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ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ

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ରାଜ୍ୟ ଶ୍ରମ ସଂସ୍ଥାନ
ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର

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Coordination Cell) ର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରାଯିବା ସହ, ଏକ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଖସଡ଼ା
(Action plan) ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ କରାଯାଇ ୧୧ ଗୋଟି ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ ପ୍ରବଣ ଜିଲ୍ଲା
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କର୍ଣ୍ଣାଟକ ଓ ଆନ୍ଧ୍ରପ୍ରଦେଶ ଠାରେ ଥିବା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସଂଘ ମାନଙ୍କ ସହ ବୁଝାମଣା ପତ୍ର
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ଶ୍ରମିକ ସଂଘ ଓ ଗଣମାଧ୍ୟମ ମାନଙ୍କର ବି ଗୁରୁ ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ରହିଛି ।

ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ସହଯୋଗରେ ପଞ୍ଚାୟତ ସ୍ତରରେ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ରେଜିଷ୍ଟ୍ରିଭୁକ୍ତ
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ଚାଲୁରହିଛି ।

ଏ ଦିଗରେ ରାଜ୍ୟ ଶ୍ରମ ସଂସ୍ଥାନର ପ୍ରୟାସ ଜାରି ରହିଛି ଓ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକଙ୍କୁ
‘ଆଇନଗତ ସୁରକ୍ଷା’ ସଂପର୍କିତ ଏକ ପୁସ୍ତିକା ପ୍ରକାଶ ହେବା ସହିତ ‘ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ’
ପତ୍ରିକାଟି ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ଛଅ ମାସରେ ଥରେ ପ୍ରକାଶିତ ହୋଇ ସଚେତନତାର ସାମାନ୍ୟତମ
ଅଭାବକୁ ପୁରଣ କରିବା ଦିଗରେ ସହାୟକ ହେବ ବୋଲି ଆଶା ଓ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ।

ଏହି ପତ୍ରିକାଟିକୁ ତୁଚ୍ଛିରହିତ କରିବା ନିମନ୍ତେ ଯଥାସମ୍ଭବ ଉଦ୍ୟମ କରାଯାଇଛି । ତାହା
ସତ୍ତ୍ୱେ ଯଦି କୌଣସି ତ୍ରୁଟି ରହି ଯାଇଥାଏ ତାହା ଅନିଚ୍ଛାକୃତ ।

ସୁଧାକର ବୁର୍ଗା
ସଂପାଦକ

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REGIONAL OVERVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

Though population mobility has always been a part of human history, the magnitude of the flows and heterogeneity witnessed in the last two decades is phenomenal. The fluid movement of people across and within borders has intensified following the turbulence and change occurring in multiple directions under globalisation (Arya and Roy, 2006). Greater integration of the world economy characterised by the accelerated movement of commodities, capital and ideas, rising income inequality, and lack of viable employment opportunities is further intensifying the process. Till recently, the discussion on migration revolved around the push and pull factors, the voluntarist perspective, or the dichotomous nature of migration analysed in terms of centre-periphery, industry-peasant base, and the North and the South (Thapan, 2006). However, recent decades have seen a more nuanced discussion of the specificities of class, gender, region, nationality and religion in migration (Brochmann, 1993; Gulati, 1997; Oishi, 2005).

The impact of migration on countries of origin, transit and destination needs no emphasis, particularly considering the magnitude, spread, heterogeneity and streams of population movements—students, refugees and workers. This trend is likely to intensify in the near future due to several demographic, political and economic reasons, advances in technology, and environmental changes, as highlighted by the *World Migration Report 2010* (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2010a). The report further notes that though this escalation has the potential to induce economic growth and reduce poverty, it also opens up new challenges, requiring innovative strategies to manage migration. This study is an attempt in this direction, and traces the movement of women workers from South Asia to the Gulf, exploring nuances in their migration process, structures hindering/facilitating their movement, and possible policy interventions that approach female migration with a rights based perspective. As a prelude to the discussions that follow, this chapter provides a regional overview of the South Asia-Gulf migration corridor; historical reasons for migration; and the socio-economic context that determines labour demand, pattern and composition of migration flows, and trends in remittances.

2.1 GLOBAL MIGRATION TRENDS

The total number of international migrants worldwide in 2010 is estimated to be 214 million. As a share of the global population, the stock of international migrants seems to be relatively stable, the increase in the last decade, i.e. from 2000 to 2010, being only 0.2 percentage points. Female migration, which now constitutes almost half of the international migration stock, also seems to be relatively stable, though with significant variations at the regional level.



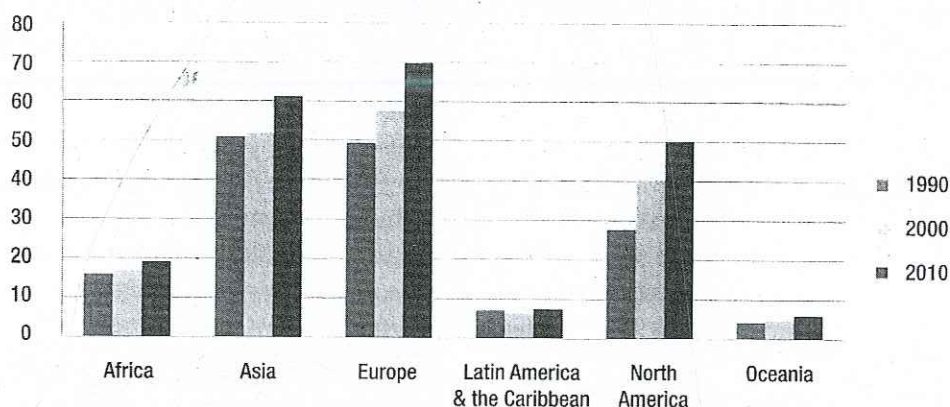
TABLE 2.1

VARIABLE	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010
Estimated number of international migrants at mid-year (in millions)	155.5	166.0	178.5	195.3	213.9
International migrants as a percentage of the population	2.9	2.9	2.9	3.0	3.1
Female migrants as a percentage of all international migrants	49.1	49.3	49.4	49.2	49.0

Source: UN DESA, retrieved from the website <<http://esa.un.org/migration/>> on 1-06-2011.

The regional spread of international migrant stock is represented in Figure 2.1. In 2010, Europe hosted almost 70 million international migrants, one-third of the global total. Asia (61 million) followed by North America (50 million) were in the second and third positions in terms of international migration stock. A slightly different picture emerges if we look at international migrants as a percentage of total population. In 2010, Oceania followed by North America had 16.9 per cent and 14.2 per cent of population as international migrants. The share of Asia was merely 1.5 per cent.

FIGURE 2.1 STOCK OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS BY REGION [in millions]



Source: UN DESA, retrieved from the website <<http://esa.un.org/migration/>> on 1-06-2011.

The *World Migration Report 2010* notes that the USA hosts the largest migrant stock and the majority of international migrants live in high income countries—57 per cent in 2010 compared to 43 per cent in 1990 (IOM, 2010a). Other prominent features noted by the report include the increase in the share of irregular migrants living and working abroad and increase in the share of temporary and circular migrants. Among the international migrants, refugees constitute an important proportion. In 2010, the share of the refugee population was 16.3 million, which was 4 per cent higher than in 2000 (15.6 million) (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs [UN DESA] website). Of the total, 66 per cent of the refugees



(10.9 million) were in Asia, followed by Africa (2.6 million) and Europe (1.6 million). Between 2000 and 2010, the increase in the refugee population in Asia was 23 per cent.

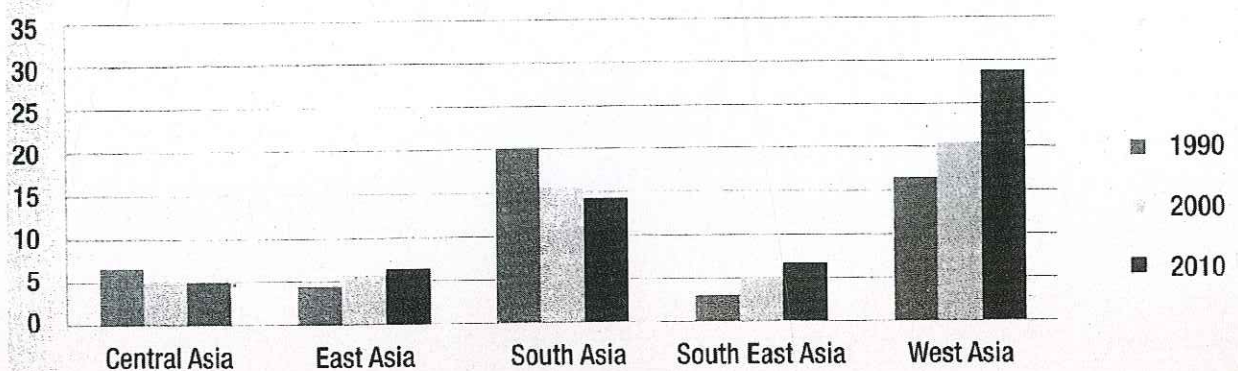
Yet another interesting feature is an increase in the stock of high skilled migrants—an increase of 60.1 per cent between 1990 and 2000—which raised the share of the high skilled in the migrant stock from 20.4 per cent to 26.1 per cent during the same period (Docquier et al., 2010). Interestingly, developing countries in Asia and Latin America send the highest number of high skilled migrants,

While Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America send the largest volume of low skilled migrants. The demand for migrant labour is likely to increase in the developed world for various reasons, such as an ageing population, inflow of students, demand for high skilled workers, and the expanding role of the migration industry (IOM, 2010a). While the labour force in developed countries is estimated to remain at 600 million till 2050, the labour force in less developed countries is expected to increase from 2.4 billion in 2005 to 3 billion in 2020 and 3.6 billion in 2040. Yet another factor that is expected to push up migration is the stagnant employment situation in certain parts of the developing world (ibid.).

2.2 MIGRATION TRENDS IN ASIA

Analysis of international migration in the Asian region indicates that West Asia has the largest stock of migrants—around 28.85 million in 2010—followed by South Asia (14.30 million), as indicated in Figure 2.2. This would translate to 12.4 per cent and 0.8 per cent of the population in West Asia and South Asia respectively in 2010. While the share of international migrants shows an increasing trend in East Asia and South East Asia, a declining trend is indicated in Central Asia.

FIGURE 2.2 STOCK OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS IN ASIA [in millions]



Source: UN DESA, retrieved from the website <<http://esa.un.org/migration/>> on 1-06-2011



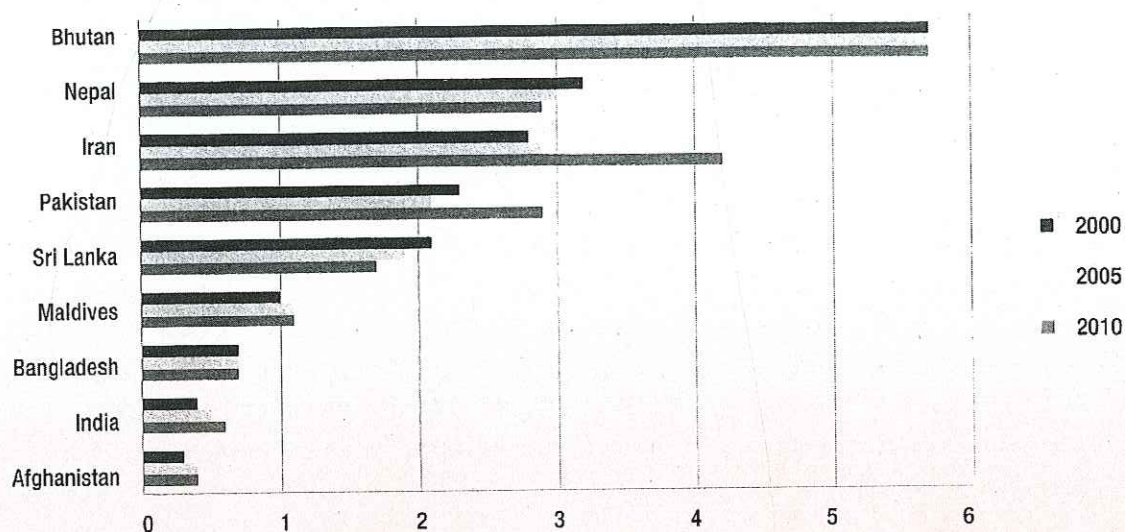
In terms of absolute figures, the Asian countries—China, Bangladesh and India—are among the top ten emigration countries in the world (IOM, 2010a). Approximately 37 per cent of Asian migrants move to countries belonging to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 43 per cent within the region, and the rest to countries outside the region.

A major destination of the Asian population is the US—7.9 million emigrants according to the 2000 Census Round data. There is also significant migration within Asia, with India registering 6.1 million immigrants from Asian countries, primarily Bangladesh and Nepal, followed by Pakistan (with nearly 2.8 million intra-regional migrants), Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China (nearly 2.5 million), Iran (almost 1.9 million) and Malaysia (almost 1.7 million) (ibid.). As indicated in Figure 2.3, within South-Central Asia, Bhutan has the largest share of migrants as a percentage of the population. However, the top emigration countries in the region are India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Sri Lanka.

Two broad streams of population movements are distinguishable within Asia—one to the oil-rich countries of West Asia and the second to the emerging economies of East and South East Asia, several factors have contributed to such movements. At a broad level, tremendous economic ;7 growth witnessed in these regions, coupled with related changes in lifestyle and a limited additional supply of national workers, necessitated a requirement for labour over and above the supply of the

FIGURE 2.3

STOCK OF MIGRANTS IN SOUTH-CENTRAL ASIA AS SHARE OF TOTAL POPULATION (in per cen)



Source: IOM, 2010a.



