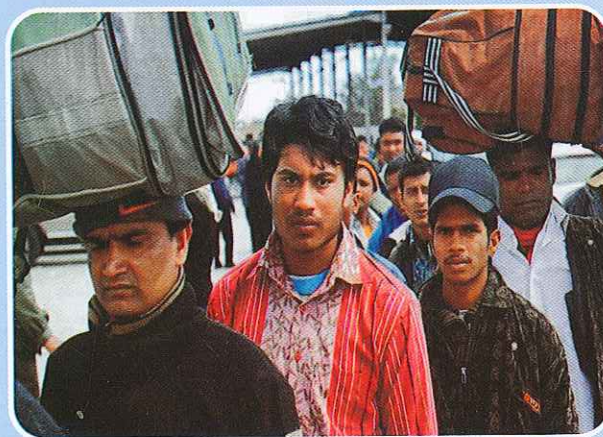
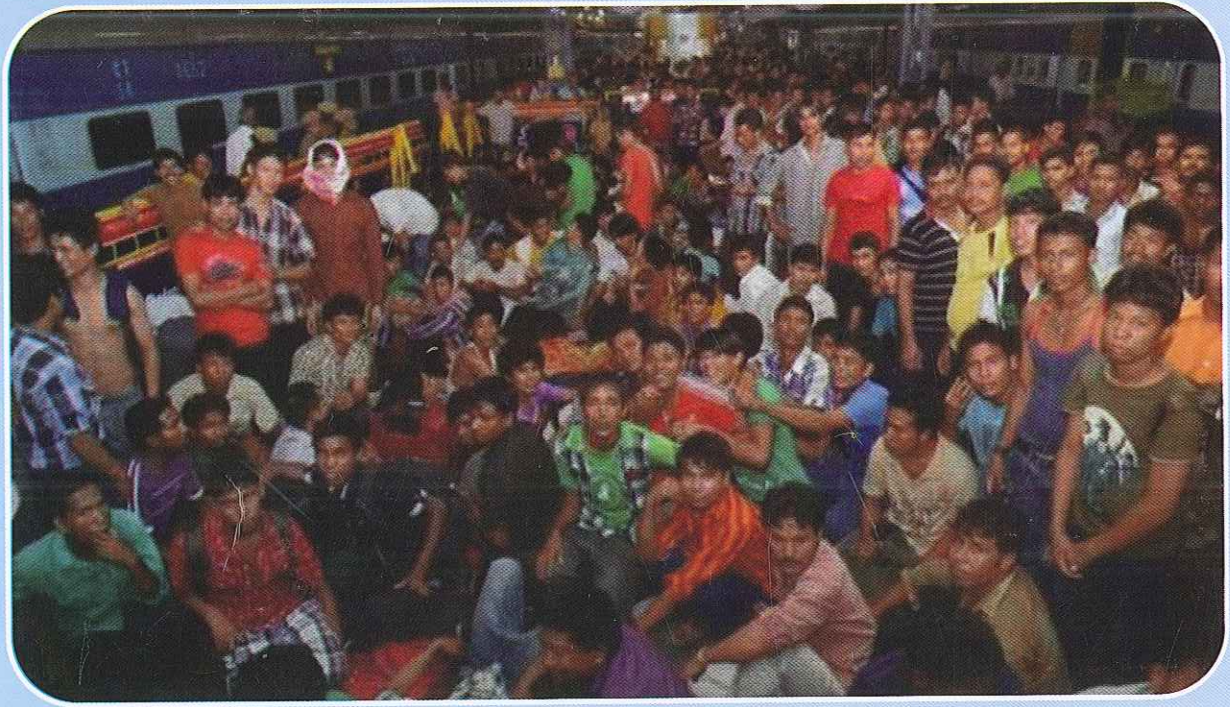
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