Local labour market (UN, 2003). The response of the poor countries of Asia in opening up their labour surplus markets to the Gulf facilitated the availability of low wage labour to meet the labour requirement. The post 1990s have witnessed a significant increase in the migration of highly skilled professionals from South Asia, especially Information Technology (IT) and health care workers (mainly para-medics), in response to growing demand in the developed countries. The case of India as a major source of origin deserves mention here. Yet another interesting development is the emergence of a few countries within Asia as both sending and receiving locations—India for instance—while certain countries continue to be either labour sending or receiving, as indicated in Table 2.2. In East and South East Asia, countries like Brunei Darussalam, Hong Kong SAR, Japan, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Taiwan Province of China and Thailand attract migrant workers. The population movement to West Asia started with the economic development that followed the oil boom of the 1970s, which initially generated a huge labour demand for construction activities and later for the subsequent development. This study will specifically look into female labour migration in the South Asia-Gulf corridor.

TABLE 2.2 MIGRATION STATUS OF ASIAN COUNTRIES

LABOUR SENDING	LABOUR RECEIVING	LABOUR SENDING & RECEIVING
Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines, Vietnam, Sri Lanka	Middle East, Japan, Taiwan (China), Brunei Darussalam, Republic of Korea, Hong Kong SAR, Singapore	India, Malaysia, Pakistan, Thailand

Source: Wickramasekara, 2002.

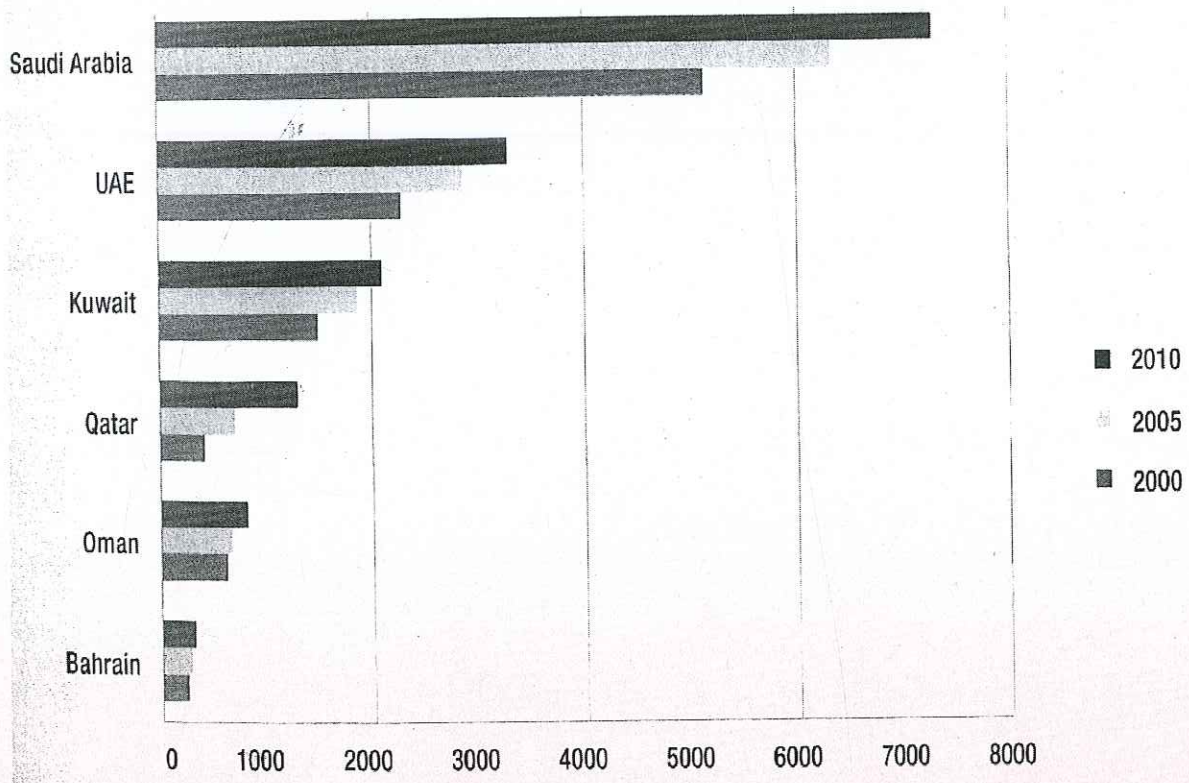
2.3 LABOUR MIGRATION FROM SOUTH ASIA TO THE GULF

South Asian countries covered under this study, which have a shared history of colonialism and underdevelopment, have come to share a common migration experience in recent decades, though with significant discontinuities. Among the top ten countries in the world in international emigration, India and Bangladesh stand first and second while Pakistan and Nepal are ranked fourth and fifth (IOM, 2010a). At the same time, in most South Asian countries, the State adopts a paternalistic attitude in regulating the flow of female migration, with Sri Lanka being the only country that proactively encourages female migration. This section attempts to explore labour mobility in the countries of origin (South Asia) and destination (Gulf countries), the magnitude and trends in labour outflows, remittances inflows, and the migration policies in the host countries and their implications for the countries of origin.

2.3.1 Labour Inflow to GCC Countries

The inflow of labour to Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries has evolved in different phases. The post 1970s development of the oil industry was hindered by several political and legal factors (Tetreault, 2008). Prominent among them were the British control over Kuwait and the emergence of oligopoly in oil production. Even during the pre 1970 phase, the demand for labour was met by inflows, primarily from Arab countries. By the early 1970s, the total number of foreigners in the GCC countries was estimated at 800,000-1.25 million, which doubled to 2.76 million by 1975 (of which 1.4 million were workers) (Winckler, 2009). To meet the labour demand in construction, government and services, it was thought best to rely on short-term migration of foreign labour, rather than to train the natives (Dito, 2010). The post 1970s phase also witnessed a diversification of labour flows, with a larger presence of people from Asian countries. The decline in oil prices during the second half of the 1980s temporarily reduced the inflow of migrant workers (Baldwin - Edwards, 2011). Figure 2.4 depicts the relative sizes of migrant stock in different GCC countries. In terms of magnitude Bahrain and Oman have the lowest stock of migrants, while Saudi Arabia and the UAE lead among Gulf countries in migration inflows.

FIGURE 2.4 STOCK OF MIGRANTS IN GCC COUNTRIES (in thousands)



Source: UN DESA, retrieved from the website <<http://esa.un.org/migration/>> on 1-06-2011.



However, a different picture emerges if we look at the percentage of foreigners in the population and labour force. Interestingly, Saudi Arabia, which has the largest stock of migrant population among Gulf countries, has the lowest share of foreigners in both population and labour force, while Bahrain's case seems to be the opposite. Given the demographic structure of GCC countries, it is difficult for them to give up dependence on foreign labour, though all the countries have

vigorously followed nationalisation policies (see Section 2.5). However, the trends in the share of migrant population and labour force do indicate a positive outcome of such policies, particularly in Saudi Arabia and the UAE, as a consistent decline is noted in the share of foreign workers.

TABLE 2.3

MIGRANTS' SHARE IN THE POPULATION AND LABOUR FORCE IN GCC COUNTRIES (in per cent)

COUNTRY	POPULATION				LABOUR FORCE				
	1975	1985	1997	2008	1975	1985	1990	1999	2008
Saudi Arabia	25	23	31	27	42.9	64.9	59.8	55.8	50.6
Kuwait	52	60	66	68	69.8	81.2	86.1	82.0	83.2
Bahrain	21	35	39	51	39.5	58.0	51.0	63.2	76.7
Oman	17	22	28	31	34.1	64.2	70.0	61.7	74.6
Qatar	59	60	67	87	80.6	89.7	91.6	87.1	94.3
UAE	70	79	76	81	84.8	89.5	89.3	90.4	85.0
GCC				41	50.6	69.8	67.7	64.1	66.9

Note: * 2009 data for Kuwait; 2010 data for Bahrain (employed only).

Source: Baldwin-Edwards, 2011.

Policies aimed at reducing foreign workers emerge from the prevalent labour market situation in the GCC countries. Prominent features as noted by Martin Baldwin-Edwards (2011) include: a lower LFPR and employment rate and a rising unemployment rate among nationals; employment segregation for nationals in the public sector and for non-nationals in the private sector; and an economy dominated by construction and services. As indicated in Table 2.4, natives in the Gulf countries record low LFPRs, the rate being as low as 36 per cent in Saudi Arabia. Though women record a low LFPR, the difference between native and non-native females is wide; for instance, in Saudi Arabia the rates for the two groups are 11.5 per cent and 40.8 per cent respectively. The employment rates are extremely low for nationals in Saudi Arabia and Qatar. However, in Qatar the unemployment rate for nationals is also low. It is interesting that in all the Gulf countries,



TABLE 2.4

SELECTED LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS FDR GCC COUNTRIES (in per cent)

INDICATOR	SAUDI ARABIA	UAE	KUWAIT	QATAR	OMAN	BAHRAIN
LFPR (2008)						
Nationals	36.3	45.6	51.1	49.3	-	-
Migrants	79.9	79.2	84.7	92.1	-	-
EMPLOYMENT RATE (2007-08)						
Nationals	13.3	-	-	7.5	22.3	26.4
Migrants	86.7			92.5	77.3	73.6
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (2008)						
Nationals	10.0	13.8	3.6	3.2	-	-
Migrants	0.5	2.6	1.2	0.3	-	-
SECTOR OF EMPLOYMENT FOR NATIONALS Public (2008)						
72			86	88	47	29
Private (2003)	46	1	3	3	48	30

Source: Baldwin-Edwards, 2011.

Nationals are disproportionately employed in public sector jobs that are highly remunerative and offer various benefits, in comparison with non-native labour which is engaged primarily in the private sector. The preference for public sector jobs and the entry of a higher proportion of youth into the labour market are expected to increase the unemployment rates in the GCC countries, putting further pressure on immigration policies.

Table 2.5 indicates the gross domestic product (GDP) growth rates of GCC countries. Except for Oman and Qatar, GDP growth rates witnessed a steep decline following the global downturn. Even the projected figures for 2016 indicate modest growth rates for the majority of the GCC countries. This is likely to have a severe negative impact on the inflow of labour, particularly in Saudi Arabia and the UAE which accommodate a higher share of migrants.



TABLE 2.5

GDP GROWTH RATE OF GCC COUNTRIES (in per cent)

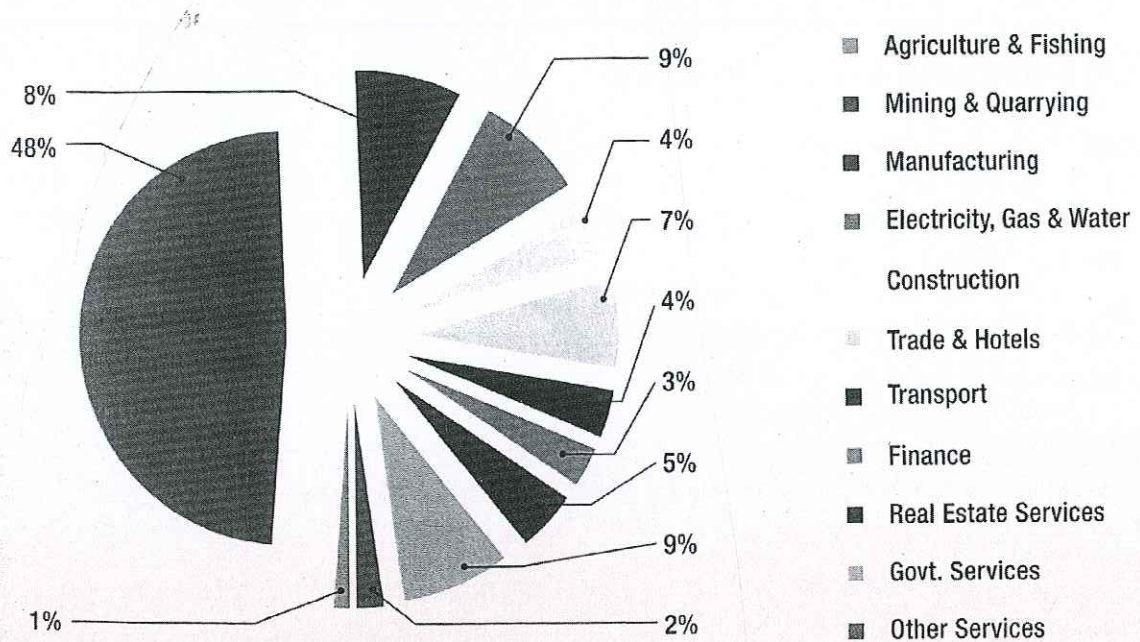
COUNTRY	2001	2005	2010	2011	2016*
Bahrain	4.6	7.9	4.1	1.5	4.2
Kuwait	0.7	10.4	3.4	5.7	4.7
Oman	5.6	4.0	4.1	4.4	3.6
Qatar	6.3	7.5	16.6	18.7	4.9
Saudi Arabia	0.5	5.6	4.1	6.5	4.2
UAE	1.8	8.6	3.2	3.3	4.2

Note: * Projected.

Source: International Monetary Fund (IMF), 2011, retrieved from the website <<http://www.imf.org/external/ns/cs.aspx?id=28/>> on 23-09-2011.

The economy of GCC countries is driven by oil and gas, with mining and quarrying generating more than half of the GDP. This is followed by the service sector, accounting for 32 per cent of the GDP in 2008 as indicated in Figure 2.5.

FIGURE 2.5 SECTORAL SHARE OF GDP IN GCC COUNTRIES (in per cent)



Source: GCC Secretariat, 2010.



However, a different picture emerges if the pattern of employment is examined for those GCC countries for which data is available. Services emerges as the major sector of employment generation, followed by construction activities. Interestingly, these are the sectors that employ the

TABLE 2.6
SECTORAL SHARE OF SELECTED GCC COUNTRIES, 2009 (in per cent)

SECTOR	SAUDI ARABIA	UAE	KUWAIT	QATAR	BAHRAIN
Agriculture	3.8	3.8	1.8	1.6	1.2
Secondary	8.8	10.8	6.5	14.1	17.2
Construction	12.8	12.3	8.1	44.3	32.8
Services	74.6	73.1	83.5	40.0	48.8

Source: Baldwin-Edwards, 2011.

Largest segment of foreign workers. As noted by Martin Baldwin-Edwards (2011), the share of nonnative workers in certain low paying service subsectors like domestic workers or personal assistants, is as high as 99.6 per cent and 94.8 per cent in Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

2.3.2 Labour Outflow from South Asia

It is estimated that nearly 9 million migrants from South Asia are currently working and residing in the GCC countries (Mohapatra et al., 2011). High levels of unemployment and underemployment, low wages and widespread poverty prevalent in the South Asian countries are often cited as the reasons that propel large-scale migration from South Asia to the Gulf countries. However, as critically analysed by Oishi (2005), if we look at poverty as a highly determining force, it would seem that there would be a higher rate of migration from a country like Bangladesh which is comparatively poorer than many of its South Asian neighbours. A closer analysis reveals that, apart from the economic aspect, cultural and historical factors and the role played by the State determine and shape migration flows.

As noted, the outflow of workers from South Asia to the Gulf was in response to the demand following the oil boom of the 1970s. During the initial phase of migration, labour flows mostly involved male workers from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, who were primarily low skilled workers. The demand for female migrants, as medical/health care personnel and as domestic workers, followed after the construction boom (Chammartin, 2005). Table 2.7 indicates the trends in labour flow to the Gulf countries. India emerges as the major labour sending country to all the GCC countries, followed by Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Historical and contemporary links have contributed to the position of India as a major



sending and receiving country of international migrants. It is estimated that there are about 5 million overseas Indian workers all over the world, with the majority in the Gulf countries. India was the first among the South Asian countries to take advantage of the oil boom in the Gulf. In the initial period, the construction sector attracted the largest share of India's low skilled and semi-skilled workers; however, there was an increase in the share of skilled workers in the later phase. Apart from the Gulf countries, the USA and the UK have also emerged as major migration destinations for Indian workers. Within the Gulf countries, Saudi Arabia and the UAE are the major destinations.

Poverty seems to be the driving force for labour migration from Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka, and partially for Pakistan. Bangladesh is a late entrant in the Gulf labour market. As Oishi (2005) notes, an important reason was the independence of Bangladesh from Pakistan which was viewed in a bad light in the Middle East and often wrongly interpreted as a rejection of Muslim identity'. Further, the government did not seem to have a definite plan to promote international migration till the late 1970s. Till 1975, 90 per cent of international migration from Bangladesh was to the UK.

TABLE 27

LABOUR FLOW TO GULF COUNTRIES [in thousands]

NATIONALITY	BAHRAIN (2004)	KUWAIT (2003)	OMAN (2004)	QATAR (2002)	SAUDI ARABIA (2004)	UAE (2002)	TOTAL
Indians	120	320	330	100	1,300	1,200	3,370
Pakistanis	50	100	70	100	900	450	1,670
Egyptians	30	260	30	35	900	140	1,395
Yemenis	-	-	-	-	800	60	860
Bangladeshis	-	170	110	-	400	100	780
Filipinos	25	70	-	50	500	120	765
Sri Lankans	-	170	30	35	350	160	745
Jordanians/ Palestinians	20	50	-	50	260	110	490
Sudanese	-	-	-	-	250	30	280
Indonesians	-	9	-	-	250	-	259
Iranians	30	80	-	60	-	40	210
Syrians	-	100	-	-	100	-	200
Turks	-	-	-	-	80	-	80
Bidoon	-	80	-	-	-	-	80
Nepalese	-	-	-	70	-	-	70

Source: Kapiszewski, 2006.



However, a shift was visible from 1976 onwards and Bangladesh is fast emerging as one of the major labour sending countries. Given its poor performance in social and economic development, migration seems to be a key option for this labour surplus country. From 1976 to 1999, 42 per cent of international migrants from Bangladesh went to Saudi Arabia (IOM, 2003). Country-wise foreign employment figures in 2010 for Bangladesh suggests that over 72 per cent of Bangladeshi migrants are working in the Gulf countries, with the UAE accounting for 51 per cent, Oman 10 per cent, Bahrain 6 per cent, Qatar 3 per cent and Saudi Arabia 2 per cent (Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training [BMET] website).

In Nepal, Maoist insurgency and the development impasse that followed, manifesting in high levels of poverty, inequality and low economic growth, worked as a major push factor for international migration. With an agrarian economy, almost one-third of the country's population (around 31 per cent) lives in poverty (Central Bureau of Statistics [CBS], 2005). However, labour migration

BOX 2.1

THE CASE OF AFGHANISTAN, BHUTAN AND MALDIVES

Data on international migration is extremely inadequate in the case of South Asian countries like Afghanistan, Bhutan and Maldives. According to the Royal Monetary Authority of Bhutan (2011), non-resident Bhutanese remitted around US \$4.1 million in 2009-10. This could be lower than the actual figure as the estimate does not include remittances from India and those by unofficial channels. In the case of Maldives, remittances were estimated to be around US \$3 million in 2007, which was about 0.2 per cent of FDI to the country (UNDP, 2009a). Migration from Afghanistan was mainly to Pakistan and Iran and does not strictly fall in the category of labour migration as a majority migrated to escape conflict situations in the home country (Kuschminder and Manoj, 2009). However, post 2001, Afghanistan witnessed a return flow of migrants from both these countries. In 2006, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) estimated remittances to Afghanistan at US \$2,485 million or 29.6 per cent of the GDP. All these three countries record high levels of poverty and, at least in the case of Maldives and Bhutan, internal migration seems to be high. Though the internal political situation is unstable only in Afghanistan, none of these countries have reached a stage of visualising international migration, let alone female migration, as an opportunity for development. from Nepal to the Gulf is relatively new and not directly linked to the oil boom. The country has a regular flow of migration to India, with which it shares a common border. The current labour migration from Nepal to the Gulf is marked by an increasing share of women in the labour outflows (4.8 per cent), who are primarily moving to low skilled occupations (Nepal Institute of Development Studies [NIDS], 2010).

High unemployment and poverty rates in Pakistan, resulting from an unstable economic and political situation, have triggered a major labour outflow from the country. Further, geographical proximity and commonality of religion could be important reasons for the choice



of Gulf countries as a major destination. Within the Gulf countries, a major proportion of Pakistani workers are in the UAE and Saudi Arabia. However, female labour migration from Pakistan is low and the government policies on female migration continue to be restrictive. The migration narrative of Sri Lanka presents both distinctions and similarities with the other South Asian countries discussed here. Sri Lanka is the only country in South Asia where the share of female migrants outnumbered that of male migrants; females accounted for 52 per cent of labour outflows in 2009 (Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment [SLBFE], 2009). Interestingly, the government has always promoted female migration, unlike other South Asian countries which have imposed many restrictive conditions on female migration. However, as in the case of countries under discussion, migration to the Gulf dominates labour movements, again involving those in the low skilled category. An unstable political and economic situation, due to a prolonged civil war in Sri Lanka that continued till 2009, was a prominent factor shaping the migration flow in the country. Though a developing economy, Sri Lanka has made significant achievements in human development and poverty reduction. However, income inequality and lack of viable opportunities sustain and intensify labour outflows from Sri Lanka.

2.4 TRENDS IN REMITTANCES

One of the most significant and immediate outcomes of migration is the counter-flow of remittances. A significant increase in the quantum of remittances sent home by migrant workers in recent years, and the accelerated pace at which it is growing, have infused interest into the understanding of such remittance flows and related dimensions. Documented remittance flows to developing countries from overseas resident and non-resident workers amounted to US \$325 billion in 2010, accounting for nearly three quarters of the total worldwide recorded remittance flows of US \$440 billion (Table 2.8). Remittance remains the second largest financial flow to developing countries after Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), more than double the size of Official Development Assistance (ODA). In fact, the remittance flows to developing countries have nearly doubled during the last five years, 2005 to 2010 (US \$167 billion to US \$325 billion). The above trends clearly highlight the increasing role of migrant workers' remittances as a source of external financing in developing countries. Another important dimension to be noted about remittance flows to developing countries relates to the stability of such flows. Whilst FDI, portfolio investment and other capital flows to developing countries rise and fall cyclically, remittances show remarkable stability over time and even increases in response to economic crises.

South Asia is one of the major remittance-recipient regions of the world, accounting for nearly one-fourth of remittance flows to developing countries. In fact, among the different regions of the world, South Asia recorded the highest growth of remittances (8.2 per cent) during 2009-10. This growth is partly because of the increase in oil prices and expansion of economic activity in the GCC countries, one of the main destination regions for South Asian migrant workers (Mohapatra et al., 2011). Among the South Asian countries, India is the largest

recipient of remittances

TABLE 2.8 REMITTANCE FLOWS TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, 2007-10

TABLE 2.8 REMITTANCE FLOWS TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, 2007-10				
	2007	2008	2009	2010*
REMITTANCES (in US\$ billions)				
<i>All developing countries</i>	278	325	308	325
East Asia & Pacific	71	85	86	93
Europe & Central Asia	39	46	35	36
Latin America & Caribbean	63	64	57	58
Middle East & North Africa	32	36	34	36
South Asia	54	72	75	81
Sub-Saharan Africa	19	22	21	22
LDCs** (UN classification)	17	23	24	26
Low income countries	17	22	23	24
Middle income countries	262	303	285	300
World	385	444	417	440
GROWTH RATE (in per cent)				
<i>All developing countries</i>	22.9	16.8	-5.4	5.6
East Asia & Pacific	23.7	20.3	0.8	7.4
Europe & Central Asia	38.5	16.5	-22.7	1.3
Latin America & Caribbean	7.1	2.3	-12.3	1.7
Middle East & North Africa	21.5	12.0	-6.8	6.2
South Asia	27.1	32.6	4.8	8.2
Sub-Saharan Africa	47.1	16.0	-3.8	5.5
LDCs (UN classification)	22.9	32.8	5.2	5.8
Low income countries	27.9	32.5	3.3	6.9
Middle income countries	22.6	15.8	-6.0	5.5
World	21.1	15.3	-5.9	5.4

Note: * Estimated; ** Least Developed Countries.

Source: Mohapatra et al., 2011.

(US \$55 billion) followed by Bangladesh (US \$11.1 billion) and Pakistan (US \$9.4 billion) (Table 2.9). However, as a percentage of GDP, remittances are most significant for Nepal (22.9 per cent), Bangladesh (11.8 per cent) and Sri Lanka (7.9 per cent).

One of the major limitations of the remittance data is the lack of any reliable information on the contribution of women in remittance flows. In fact, no major remittance-recipient country provides national level remittance data disaggregated by contributions of male and female migrant workers. This is surprising given that nearly half of the international migrants



are women. Apart from this issue, there is almost universal recognition of the fact that officially transferred remittances, as reflected in the balance of payments accounts/national accounts, does not capture the actual level of remittances.

This is because of two factors. Some amount of savings is transferred through legal channels but is not accounted in the official statistics (such as personal baggage, duty free allowances and cash carried by returnees or the personal network of migrants). The second and the most important channel is, however, undocumented and through informal transfer systems circumventing official

TABLE 2.9 : FLOW OF REMITTANCES IN SOUTH ASIA AND GCC (in US \$ millions)

COUNTRY	INFLOWS 2005	OUTFLOWS 2005	INFLOWS 2009	OUTFLOWS 2009	INFLOWS 2010*
Banladesh	4,315	5	10,523	8	11,050
India	22,125	1,348	49,256	4,000	55,000
Nepal	1,212	66	2,986	12	3,513
Pakistan	4,280	3	8,720	8	9,407
Sri Lanka	1,991	257	3,363	435	3,612
Bahrain	-	1,223	-	1,391	-
Kuwait	-	2,648	-	9,912	-
Oman	39	2,257	38	5,313	40
Saudi Arabia	94	14,315	217	25,969	233

Note: * Estimated.

Source: World Bank, 2011.

And formal channels. The most important and extensive form of such transfers, in the context of South Asia, is referred to as the *hawala* or *hundi* system. *Hawala* refers to informal channels for transferring of funds from one location to another through service providers known as *hawaladar*, regardless of the nature of the transaction and countries involved (El-Qurochi, 2002). Under this method of remittances, the worker transfers a sum in foreign currency to an agent overseas under the agreement that the local currency equivalent at an agreed exchange rate, which is usually set above the official exchange rate, is transferred by the agent's counterpart to the migrants family or its nominees. *Hawala* works by transferring money without actually moving it, i.e. money transfer without money movement. The system is of old standing, associated with ancient trading networks in the Middle East, South Asia and East Asia. The system has been invigorated by the massive expansion of labour migration in the 1970s and 1980s. It works on trust and is used both for remittances of legally earned incomes as also those generated or financed through illegal and criminal activities. It is the association with money laundering that has made this system infamous.



2.5 LABOUR GOVERNANCE: POLICIES OF GCC COUNTRIES

All the GCC countries follow the sponsorship system called *kafala* to manage the flow of workers by restricting them to temporary resident status and thereby protecting the native labour force (Winckler, 1998). Of late *kafala* has come under the scanner as it has led to visa trading and promoted irregular migration, as discussed in Chapter 4 (Shaham, 2009). Further, the system undermines the rights of migrant workers and forces them to remain in exploitative situations with little choice (Kapiszewski, 2006). However, as noted by Martin Baldwin-Edwards (2011), other than in a couple of countries such as Kuwait and Bahrain which have initiated steps to reform *kafala*, this practice of sponsoring migrant workers remains widely prevalent in the Gulf countries.

Yet another important means of controlling labour in the Gulf is a policy of nationalisation of the labour force, adopted following the rising share of immigrants in population and labour force, and a decline in the economic boom after the initial euphoria of the 1970s. Though initiated from 1985 in Kuwait and 1988 in Oman, the strategy was followed more aggressively post 1990s after Saudi Arabia's involvement. As Table 2.10 shows, a drastic change is evident in the way Gulf countries view labour inflow; from viewing it as satisfactory/too low in 1976, all Gulf countries except Bahrain have found the migration level to be too high and have initiated policies to lower it by 2009.

TABLE 2.10

IMMIGRATION POLICY OF GCC COUNTRIES

COUNTRY	1976 VIEW	POLICY	2009 VIEW	POLICY
Bahrain	Satisfactory	Maintain	Satisfactory	Maintain
Kuwait	Satisfactory	Maintain	Too High	Lower
Oman	Satisfactory	Maintain	Satisfactory	Maintain
Qatar	Satisfactory	Maintain	Too High	Lower
Saudi Arabia	Too Low	Raise	Too High	Lower
UAE	Satisfactory	Maintain	Too High	Lower

Source: United Nations, 2010.

Strategies adopted for achieving nationalisation include: restricting the entry of migrants in certain sectors; prescribing quotas on employment of non-natives; reserving the major chunk of public sector jobs for nationals; strict implementation of immigration rules; increasing the skill levels of native workers; and increasing the cost of hiring and living of foreign workers. Differential wage rates for the same work by national and non-nationals is widely prevalent in the Gulf. A detailed review of various measures adopted to control migrant



workers in GCC countries has been provided by Nasra M. Shah (2008). As noted by Martin Baldwin-Edwards (2011), among the Gulf countries, Saudi Arabia seems to have the most effective policy, reflected in the steady decline in the number of non-natives in their labour force, as mentioned previously. The policies of different Gulf countries with respect to foreign labour are depicted in Box 2.2.

BOX 2.2

LABOUR MARKET STRATEGIES FOR 'NATIONALISATION'

A. POLICIES AIMING TO REDUCE THE DEMAND FOR IMMIGRANT LABOUR

1. Raising costs of hiring foreign workers (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman)
2. Closing of employment in specific sectors of professions (all GCC)
3. Ceiling of proportion of foreign workers in company (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE)
4. Tax on non-diversity of nationalities (i.e. > 30 percent any nationality (UAE)
5. Reducing labour-intensive projects in the public sector (Kuwait)
6. Preferential award of government contracts to private companies satisfying nationalisation quota objectives (Oman)

B. POLICIES AIMING TO REDUCE THE SUPPLY OF IMMIGRANT LABOUR

1. Health insurance paid by migrant worker (Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, UAE)
2. Degree Validation fee (UAE)
3. Direct tax on migrant worker (Saudi Arabia)
4. Restrictions on visa issuance (Bahrain, Saudi Arabia)
5. Deportation of irregular migrants (all GCC)

C. POLICIES AIMING TO INCREASE THE DEMAND FOR INDIGENOUS LABOUR

1. State subsidy (up to 50 percent) of private sector pay for native worker (Saudi Arabia)
2. Quotas for natives in public/private employment (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, Qatar)
3. Development of economic sectors for nationals' employment (Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, UAE)
4. Directing new labour market entrants to the private sector (all GCC)
5. Promoting study and training in technology and medicine (all GCC)

D. POLICIES AIMING TO REDUCE LOCAL/IMMIGRANT WAGE DISPARITIES

1. Reform/near-abandonment of the Kafala system (Oman, Bahrain)
2. Taxes on hiring migrant workers (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman)
3. Subsidies for hiring of indigenous workers (Saudi Arabia)

Source: Adapted from Baldwin-Edwards, 2011.

Gulf countries in general have a track record of restricting the rights of workers, particularly migrants. For instance, labour laws in Bahrain grant limited rights to both citizens and non-citizens to form and join trade unions. Migrant workers excluding domestic workers can join trade unions though they cannot bargain. In Bahrain, all trade unions are required to join and affiliate with the General Federation of Bahrain Trade Union (GFBTU). In 2009 new



rules were framed in Bahrain to allow migrant workers to change jobs without the permission of employers, but subject to certain conditions. In Kuwait, migrant workers are subjected to severe limitations in rights. In February 2010, a new private sector labour law, replacing a 1964 law, was enacted that expanded the rights of private sector employees other than domestic servants. Barring domestic workers and maritime employees, all others including migrant workers can join trade unions. Migrant workers have to acquire a certificate of good conduct and moral standing from the government and they cannot run for seats or vote.

Workers in Oman, other than those in the armed forces, public security institutions, government employees and domestic workers, enjoy the right to form unions. The law in Oman allows for collective bargaining according to the terms and conditions of employment, including wages and hours of work. In Qatar only one trade union is allowed—the General Union of Workers of Qatar; non-citizens cannot become members of the workers' committee but can become members of the joint labour management committee. The right to strike is allowed but not for civil servants and domestic workers. In Saudi Arabia, the labour law does not allow for labour unions; there is no provision to strike work and protection of collective bargaining. In the UAE, workers are not allowed to form unions except in the case of professional bodies and labour law excludes domestic workers, agricultural workers and government workers.

TABLE 2.11

GROUPS PROHIBITED TO FORM LABOUR UNIONS IN GCC COUNTRIES

Bahrain	Military workers and domestic workers cannot join trade unions
Kuwait	Maritime employees and domestic workers cannot join trade unions
Oman	Armed forces, public security institutions, government employees and domestic workers cannot join trade unions
Qatar	Civil servants and domestic workers cannot join unions
Saudi Arabia	No trade unions
UAE	No trade unions but professional bodies, excluding agricultural workers, government employees and domestic workers, are allowed

Source: US State Department, 2010a.

The UAE has taken several measures since the mid-2000s to assist migrant workers in recouping unpaid wages. Electronic bank payment of wages was made compulsory from 2008. The government has facilitated employment transfers, enhanced the legal rights of workers vis-a-vis employers, and introduced compulsory health insurance for all workers including those in domestic service paid by sponsors from 2008. Employment contracts for domestic workers have been instituted recently, protecting their rights to pay, accommodation, health care and working hours.

Nationalisation of the workforce or the policy of gradually replacing the migrant workforce with a national workforce has a direct fall-out in the recruitment and social security



of the migrant workers. The UAE, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait are moving towards a policy of health insurance being paid by migrant workers. The UAE has a degree validation fee for migrant workers while Saudi Arabia imposes a direct tax on migrant workers.

Children born to migrant workers in the Gulf countries have no special status and are covered by their parents' sponsorship. Sponsorship ceases for male children at the age of 21, and girls upon marriage. After the stipulated age, the person must be registered either as a student or as employed, in order to have a legal residence in the Gulf. Women are technically allowed to remain on their husbands' residence permits, depending on their husbands' income.

Though several strategies have been adopted by Gulf countries to reverse the lower labour force participation of native labour force, especially females, because of cultural reasons and poor quality of skilled labour force, the extent to which such policies will be successful is open to debate. Even in countries like Bahrain where the quality of the labour force is considered to be better (Kapiszewski, 2001), this seems to be an issue. However, it also needs to be mentioned that such policies of nationalisation of labour force are occurring at a stage when sending countries are actively involved in negotiating the living and working conditions for migrant workers abroad and moving from controlling migration to even facilitating the outflow of workers. Though this should ideally result in positive outcomes for both sending and receiving countries, how far this will be achieved is difficult to predict.



THE FEMINISATION OF MIGRANTS

With women presently constituting half of the number of international migrants, the term feminisation of migration is used to capture the changing pattern of female migration flows—women migrating for work, often without family—rather than a mere increase in the number of women migrants. This change in the pattern of female migratory flows calls for gender-sensitive policies as migration creates gender differentiated experiences and outcomes (Piper, 2008). Though the link between migration and development is well acknowledged, a gendered analysis of the migration cycle is relatively recent. Migration narratives of women are complex as several factors at the sending and receiving countries intervene in and impact upon how female migrants reproduce/liberate their traditional role and how they respond to and (re)negotiate opportunities/ vulnerabilities in the process.

At the global level, two features distinguish the current pattern of female labour migration. First, an overwhelming majority of international female migrants belong to either the low skilled or semi-skilled category. This is particularly true of those from South Asia and South East Asia who move within Asia, either to South East Asia or to the oil-rich countries of West Asia, as domestic workers. Second, the increased intensity of population movements has played a major role in shaping the debates over ensuring justice for and dignity of workers, both at the national and international levels. Demands are strongly expressed by national and international forums of migrants to recognise their right to migrate for work and also rights at work. This also holds true for those in the care services as they often fall outside the provisions of labour law in several countries. Though the success of such initiatives depends, to a large extent, on the stakeholders' responses at different levels and situations, such voices have led to certain positive developments with respect to migrants' rights in both the sending and receiving countries. Hence, at one level, even as female labour has become mobile, internationally they continue to be in the 'old job' at a 'new destination. At another level, female domestic workers have been given a 'new voice' from 'no voice', which is positive. In this chapter, an attempt is made to examine the trends in the feminisation of migration in the global and Asian contexts, and to identify the factors that trigger the migration of female workers. Further, government policies in the South Asian countries have also been analysed to examine how far they facilitate or hinder female mobility.



3.1 GLOBAL TRENDS

The stock of international female migrants is estimated to be 105 million in 2010. The ratio of international female migrants to the total stock of migrants remains almost constant—around 49 per cent from 1990 to 2011 (Table 3.1). However, the data indicates regional variations in female mobility. In 2010, female migrants constituted the majority in Europe and Oceania—52.4 per cent and 51.2 per cent respectively—while in North America and Latin America & the Caribbean, the stock of female migrants equalled that of male migrants. The Asian region has the lowest share of women as a percentage of the international migrants' stock—around 45 per cent in 2010 (27.35 million). However, the share of Asia in the female international migration stock is about one-fourth, 26 per cent in 2010.

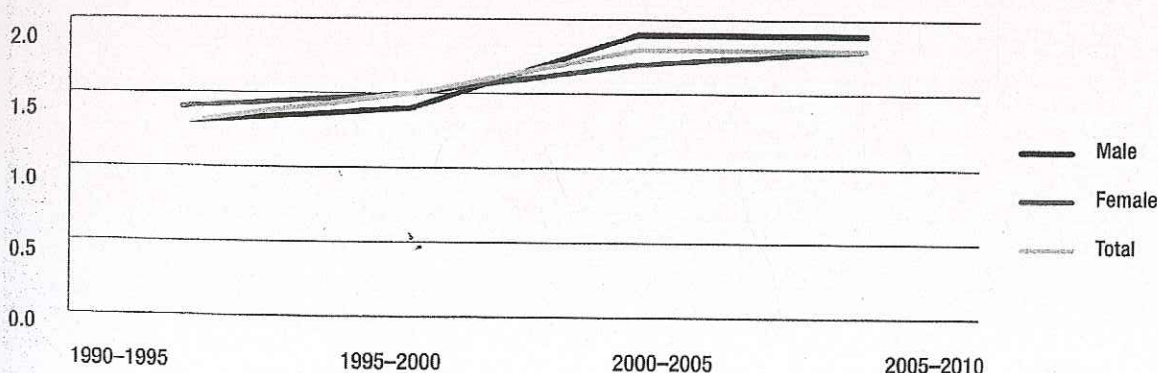
TABLE 3.1

WOMEN MIGRANTS AS PERCENTAGE OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS [in per cent]

REGION	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010
Africa	46.2	47.1	46.7	46.7	46.8
Asia	45.4	45.3	45.7	45.0	44.6
Europe	52.7	52.4	52.8	52.5	52.3
Latin America & the Caribbean	49.7	49.9	50.0	50.1	50.1
North America	51.1	50.8	50.5	50.4	50.1
Oceania	49.1	49.7	50.2	50.7	51.2
World	49.1	49.3	49.4	49.2	49.0

Source: UN DESA, retrieved from the website <<http://esa.un.org/migration/>> on 1-06-2011.

As indicated in Figure 3.1, the stock of international female migrants has been registering a consistent increase, in comparison to the sluggishness noted in the stock of total migrants and male migrants. Though, prima facie, this seems to be positive, one needs to look into the disaggregated data to locate factors that promote female migration in the present magnitude.

FIGURE 3 1 ANNUAL RATE OF CHANGE OF MIGRANT STOCK (in per cent)


Source: UN DESA, retrieved from the website <<http://esa.un.org/migration/>> on 1 -06-2011.

3.2 MIGRATION TRENDS OF WOMEN IN ASIA

In Asia, the regions with a high share of women in the international migration stock include East Asia, Central Asia and South East Asia. The share of women migrants in the total international migrant stock in South Asia is comparatively low—45 per cent in 2010, as indicated in Table 3.2. Within Asia, West Asia has the highest stock of international women migrants—out of 27.35 million international female migrants in Asia, 11.32 million is accounted for by West Asia, indicating a higher inflow of female migrants to the region. However, it is important to note that

TABLE 3.2

WOMEN MIGRANTS AS PERCENTAGE OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS, ASIA (in per cent)

REGION	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010
Central Asia	55.2	55.2	55.4	55.3	55.2
East Asia	49.0	50.5	52.9	54.4	55.0
South Asia	44.8	44.9	44.9	44.9	44.6
South East Asia	48.0	48.4	49.1	49.1	49.6
West Asia	40.7	40.4	41.0	39.5	39.3
Asia	45.4	45.3	45.7	45.0	44.6

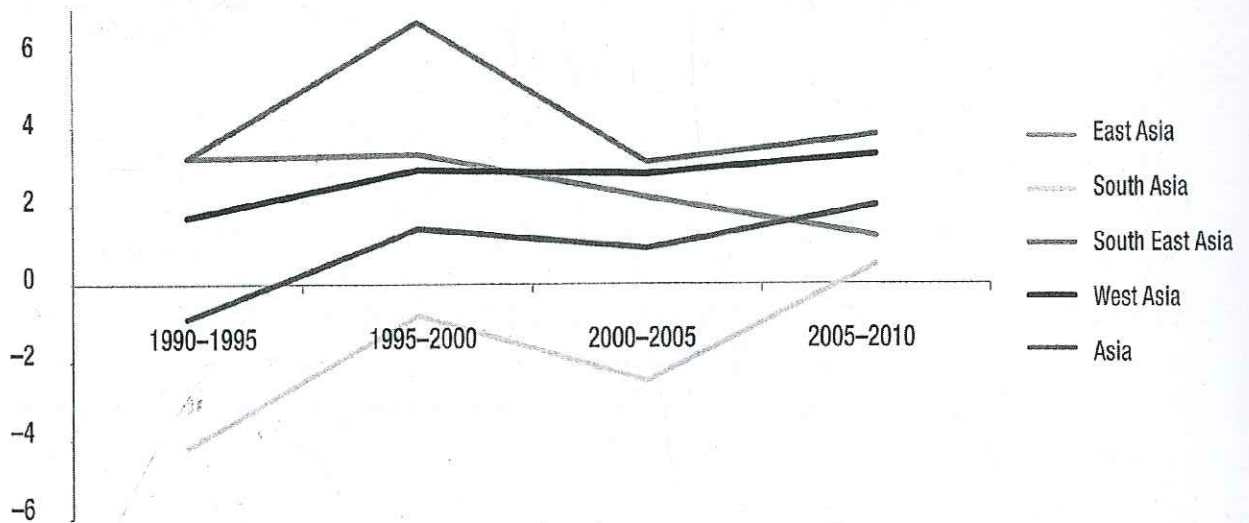
Source: UN DESA, retrieved from the website <<http://esa.un.org/migration/>> on 1 -06-2011.



The proportion of women migrants in the total migrant stock is much less when compared to male migrants in West Asia.

Figure 3.2 indicates the annual rate of change of the female migrant stock. The highest increase is evident in South East Asia and West Asia—3.8 per cent and 3.3 per cent respectively during 2005- 2010—in comparison with 2 per cent noted for Asia during the same period. Growth in the stock of international female migrants continues to be low in South Asia during 2005-10.

FIGURE 3 2 ANNUAL RATE OF CHANGE OF THE FEMALE MIGRANT STOCK IN ASIA C [in per cent]



Source: UN DESA, retrieved from the website <<http://esa.un.org/migration/>> on 1-06-2011.

Within South Asia, Nepal has the most feminised migrant stock (68.2 per cent) as indicated in Table 3.3. It is followed by Sri Lanka and India. Though the share of women in the international migration stock is low in Pakistan and Bangladesh, a positive development is the high growth of female migrants noted in these two countries in the recent past. However, the picture changes when the percentage share of each country in the pool of international female migrants from South Asia is considered. Out of the 6.45 million international women migrants from South Asia in 2010, 2.7 million were from India, followed by 1.9 million from Pakistan; both these countries together accounted for 71 per cent of international female migrants from South Asia. As noted before, the share of international women migrants from Afghanistan, Bhutan and Maldives is negligible. Of the total international female migrants from South Asia, the share of these three countries was merely 0.8 per cent in 2010.



TABLE 3.3 .
PERCENTAGE OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN MIGRANTS IN SOUTH ASIA

COUNTRY	SHARE					GROWTH			
	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	1990-95	1995-2000	2000-05	2005-10
Bangladesh	13.9	13.9	13.9	13.9	13.9	2.7	-0.4	0.9	1.0
India	47.8	48.1	48.5	48.6	48.7	-1.1	-1.7	-1.6	-1.5
Nepal	71.6	71.1	70.1	69.1	68.2	7.6	2.5	2.4	2.6
Pakistan	45.0	45.2	45.0	44.8	44.7	-9.0	0.7	-3.5	3.5
Sri Lanka	49.8	49.8	49.8	49.8	49.8	-1.5	-1.5	-1.5	-1.5
Afghanistan	43.6	43.6	43.6	43.6	43.6	4.0	1.6	2.6	1.0
Bhutan	18.5	18.5	18.5	18.5	18.5	3.0	3.0	3.0	1.5
Maldives	45.0	45.2	45.0	44.8	44.7	1.7	1.0	0.8	0.7

Source: UN DESA, retrieved from the website <<http://esa.un.org/migration/>> on 1 -06-2011.

Several patterns in international female migration have been noted at the global level (Ghosh, 2009). Most prominent among them is for the purpose of marriage. A closely related stream of migration is family migration, where the woman migrates while accompanying the household head to a nation other than their place of birth or for the purpose of family reunification, or where the woman migrates alone to join the family. All these three kinds of migration have a higher chance of falling into the category of permanent migration. Women also migrate either alone or with family due to displacement linked to natural disasters, or tense social and political situations like wars or other forms of violence, to mention a few. Of late, migration of females for education and for work is becoming increasingly prominent. All the forms of migration mentioned here fall into the categories of forced/voluntary, regular/irregular, placing the migrant women in different processes and vulnerabilities. Here we will be looking more specifically at migration for the purpose of employment.

3.3 LOCATING FEMALE LABOUR MIGRATION IN ASIA

Within Asia—a major region of origin for international female migrants—three circuits of migration have been identified (Abella, 1995). The principal stream is the migration of women workers from South and South East Asia to Gulf countries. The second stream is from developing Asian countries, such as Sri Lanka, Thailand, Indonesia and Philippines, to Brunei, Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia. The third stream is of those moving to Canada, the US and Europe. The first and second stream of migrants generally consist of workers in the lower end of manufacturing and services, particularly domestic workers, while the third stream of



migrants consists of those in the medium and high skilled categories, such as IT professionals and health care workers.

A gender differentiated demand for labour seems to determine the migration flow of international female workers (Ghosh, 2009). While the majority of male migrants are engaged in production and construction, females are disproportionately engaged in the service sector—care and entertainment services. Though working conditions are likely to be precarious in such sectors, it is also true that employment generation is less likely to be affected by economic cycles; it is determined primarily by the labour market structure of receiving countries and their social and cultural practices. The demand for domestic workers in GCC nations is an apt example. As indicated in Table 3.4, females constitute the major segment of migrant domestic workers in the GCC region. The largest groups of migrant female domestic workers are in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

TABLE 3.4

MIGRANT DOMESTIC WORKERS IN GCC COUNTRIES

COUNTRY	YEAR	TOTAL	WOMEN
Bahrain	2011*	83,198	51,811
Kuwait	2010	569,536	310,402
Oman	2009	94,592	69,256
Qatar	2009	80,342	48,147
Saudi Arabia	2009	777,254	506,950

Note: * First quarter.

Source: Esim and Carole, 2011.

Several factors have influenced the demand for female caregivers in the Gulf. With improved economic situations, the hiring of domestic workers is considered a necessary comfort, particularly in societies with a feudal structure. At the same time, the hiring of local domestic workers has become difficult either due to the shortage of local labour or higher prices charged by them. Female labour migration from South Asia to the Gulf countries is essentially linked to their economic prosperity as the latter register very low female LFPRs. Thus the feminisation of international migration is linked to a global demand for domestic workers, reproducing the traditional sexual division of labour, where women are relegated to



lower end jobs (Agrawal, 2006). Instances are also not uncommon of how global capital determines and reaffirms the existing gender division of labour. In the context of East and South East Asia, Keiko Yamanaka and Nicola Piper (2005) trace how Hong Kong SAR, the Republic of Korea, Singapore and Taiwan Province of China became Asia's economic 'miracle' by mobilising and controlling 'inexpensive, tractable and disposable' female labour.

The feminisation of migration has challenged the existing social and cultural norms and in certain cases created new conditions that restrict women's mobility, which could be informal or legal. However, as will be argued in the following section, restrictions with the intention to 'protect' females tend to be counterproductive, reproducing existing oppressive structures and increasing the vulnerability of female workers. At the same time, efforts made to ensure conditions of decent work to migrants, including adequate wages, social security and protection against abuses, have been limited at best. A related issue that requires attention is the devaluation of skills or nonrecognition of the migrants' qualifications and previous job experience, affecting their earning capacity. This is particularly true of female labour migration, especially of health care workers, to Western countries.

3.4 THE FEMINISATION OF SOUTH ASIAN MIGRATION

The main reasons for migration in general—lack of viable opportunities in the home country, widespread poverty, desire for a better future, and a high remuneration in the destination country—hold true for female migration in South Asia, though the impact of such factors varies across countries. At the same time, as will be discussed, factors such as the harsh realities of family life, alcoholism of the male members of the family, oppressive social systems, etc. seem to play a crucial role in influencing women's decision to migrate.

In the South Asian context, the feminisation of migration is largely associated with the migration of women from Sri Lanka. As per the statistics in 2009, 51.73 per cent of the total Sri Lankan emigrants were women, of which 89 per cent migrated as housemaids (SLBFE, 2009). The composition of female migrants provides clues about the factors that trigger migration at the micro level. In the present decade, as the figures suggest, the migration of women workers from Sri Lanka is inextricably linked with the employment of Sri Lankan housemaids in the Gulf countries. Sri Lankan women migrants are predominantly Sinhalese and Muslim; the number of Tamils is much lower. While migrants were drawn primarily from the urban areas surrounding the capital city of Colombo in the late 1970s, they now come from all over the island, including the western districts of Colombo, Kurunegala and Gampaha, in large numbers (Frantz, 2010).

Prior to the current spurt of female international migration, women workers were



largely engaged in plantations and Free Trade Zones (Brochmann, 1993; Kottegoda, 2006) and so had a higher workforce participation rate. Sri Lanka's vibrant garment industry spread across the country also boosted the numbers of female migrant workers. Large numbers of women trained in these factories have found jobs in garment factories overseas. The increase in female migrant labour as housemaids and as low skilled and semi-skilled factory workers (predominantly garment factory workers) is attributed to a number of other social, economic and policy factors. For example, Ismail (1999) notes that the free market economic policies of the United National Party that came to power in 1977 had an adverse effect on the female worker-dominated handloom and textile sectors, and hiked the female unemployment rate to 45 per cent, which later on propelled female migration on a large scale from the country. The new economic policy of the government, among other things, dismantled the control system on private economy, opening up previous State monopolies to the private sector (Brochmann, 1993). An immediate effect was high inflation rates, with the price of food items increasing by nearly 200 per cent, fuel and power by nearly 400 per cent, and miscellaneous items, including medicine, by about 138 per cent between 1977 and 1984 (ibid.). Despite liberalisation, unemployment remained a major problem and the standard of living of the population further worsened with the withdrawal of the food subsidy. The increased demand for workers in the Gulf gave the Sri Lankan government an avenue to overcome the low economic growth. In this context it can be argued that the historical legacies of female employment outside the household also helped female migration from Sri Lanka on a large scale (Oishi, 2005).

Female migration from Nepal presents a different trajectory. Migration in Nepal before the 1990s often meant male migration in which women accompanied their spouses, parents or relatives. Patriarchal attitudes coupled with a lack of reliable and available networks and lack of funds to support migrant initiatives hindered the independent movement of women migrant workers (Adhikari, 2006). One significant development in the 1990s was the change in the political organisation of Nepal from that of monarchy to democracy. The failure of the agricultural economy and the resultant poverty after the 1990s and the search for non-farm jobs led many Nepalese women to India, while a few migrated to countries other than India (Bohra and Douglas, 2009).

As in the case of Sri Lanka and Nepal, widespread poverty, unemployment at home, and wage differences at the destination triggered international labour migration from India to Gulf countries. Academic literature on international labour migration in India is largely focused on male migration. This complements the near 'invisibility' of data with respect to female migrants. This seems ironic in the case of Kerala which records high levels of female labour migration to Gulf countries. However, the plight of female labour migration in the category of



low skilled (domestic workers) and medium skilled (health care workers) is increasingly receiving attention (Bindhulakshmi, 2010; Percot, 2006). The study conducted by IOM (2010b) among labour migrants from Andhra Pradesh indicates that all of them decided to migrate because of the economic benefits. Studies on female labour migration to Gulf countries indicate that their choice (particularly for nurses) is also guided by a desire to migrate to a better destination, for example to the West (Percot, 2006). Though there is also an increasing flow of migrants to Western countries, for instance in the IT field, their migration experience is yet to be adequately studied.

Female migration continues to be low in both Pakistan and Bangladesh according to the official statistics. Poor economic conditions in these countries along with political instability play a major role in pushing migration. As indicated in the analysis of Oishi (2005), for some younger single educated women or older married women with no children, some education and dead-end jobs, migration represents an adventure, a broadening of their horizons. The social status of the female migrant—illiterate, divorced or separated—also seems to influence her decision to migrate (Blanchet et al., 2008), given limited employment opportunities in Bangladesh. A few also migrate to save money for marriage related expenses (Sidiqqi, 2001). Similar is the case of Pakistan. Interestingly, unlike the case of Sri Lanka, India and Nepal, where poverty and high unemployment have triggered off fairly large-scale female migration, in Bangladesh and Pakistan where poverty and unemployment are relatively high, oppressive gender structures may be hindering female mobility.

3.5 MANAGING WOMEN'S MIGRATION: STATE RESPONSES

All countries have legislations to regulate the flow of emigrants and to control emigration. A striking aspect of the emigration policies of the South Asian countries as noted by Oishi (2005) is that the policies do not treat men and women uniformly. Despite the increasing presence of women in migration flows, especially as workers, the migration policies in both the sending and receiving countries in the South Asia-Gulf migration corridor tend to be gender-stereotypical. Migration policies in the regions are often formulated placing women at the margins, reproducing existing gender stereotypes—women as victims of all sorts of violations and incapable of deciding on cross-border migration. The State intervenes to protect and control women, thereby curtailing women's right to make their own decision and earn a decent living. As noted by Kapur (2005), constructing women as 'victims' delegitimises women's movement in search of work. Further, they are left with no option apart from depending on informal and often illegal agents, increasing the probability of women ending up in trafficked networks.



Oishi (2005) explains the relevance of the concept of 'social legitimacy' to analyse female migration processes in South Asia. She defines social legitimacy as 'a particular set of social norms that accept women's wage employment and geographical mobility and that establish an environment conducive to international female migration. The concept not only seems to mould society's attitude towards female migration, but also influences State policies promoting, regulating and/or controlling their mobility. Kapur (2005) narrates how the categorisation of migrant women by the State into groups—such as potential victims and those outside the scope of victimisation (women travelling alone and those travelling with family)—often leads to half-baked solutions. Taking the point further, Bindhulakshmi (2010) questions (il)legality and (il)licitness in the migration of female domestic workers and the role played by the State in the process. Situating the debate in the migration of domestic workers from Kerala, India, to the UAE, the author cites instances of women relying on channels that are often very risky because of delays in the official procedures related to migration.

As noted in Table 3.5, age is used as a crucial variable to restrict international migration of female workers, particularly that of domestic workers. In Pakistan, women must be at least 35 to work abroad as domestic workers. The situation is ironical considering that the Pakistan National.



AMPLITUDE OF SOCIAL SECURITY PROTECTIONS TO MIGRANT WORKERS IN GLOBALIZATION: A CRITICAL APPRAISAL

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Abstract

Globalization and liberalization of trade and services have led to promotion of inter-nations and intranational movements of working force. There are various social, economical and politi-cal factors that are responsible for the migration of working force from rural area to urban area, within India and outside India. India has implemented some social welfare legislations to protect the interest of these workers from any kind of exploitation at the hands of contractors/middle man. The International Labour Organization, the United Nations Organization and other international agencies have been working to provide an atmosphere, by formulating some policies in form of covenants, or convections, to protect migrant workers from all kinds of exploitations at global level. It is pertinent to mention that majority of industrial countries have not ratified the conven-tions of the ILO and the UN. It is evident from the ground realities, let it at national or international level, the migrant workers are being ill treated and not provided necessary social security protections in the forms of minimum wages, disablements benefits, unemployment allowance, maternity benefits, *etc.* This research paper would endeavour to focus on identifications of problems/ difficulties of migrant workers in general and social security protections in special and possible solutions of these problems in form of some suggestions/recommendations.

1. Introduction

One powerful Bahraini construction company wrongfully confined 100 migrant workers from India to work for nearly six years under horrible working conditions. These workers were treated like as bonded workers or slave in modem sense. Further it is pertinent to note that more than twenty five migrant workers committed suicide due to the harassments and pathetic treatment at the hands of employers in the country in 2012. One Non-governmental organization (*Avaaz*) played a significant role with the assistance of Indian embassy in Bahrain in getting released of these bonded workers from the clutches of the exploiter company.' This is not an isolated instance of the treatment which is being imparted to hundreds of millions of migrant workers especially manual workers all over the word. The said company has been blacklisted by the Indian govern-ment for any transactions in future. It is very evident from the facts that employers exploited workers for their own benefits and did not care for any governmental agency in case of gross violation of fundamental human rights.

Liberalization, privatization and globalization (LPG) have led to free flow of information, trade and services. The LPG has promoted mobility of capital, technologies and work force inter-nations and intranationl in order avail production cost benefits. There are various social, economical and legal factors that are responsible for the migration of working



force from rural area to urban area, within India and outside India. India has implemented some social welfare legislations to protect the interest of these workers from any kind of exploitation at the hands of contractors/middle man. The International Labour Organization (hereinafter ILO), the United Nations Organization (hereinafter UN) and other international agencies have been working to provide an atmosphere, by formulating some policies in form of covenants, or conventions, to protect migrant worker from all kinds of exploitations at global level.

It is pertinent to mention that majority of industrial developed countries have not ratified conventions of the ILO and the UN on protections to migrant workers and their families. It is evident from the ground realities, let it at national or international level, the migrant workers are being poorly treated and are also not provided any type of social security protections in the forms of minimum wages, disablements benefits, unemployment allowance, maternity benefits, good housing facilities and other welfare measures.

This research paper is an attempt to examine the impact of globalization and liberalization on conditions of migrant workers and to analyse factors responsible for worsening working conditions of migrations. This research is also aimed at to examine the amplitude of existing international instruments pertaining to social security protection to migrant workers. Research paper has made an attempt to suggest/recommend some remedial measures in order to promote and protect the interests of migrant workers.

2. International Instruments on Migrant Workers

'Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization' was adopted by the ILO in 2008. The Declaration is a powerful reaffirmation of ILO's commitment to protect and promote workers at global platform. The declaration in its one of the main principles stipulates that the member nations (now 185 countries), promises to work for developing and enhancing measures of social protection which includes social security and labour protection. The declaration provides that social security protections should extend to all. Further the declaration ensures "healthy and safe working conditions and policies in regard to wages and earnings, hours and, other conditions of work, designed to ensure a just share of the fruits of progress to all and a minimum living wage to all employe and in need of such protection"³.

There are many declarations at the ILO as well as at the UN to ensure the compliance of protections to workers under domestic legislations. But the ground realities are quite different from the commitments. There is a wide gap between preaching and practicing of international standards on migrant workers which is deliberately created by the employing countries. This is one of the main reasons for not improving the conditions of migrant workers, who have been exploited for the sake of economical development, and other social, economical and political reasons, for years together. Now the research paper would examine the nature and scope of important conventions on migrant workers formulated by the ILO and the UN.



According to the provisions of the Convention that each Member, who has ratified the convention

v) To satisfy an adequate and free service to assist migrants for employment and to provide them information, measures such as to facilitate reception of migrants for employment, to protect the interest of migrant workers shall be the responsibility of the employing state.

d "There shall be no discrimination in respect of nationality, race, religion or sex, to immigrants within the territory of employing state, in respect of remuneration including allowances, hours of work, overtime; holidays with pay, and restrictions pertaining to employment of woman is and young person and provision of accommodation. Migrant workers shall be allowed to be part d of any association of Workers. The member state shall incorporate all these protection in the municipal laws including subordinate legislations.

Q According to Article 6, social security protections to migrant workers including family members in case of employment injury, maternity, sickness, invalidity, old age, death, unemployment and family responsibilities and any other contingency must be provided according to national laws or regulations. Municipal law of immigration countries may specify scheme including rate of contributions, benefits, and machinery for claiming the benefits.

2.2. Convention on the 'Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention No 143, 1975

The preamble of the convection takes the cognizance of the existence of illicit and clandestine trafficking in labour Jffld calls for further standards specifically aimed at eliminating these abuses. According to the Convention, social security is desirable in order to promote equality of oppor-tunity and treatment¹" of migrant workers equal to that of nationals. The convention ensures that each member must respect the basic human rights of all migrant workers". The employing nation is bound to ensure through legislation or agreements in case of legal or illegal migrant worker, that migrant workers are not exploited during employment and non employment. This Conven-tion does not prevent Members from concluding multilateral or bilateral agreements with a view to resolving problems arising from its application, is seen that the JLO's Convention No. 97 have been ratified by 47 member nations out of 185, which does not include the USA, China, the UEA, Singapore, Thailand, India, and other industrial developed countries. The UK has ratified the convention with exclusion of Annex I and III. Despite the fact of ratification by some countries the conditions of migrant workers have not improved much, which is evident from the reported instances on ill-treatment of migrant workers. Majority of nations are reluctant to enforce any protection to migrant workers due to trade reasons and protest by the local people. ILO's Convention No 143 has been ratified by 23 member nations which, again, do not represent leading industrialist



countries.

2.3. The United Nations 'Interactional Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant workers and Members of Their Families, 1990

The convention was adopted at the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. It is important to note that the said convention of the UN provides similar kinds of protections to migrant v. others which have been listed under various conventions of the ILO on the issue. The term "Migrant worker" for the purpose of the convention means a person, who is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a State of which he or she is not a national. The Convention on Migrant Workers derives the rights of migrant workers including family members into two categories of rights, firstly rights provided under the Part -III, which is applicable to both documented and undocumented workers, and rights under the Part IV available to regular workers.

The Convention provides for protection against the dehumanization of migrant workers and members of their families who have been evicted of their main human rights. Protections against horrible living and working conditions and physical abuse including sexual abuse, to migrant workers, must continue to be part of right to life of migrant workers and their family members.¹⁸ The Convention also provides protections against cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of punishment¹⁹ as well as slavery or servitude and forced or compulsory labour by the migrant workers and family members.

It is important to mention that according to some crucial articles of the convention such as 25, 27, and 28, Migrant workers are to be treated as equal to the nationals of the host country in respect of remuneration and conditions of work such as overtime, hours of work, weekly rest, holidays with pay, safety, health, termination of work contract, minimum age, and restrictions on home work. Further the convention guarantees the equality with nationals in case of social security protections and medical care in case of sickness.

“Migrant workers shall enjoy equality of treatment in respect of protection against dismissal, unemployment benefits, access to public work schemes intended to combat unemployment and access to alternative employment in the event of loss of work or termination of other remunerated activity. In case of terms and conditions of contract of service are violated by the employer that migrant worker have the right to take legal recourse before the competent authority of employment nation.

It is unfortunate that most of the developed and developing nations like as the USA, UK, Australia, Hong Kong, Spain, Canada, India, China and Singapore have not ratified the convention till date. According to the United Nations source only 31 countries have Ratified the provisions of conventions and have provided such protections to migrant workers under their municipal laws. Even if there are municipal laws to protect workers of any origin, but mere are



problems of enforcement, result of that is migrant workers are not taken care well by employers and enforcement machineries.

3. *Migrant Worker's Protections under the Social Security Agreements*

The ILO's convention No 97 of 1949 and convention No 143 of 1975 and the UN's convention of 1990 on protection to migrant workers and their families members have suggested that member nations may enter into any agreements with the recruiting states for the provisions of such social security protections, recruitments, placement *etc.*

A Social Security Agreement (hereinafter SSA) is a bilateral instrument to protect the social security interests of workers posted in another country. Being a reciprocal arrangement, it generally provides for equality of treatment and avoidance of double coverage. Generally an SSA applies to employees sent on posting in another country, provided they are complying under the social security system of the home country. It also provides for the Provision of payment of pension benefits directly without any reduction to the beneficiary choosing to reside in the territory of the home country as also to a beneficiary choosing to reside in the territory of a third country. Further the period of service rendered by an employee in a foreign country is counted for determining the eligibility for benefits, but the quantum of payment is restricted to the length of service, on pro-rata basis.

Eight SSAs by India in respect of Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, Luxembourg, France, South Korea and the Netherlands have been made effective from 1st September, 2009, 1st October, 2009, 29th January, 2011, 1st May, 2011, 1st June, 2011, 1st July, 2011, 1st November, 2011 and 1st December, 2011 respectively. These agreements aspire at achieving equality on the principles of reciprocity and are intended to benefit the employees and employers of the parties to the agreements. Most of these agreements cover the employed persons under social security insurance schemes for the benefits of old age or survivors' benefits and permanent total disability pension. It is important to mention that SSA with Netherlands covers additional social security protections benefits, in addition to the above mentioned benefits, to employed persons in the form of maternity benefits, unemployment benefits, and children allowances. In consonance with these SSAs, India has inserted appropriate amendments under the provisions of the Employees Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952 and various schemes which are covered under this Act.

The Government of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the Government of the People's Republic of China has also entered into SSA in the field of health service and medical science. Similar type of social security protections agreement between the Kingdom of Belgium and Bosnia-Herzegovina was signed in Brussels on 6 March 2006. Another SSA between Luxembourg and Bosnia Herzegovina was accepted on 08 April 2011.

It is very difficult to find out the effectiveness of these SSAs. Whether the parties to



these SSAs have been able to provide any protections to the employed person in their respective countries or not? This is a matter of further empirical research. It is observed that India has signed only eight social security agreements which do not include the countries where majority of migrant workers are employed such as the UEA, Kuwait, Oman, South Arabia, and western nations such as the USA, UK, and Canada. The observation of the researcher on Indian migrant workers has been vindicated by the following data collected and maintained by the ILO.

Countries	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
1. Kuwait	54431	52061	39124	47449	48467
2. Malaysia	26898	31464	71041	36500	30916
3. Oman	36816	33275	40931	67992	95462
4. Saudi Arabia	121431	123522	99879	134059	195437
5. United Arab Emirates	143804	175262	194412	254774	312695

Countries	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
United Kingdom	15527	38955	42797	20526	38443	47705	17169

Countries	2000	2001	2005	2006
USA	17150	16001	46221	56850

It is pertinent to mention that the scope of the most of SSAs, to which India is of the signatories, is very limited to old age pension or survivor's pension and permanent total disability insurance only. Social security protections such as minimum rate of wages, employment injury, maternity benefits, and other welfare measures like housing facilities, recreational facilities, medical facilities, and working conditions, are beyond the scope of these SSAs. It is felt that the jurisdiction and amplitude of the SSAs are required to be enhanced to cover majority of Indian migrant workers against any exploitation at the hands of employers in employing countries.

4. No Respect for Human Rights of Migrant Workers

Living and working conditions migrant workers are pathetic all over the world. Sometimes migrant workers are not treated like human beings by employers. Like an ordinary human being, a migrant worker is entitled to all the human rights. International instruments, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination 1965, Convention on Civil and Political Rights, 1966, Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966, Convention Concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers, 2011 and Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 2000; Declaration on the Human Rights of Individuals who are not Nationals of the Country in which They Live, 1985 provide for various human rights including equality, live



with dignity, social security, right to freedom of expression, associations, and profession, protections against exploitations, health and safety protections of workers, and labour welfare measures. It is noticed that most of the fundamental human rights are confined to statute books only. Practical applications of these international instruments and municipal laws negate the existence of some vital human rights of migrant workers, which is clear evident from the reported instances on gross violation human rights all over the world.

Let us examine one particular instance of gross violation of human rights of a migrant domestic worker at the hands of employers and the employing country. One female migrant domestic worker, who was engaged in Middle West Asia, had been repeatedly raped by the son of the employer, dared to complain about this instance to the employer. No action was taken by the employer. She was not in a position to approach to police. She was compelled by the circumstances to kill the employer, his wife and his son. Later she was beheaded for committing murder and her dead body was not handed over to any person for the final rites, because of some law has prohibited final rites of a murderer.

Migrant workers especially unskilled or manual workers such as domestic servants, agricultural workers, construction workers, and other personal services works are mostly exploited by employers. Migrant workers are not treated at par with native workers in respect of remuneration, social security protections, and workers welfare. Minimum rate of wages, paid to native workers, which has been considered as a fundamental right by the ILO, is not paid to migrant workers. It is also equally pertinent to mention that workers are not in a position to complain against such violation, due to lack of job security and volatility of the terms and conditions of employments. It is evident from various experiences which have been reported in media from Middle East countries that working conditions are arbitrarily decided. Remuneration for the services rendered is paid at irregular intervals. Housing facilities are not provided by majority of employers and workers are compelled to stay in unhygienic conditions.

5. Challenges for Migrant Workers in Globalisation

Recruitment agencies including middlemen publicize employment benefits of employment in foreign countries in a way to create an illusion in the minds of people that foreign countries pay high rate of remuneration and conditions of employments are the best as compare to India, in order to trap workers for the benefits of the agency. This is due to the fact that employment opportunities for manual workers in India are scanty and rate of remuneration is quite low and vary from place to place. Uneducated/illiterate manual workers, who are unable to get good employment in India, generally migrates to foreign countries for better livings, but the moment they land at work site and observe working conditions. Their dreams shatter and they become aware of the bitter truth of working outside India. It is usual practice that the passport of migrant workers is deposited and retained by employers till the



completion of works. Due to financial incapability a migrant worker is compelled to serve like a bonded labour. An open link a video which depicts ground realities of conditions of migrant workers is cited in the footnote.

Majority of nations, who employ migrant workers in agriculture, personal service and other employments related to manual or unskilled and semi-skilled works, are of the view that if migrant workers are provided with benefits at par with native workers than it would lead to increase in the cost of production and consequently affect the competitiveness of commodities and services in the market at national and international level. It is observed that entrepreneurs want profits at any cost, with minimum operational cost in form of cheap labour from the developing countries, which are not capable to claim any benefits at par with workers of employing nations.

Due to non availability of substitute of skilled migrant working force, living and working conditions of skilled migrant workers are quite better when compared to manual workers. Due to the prevailing situations, an employer is better placed his manipulating terms and conditions of migrant manual workers. The research paper has classified the challenges faced by migrant workers into the following categories.

5.1. *Hostile Attitude of Citizens of Employing Nations:*

Numerous attacks on migrant workers have been reported from various parts of the world. Several Indian workers have been killed in Australia, the UK, and the US A, by the natives of these countries, who are under impression that migrant workers would snatch all employment opportunities from them. One Congolese man was stabbed on the Moscow metro. A Muslim girl was beaten with a bat by three teenage boys, who instructed her to leave Russia. It is seen that people of some countries are under fear that migrant workers will take over their jobs, towns, and eventually their country. It is also pathetic to mention that governments hardly take any action against such attackers. It is seen that lack of effective enforcement has serious implications which would expose the migrant workers to cruel practices.

5.2. *Deplorable Living and Working conditions of workers:*

It is important to unearth that the terms and conditions of employments of migrant workers are drafted in such a way which enhances the scope of exploitation. Further there is wide gap between demand and supply of manual or unskilled workers especially in underdeveloped countries. If an institution requires ten unskilled or manual workers for some work then hundreds of workers are in a queue even to work for less than the minimum rate of wages.

Living conditions of migrant workers are more pathetic as compare to documented migrant workers. It is very clear from the special report produced by the Guardian News Agency on migrant agriculture workers in Spain. According to this report, Southern Spain



town of Costa del Sol, where tens of thousands of African migrant-workers are engaged to grow salad vegetables for foreign markets including British Supermarkets, a two billion Euro industry, have been abused to the extent of bonded workers or slavery in modern sense. The Report further depicts that migrant workers have been working in extreme strain and stressful conditions. In case of any complain against employers, remuneration of aggrieved workers have been deducted on numerous occasions. *A video of the report is available at the internet link cited at the foot note which depicts ground realities on working and living conditions of migrant workers.*

The Report of the News agency has summarized the living and working conditions of documented and undocumented African migrant workers in the town of Spain in the following expressions:

“Migrant workers from Africa living in shacks made of old boxes and plastic sheeting, without sanitation or access to drinking water. Wages are routinely less than half the legal minimum wage. Workers without papers being told they will be reported to the police if they complain.

Allegations of segregation enforced by police harassment when African workers stray outside the hothouse areas into tourist areas.

Atrocities against migrant workers do not end here. There is a long list of such instances. Domestic workers in the Middle East have been treated badly, without any recognition of any human right. In Saudi Arabia, one employer and his wife skewered the body of a migrant domestic worker with at least 24 nails and needles. It is very clear from the report of X-ray of a domestic worker that the type of inhuman and brutal treatment delivered by her employers.

5.3 Lack of Social security protections and welfare measures :

According to one investigation report of the Channel 4 of the UK, that the “Domestic Migrant: workers work up to twenty hours a day for little pay in the UK, without any guarantee minimum rate of wage and the overtime wage. Around fifteen thousand migrant workers are living as slaves in Britain, being abused sexually, physically and psychologically by employers. The investigation report has narrated the real story of a domestic worker in Britain. The story goes like this: “Miss Patience was a domestic worker from West Africa, whose former employer was a solicitor. She used to work 120 hours a week for little money during the stay of three years with him. She was treated like a slave without proper housing facilities and protection of any social security schemes. A neighbor helped her to escape from the wrongful confinement by her employer.

A migrant worker is retained in service till the time he is fit to serve. The moment he becomes disabled due to employment injury or otherwise he is thrown out of employment without payment of any compensation. There is no social security protection in form of



compensation in case of employment injury to worker, death compensation to dependants' maternity benefits, and pensioners' benefits, available to migrant worker. Welfare measures such as good housing facilities and recreational activities for migrant workers are distant dreams.

5.4. Bargaining capacity and challenges arising out of grievances:

Nature of employment of migrant workers and prevailing social, economical and political conditions restrain migrant workers to form any trade union or association of workers. Due to lack of association their bargaining capacity for better terms and conditions of employment is reduced. A strong workers association can certainly minimise exploitation of workers. It is evident from the instance of Myanmar migrant workers employed in Thailand, who formed a workers association in Thailand, compelled the employer to improve their working conditions, and increase the rate of wages. This was made possible due to collective efforts of declaring a two-day wildcat strike on 2 May 2012

Another reason for the exploitation is the communication skills of the migrant workers. Migrant worker may not be well verse with the language of the employment country. It would be very difficult for such person to approach any state agency for filing any grievance against his employer. Even if they know the process for filing their grievances, they would be restrained to file any complaint against their employers for the simple reason of losing employment. There are migrant workers are compelled by the circumstances to bear, without munnuring a single word against employers all kinds of exploitations and torture.

6. Final Thoughts: Concluding Remarks

The question that arises into our minds is, why people migrant from one place to another place, may be within the nation or outside the nation. It is mainly for better terms and conditions of works in case of migrant workers and the honour attached to it. It is general impression in India that the tags of 'foreign returns' carry more returns for further employment and other future endeavours of any individual Secondly, it is the matter of availability of opportunities and respect and recognition of merit of talented professionals in originating countries. It is related to brain drain of intellectuals from one nation to another in search of opportunities, of employments. Tal-ented professionals are valuable assets of any economy. The quality of skilled human resources of, India is well known to the whole world. Hundreds of millions of Indian migrant workforce have been contributing to the development of other countries. It is bitter truth that India have failed miserably to cater the needs of intellectuals in India in providing a conducive ambience for work-ings, due to variety of political, social, and economical reasons.

It is also pertinent to mention that the kind of treatment which is given to migrant workers out-side India has been depicted by numerous instances that are reported in media around the world. Whole world is conscious of the pathetic and deplorable conditions migrant



workers, but nobody *is* willing to protect and promote the interests of migrant workers in their respective countries. The ILO, the UN and international and national agencies have been trying to insure the implementation of various international instruments under the domestic laws of the member nations. This has yielded unsatisfactory results, which is evident from the rate of ratifications of international instruments and instance of exploitation of migrant workers.

In order to minimize, grieves of migrant workers, all the conventions on migrant workers] should be included within the ambit of core labour standards of the ILO for further ratification by the members. Core labour standards contain eight fundamental labour standards to protect workers all over the world. Member nations have recognised the importance and seriousness of core labour standards and this is the only justification for high rates of ratification of these standards.

Developed and developing nations should also enter into more SSAs to provide protection against discrimination in case of wages, social security protections, welfare measures, and working conditions. India should enter into the SSA with all the countries where Indian migrant workers are working. Such agreements should not be confined to statute books but must be implemented in true letter and spirit to protect interest of all working force at any place. Sincerely commitment to the compliances of social security agreements can certainly reduce the chances of exploitation of such work force. There I is well known saying that Unity is the strength. Therefore it is strongly recommended that migrant workers should form some kind of trade union or association to protect and promote their interests which can only be possible when such endeavours are supported by the states. Formulation of association will certainly enhance their bargaining capacity and protect them from any kind of exploitation. It is very evident from the Indonesian experiment which is discussed in the research paper.

Sensitization of migrant workers of their rights and liability of employer and capability of enforcing their human rights in case of violation should be given top priority in the campaign of protecting migrant workers. Employing countries should ensure the compliance of domestic laws. without any discrimination between native workers and migrant workers. Protection to migrant workers can be categories into four parts, working conditions, remunerations, social security pro-, tections, and welfare measures which must be provided by the employer to all workers without any discrimination with migrant workers. It is strongly believed that the subsistence of human with; dignity is more precious rather than any kind of profits or gains at the cost of human beings.



SOCIAL SECURITY FOR MIGRANT WORKERS

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Migration of workers is, in fact, a positive factor which will enable the workers to get continuous employment and increase their bargaining capacity. But, in effect, "Migration" is perceived in a negative sense, since the migrant workers are quite often subjected to exploitation physically as well as by low wages and denying the welfare provisions under various Labour Laws.

As we are all aware, Migration may be Inter-District or Intra State, Inter-State and International. Now, we are mainly concerned with the Inter State Migration and Intra State Migration.

Traditionally, some places in every State are known for the supply of labour due to geographical, skill and economic reasons, where as the host places need labour due to existence of the Industry requiring specialist skilled workers, massive construction activity, projects construction, etc., Though the term Migrant Labour is often confined to the unskilled and blue color jobs, there is migration of highly professionalized workers like IT workers in white color employment.

While, the Contract Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act, 1970, Minimum Wages Act, 1948, Factories Act, 1948, Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 and the State Shops & Establishments Act, are the basic Acts applicable for Intra State Migrant Workers; the Inter State Migrant Workers are also within the coverage of all the above labour laws besides Inter State Migrant Workers (Regulation of Employment & Continuity of Service) Act, 1979. All these labour laws basically aim at providing minimum wages, proof of employment and certain welfare measures at the work place. The Inter State Migrant Workers Act additionally provides for journey allowance, displacement allowance and residential accommodation at or near the work place. It has been the experience of the inspectorate that of late the migration has increased manifold, mainly due to the following reasons.

1. Due to increase in wage rates for local Unorganized labour (Ex. Construction workers, Painters, Welders, Fitters, Agriculture labour etc.), the contractors are harping upon migrant labour through the Maistris who bring such labour from a distant place by paying some advance and make the workers stay near the work place. This ensures continuous availability of the worker at the work place unlike local labour whose availability is not assured at a given point of time.

2. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme which assures 100 days employment and the minimum wages of Rs.100 per day is also prompting the employers to look for migrant workers who are brought at relatively lesser wage by the Maistrs by paying advance and assuring continuity of employment for three to four months at a stretch.

The basic problems of the Migrant Workers are:

1. Less wages (Minimum Wages fixed by the Government not paid)
2. Lack of statutory welfare amenities
3. Lack of social security measures which are otherwise available to the local workers.
4. Physical threats and exploitation as they are from a far off place.

Steps taken by the Andhra Pradesh Government:

In the circumstances, the Government of Andhra Pradesh have adopted various measures for the welfare of the migrant workers some of which are as follows:-

3. Vigorous enforcement is being made by way of Special Drives under Contract Labour (R&A) Act, Minimum Wages Act, Inter State Migrant

I Workers Act, Building & Other Construction Workers Act etc., at fortnightly / intervals during which the migrant workers are being identified.

4. In collaboration with the International Labour Organization, a project to provide social security net for migrant workers especially those working in Brick-kilns, Stone Quarries and Stone Crushers has been undertaken in Andhra Pradesh. District wise mapping and survey has been done in collaboration with the NGO "Aid at action".

5. It is the endeavor of the State Government to provide basic amenities like water, electricity, schooling, medical facilities and temporary ration cards for all these migrant workers.

6. Andhra Pradesh is implementing Rajiv Aarogya Shree Health Insurance Scheme for all Below Poverty Line (BPL) Families. The Intra State Migrant Workers who possess White Ration Card in proof of their BPL Family status are assured of the health insurance for all major ailments with cashless treatment upto Rs.2 lakhs and with Institutional support from the Rajiv Aarogya Shree Trust. The Government has also agreed to provide such health insurance for construction workers who are from other states on the condition of the Board paying the insurance premia.

5. It is contemplated to register the migrant workers both Intra State & Inter State at Panchayat Secretary level, so as to ensure compliance with the statutory welfare measures which are in the nature of basic amenities like Drinking Water, Toilets, Housing with sufficient



ventilation and comfort for the workers families.

6. In Andhra Pradesh, Inter State Migrant Workers are identified basically in the following areas:

7. Orissa labour in Brick-kiln industry, in Hyderabad Ranga Reddy Districts and surroundings and also in Visakhapatnam and Vizayanagaram Districts.

8. Kerala Women workers in Sea Food Processing Industry concentrated in Visakhapatnam and West Godavari Districts.

9. Bihar labour in Steel Re-Rolling Mills.

10. Bihar, Chattisgarh & Orissa labour in construction of Factories and major projects especially for doing the job of riggers and other technical works.

In view of the large number of complaints about the exploitation of the Migrant Workers especially keeping them in bondage, a Special Cell has been constituted in the office of the Commissioner of Labour to monitor such complaints. Periodical inspections are being made in all these industries during special drives which are undertaken at fortnightly intervals. As a result of Special Drives, workers who are paid less than minimum wages are identified and the difference of wage is being paid by way of Demand Drafts / Fixed Deposits in favour of the workers. Appointment letters are issued on the spot by the Inspectors as they are finding the workers at work place which will help the workers as proof of employment.

The Employee Compensation cases pertaining to other state workers are being monitored by the Office of the Commissioner of Labour regularly with the concerned Joint Commissioners of Labour, so as to transfer the amounts to the respective states expeditiously.

7. The migrant workers working in Brick-kilns, Stone Quarries and Crushers, construction works and construction of factories (who are not covered by the Mines Act or Factories Act) are eligible for the following benefits on their registration with the A.P. Building & Other Construction Workers Act by paying one time registration fee of Rs.50/- and annual subscription of Rs.12/-.

11. Accident Insurance of Rs.2 lakhs

12. Natural Death assistance of Rs.30,000/-

13. Disability compensation up to Rs.2 Lacs-

14. Temporary Unemployment allowance @ Rs.50/- per day in case of hospitalization with a maximum of Rs. 1,500/-

15. Maternity Assistance of Rs.5,000/- upto 2 Children

The Board is also planning State Level Employees' Provident Fund and also Employees State



Insurance for all the Unorganized Workers which will automatically cover the migrant workers especially Intra State Migrant Workers. However, deliberations are on about the modalities to cover the Inter State Migrant Workers also.

8. In pursuance of the observations of the National Human Rights Commission, after their visit to Stone Quarries around Vijayawada in Krishna District in Andhr Pradesh, several actions have taken by the State Government which are listed below:

1. State and Central Government Labour Departments with the help of other departments formed squads and inspected the quarries. Basing on their observations during inspection, minimum wages claims have been filed and show cause notices issued to the managements for their failure to comply with the Mines Act, Motor Transport Workers Act, Minimum Wages Act.

9. The Mines Department have submitted a proposal to the State Government to incorporate a condition in the Mines Rules that the license is liable to be cancelled if the provisions of the Minimum Wages Act, Inter State Migrant Workers Act, Child Labour Act and other Labour Laws are violated.

10. With the help of NGOs, Survey has been done in all the residential areas where the stone quarry workers are residing and the District Collector personally participated in such survey. During the survey, 1460 families (795 families from Andhra Pradesh, 517 families from Orissa, 59 families from Tamil Nadu, 14 families from Madhya Pradesh, 10 families from Bihar, 7 families from Maharashtra and 4 families from Rajasthan) have been identified.

11. Their needs relating to Ration Cards, Women & Child Welfare, Drinking Water and Medical Care have been assessed. It is decided by the District Administration to take up temporary residential sheds construction with the help of quarry owners with all the basic essential amenities like Dwelling Rooms, Drinking Water, Electricity, Sanitation, Tree Plantation and Community Assets.

12. A comprehensive action has been drawn by the Rural Water Supply Department regarding drinking water, A.P. Transco regarding electricity supply and the District Medical & Health Officer regarding linkage of Primary Health Centers and Sub Centers besides 108 Vehicle (Emergency) and 104 Vehicle facility (Mobile Clinics).

13. Regarding ration cards, the State Civil Supply Commissioner has been requested by the District Administration to issue temporary ration cards and the permission has been received.

14. The Department of Women & Child Welfare has linked the existing 14 Aunganwadi Centers in the vicinity, to provide the Supplementary Nutrition Programme, Immunization, Pre primary Education, Health checkups, Nutrition and Health Education and Referral Services.



Bonded Labour Law - Identification, Rehabilitation and Challenges in Effective Enforcement

Dr. Onkar Sharma*

It is a fact that in different parts of the country a system of usury under which the debtor or his descendants or dependants have to work for the creditor without reasonable wage or with no wages in order to extinguish the debt is in practices. At times, several generations work under bondage for the repayment of a paltry sum which had been taken by some remote ancestor. The interest rates are exorbitant and such bondage cannot be interpreted as the result of any legitimate contract or agreement. The system implies the infringement of the basic human rights and destruction of the dignity of human labour.

Constitution of India

Prohibition of traffic in human beings and forced labour - (1) traffic in human beings and beggar and other similar forms of forced labour are prohibited and any contravention of this provision shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law.

(2) Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from imposing compulsory service for public purposes, and in imposing such service the State shall not make any discrimination on grounds only of religion, race, caste or class or any of them.

Article 23(1) envisages legislation for the enforcement of the constitutional prohibition. Section 374 of the Indian Penal Code is one such enactment, though a pre-Constitution one.

This article prohibits—

- (a) Traffic in human beings;
- (b) Beggar; and
- (c) Other similar forms of forced labour.

An exception is made for compulsory service for public purposes, under clause (2) Although clause (2) does not say so, obviously the imposition of such service has to be law, as a mere executive order of the State would not suffice for the purpose. It has been held that even if remuneration is paid for the labour still, if it is 'forced', then is unconstitutional.

Article 35(a)(ii) of the Constitution not only confers the power on Parliament to provide for punishment for the contravention of the Article 23(i) and accordingly Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976 was enacted.

In this Act, various terms have been defined. Some of the important one are given below:-



(a) “advance” means an advance, whether in cash or kind, or partly in cash or partly in kind, made by one person to another person;

(b) “agreement” means an agreement (whether written or oral, or partly written and partly oral) between a debtor and creditor, and includes an agreement providing for forced labour, the existence of which is presumed under any social custom prevailing in the concerned locality.

(c) “bonded debt” means an advance obtained, or presumed to have been obtained, by a bonded labourer under, or in pursuance of, the bonded labour system;

(d) “bonded labour” means any labour or service rendered under the bonded labour system;

(e) “bonded labour system” means the system of forced, or partly forced, labour under which a debtor enters, or has, or is presumed to have, entered, into an agreement with the creditor to the effect that—

(i) in consideration of an advance obtained by him or by any of his lineal ascendants or descendants (whether or not such advance is evidenced by the document) and in consideration of the interest, if any, due on such advance, or

(ii) in pursuance of any customary or social obligation, or

(iii) in pursuance of any obligation devolving on him by succession, or

(iv) for any economic consideration received by him or by any of his lineal ascendants or descendants, or

(v) by reason of his birth in any particular caste or community, he would

(a) render, by himself or through any member of his family, or any person dependent on him, labour or service, to the creditor, or for the benefit of the creditor, for a specific period or for an unspecified period, either

without wages or

(b) forfeit the freedom employment or other means of livelihood for a specified period or for an unspecified period, or

(c) forfeit the right to move free; throughout the territory of India, or

(d) forfeit the right to appropriate or sell at market-value any of his property or product of his labour or the labour of a member of his family or any person dependent on him and includes the system of forced, or partly forced, labour under which a surety for a debtor enters, or has, or is presumed to have, entered into an agreement with the creditor to the effect that in the event of the failure of the debtor to repay the debt, he would render the bonded labour on behalf of the debtor.



Abolition of Bonded Labour System

On the commencement of this Act, the bonded labour system shall stand abolished and every bonded labourer shall, on such commencement, stand freed and discharged from any obligation to render, any bonded labour and after the commencement of this Act, no person shall-

- (a) Make any advance under, or in pursuance of, the bonded labour system, or
- (b) Compel any person to render any bonded labour or other form of forced labour.

Agreement, Custom etc. to be void

On the commencement of this Act, any custom or tradition or any contract, agreement or other instrument (whether entered into or executed before or after the commencement of this Act,) by virtue of which any person, or any member of the family or dependent of such person, is required to do any work or render any service as a bonded labourer, shall be void and inoperative.

Liability to Repay Bonded Debt to Stand Extinguished

- (1) On the commencement of this Act, every obligation of a bonded labourer to repay any bonded debt, or such part of any bonded debt unsatisfied immediately before such commencement, shall be deemed to have been extinguished.
- (2) After the commencement of this Act, no suit or other proceedings shall lie in any civil court or before any other authority for the recovery of any bonded debt or any part thereof.
- (3) Every decree or order for the recovery of bonded debt, passed before the commencement of this Act and not fully satisfied before such commencement, shall be deemed, on such commencement, to have been fully satisfied.
- (4) Every attachment made before the commencement of this Act, for the recovery of any bonded debt, shall, on such commencement, stand vacated; and, where, in pursuance of such attachment, any movable property of the bonded labourer was seized and removed from his custody and kept in the custody of any court or other authority pending sale thereof, such movable property shall be restored, as soon as may be practicable after such commencement, to the possession of the bonded labourer.
- (5) Where, before the commencement of this Act, possession of any property belonging to a bonded labourer or a member of his family or other dependent was forcibly taken over by any creditor for the recovery of any bonded debt, such property shall be restored, as soon as may be



practicable after such commencement, to the possession of the person from whom it was seized.

(6) If restoration of the possession of any property is not made within thirty days from the commencement of this Act, the aggrieved person may apply to the authority for the restoration of the possession of such property and the authority may, after giving the creditor a reasonable opportunity of being heard, direct the creditor to restore to the applicant the possession of the concerned property within such time as may be specified in the order.

(7) An order made by authority, shall be deemed to be an order made by a civil court and may be executed by the court whose jurisdiction the creditor voluntarily resides or carries business or personally works for gain.

(8) Where any attached property was sold before the commencement of this Act, in execution of a decree or order for the recovery of a bonded debt, such sale shall not be affected by any provision of this Act.

The bonded labourer, or an agent authorised by him in this behalf, may, at any time within five years from such commencement, apply to have the sale set aside on his depositing in court, for payment to the decree-holder, the amount specified in the proclamation of sale, for the recovery of which the sale was ordered, less any amount, as well as mesne profits, which may, since the date of such proclamation of sale, have been received by the decree-holder.

(9) Where any suit or proceeding, for the enforcement of any obligation under the bonded labour system, including a suit or proceeding for the recovery of any advance made to a bonded labourer, is pending at the commencement of this Act, such suit or other proceeding shall, on such commencement stand dismissed.

(10) On the commencement of this Act, every bonded labourer who has been detained in civil prison, whether before or after judgment, shall be released from detention forthwith.

Property of Bonded Labourer to be Freed from Mortgage, etc.

All property vested in a bonded labourer which was immediately before the commencement of this Act under any mortgage, charge, lien or other encumbrances in connection with any bonded debt shall, in so far as it is relatable to the bonded debt, stand freed and discharged from such mortgage, charge, lien or other encumbrances, and where any such property was, immediately before the commencement of this Act, in the possession of the mortgage or the holder of the charge, lien or encumbrance, such property shall be restored to the possession of the bonded labourer.

If any delay is made in restoring any property to the possession of the bonded labourer, such



labourer shall be entitled to recover from the mortgage or holder of the lien, charge or encumbrance, such mesne profits may be determined by the civil court.

Freed Bonded Labourer not to be evicted from Homestead, etc.

No person who has been freed and discharged under this Act from any obligation to render any bonded labour, shall be evicted from any homestead or other residential premises which he was occupying immediately before the commencement of this Act as part of the consideration for the bonded labour.

If any such person is evicted by the creditor from any homestead or other residential premises the Executive Magistrate in charge of the Sub-Division within which such homestead or residential premises is situated shall restore the bonded labourer to the possession of such homestead or other residential premises.

Creditor not to accept payment against extinguished debt

No creditor shall accept any payment against any bonded debt which has been extinguished or deemed to have been extinguished or fully satisfied by virtue of the provisions of this Act.

Whoever contravenes this provision shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years and also with fine.

The court, convicting in addition to the penalties which may be imposed, direct the person to deposit, in court, the amount accepted in contravention of the Act within such period as may be specified in the order for being refunded to the bonded labourer.

Authorities for Implementing the Provisions of this Act and the District Magistrate may specify the officer, subordinate to him, who shall exercise all or any of the powers, and perform all or any of the duties, so conferred or imposed.

Duty of District Magistrate and other Officers to Ensure Credit

The District Magistrate authorized by the State Government and the officer specified by the District Magistrate shall try to promote the welfare of the freed bonded labourer by securing and protecting the economic interests of such bonded labourer so that he may not have any occasion or reason to contract any further bonded debt.

Duty of District Magistrate and Officers Authorized by him

It shall be the duty of every District Magistrate and every officer specified by him to inquire whether, any bonded labour system or any other form of forced labour is being enforced by, or on behalf of, any person resident within the local limits of his jurisdiction and if, as a result of



such inquiry, any person is found to be enforcing the bonded labour system or any other system of forced labour, he shall forthwith take such action as may be necessary to eradicate of such forced labour.

Vigilance Committee

State Government shall, constitute Vigilance Committees in District and Sub-Division.

Vigilance Committee, constituted for a district, shall consist of the following members, namely-

- (a) the District Magistrate, or a person nominated by him, who shall be the Chairman;
- (b) three persons belonging to the Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes and residing in the District, to be nominated by the District Magistrate;
- (c) two social workers, resident in the district, to be nominated by the District Magistrate;
- (d) not more than three persons to represent the official or non- official agencies in the district connected with rural development, to be nominated by the State Government;
- (e) one person to represent the financial and credit institutions in the district, to be nominated by the District Magistrate;

Vigilance Committee, constituted for a Sub- Division, shall consist of the following members, namely-

- (a) the Sub-Divisional Magistrate, or a person nominated by him, who shall be the Chairman;
- (b) three persons belonging to the Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes and residing in the Sub-Division, to be nominated by the Sub-Divisional Magistrate;
- (c) two social workers, resident in the Sub- Division to be nominated by the Sub- Divisional Magistrate;
- (d) not more than three persons to represent the official or non- official agencies in the Sub-Division connected with rural development to be nominated by the District Magistrate.
- (e) one person to represent the financial and credit institutions in the Sub-Division, to be nominated by the Sub-Divisional Magistrate;
- (f) one officer and functioning in the Sub- Division.

Each Vigilance Committee shall regulate its own procedure and secretarial assistance, as may be necessary, shall be provided by-

- (a) the District Magistrate, in the case of a Vigilance Committee constituted for the district;



(b) the Sub-Divisional Magistrate, in the case of a Vigilance Committee constituted for the Sub-Division.

No proceeding of a Vigilance Committee shall be invalid by reason of any defect in the constitution, or in the proceedings, of the Vigilance Committee.

Functions of Vigilance Committee

The functions of each Vigilance Committee shall be-

- (a) to advise the District Magistrate or any -officer authorized by him as to the efforts made, and action taken, to ensure that the provisions of this Act or of any rule made there under are properly implemented.
- (b) to provide for the economic and social rehabilitation of the freed bonded labourers;
- (c) to co-ordinate the functions of rural banks and co-operative societies with a view to channelizing adequate credit to the freed bonded labourer;
- (d) to keep an eye on the number of offence of which cognizance has been taken under this Act;
- (e) to make a survey as to whether there is any offence of which cognizance ought to be taken under this Act;
- (f) to defend any suit instituted against a freed bonded labourer or a member of his family or any other person dependent on him for the recovery of the whole or part of any bonded debt or any other debt which is claimed by such person to be bonded debt.

A Vigilance Committee may authorise one of its members to defend a suit against a freed labourer and the member so authorised shall be deemed, for the purpose of such suit, to be the authorised agent of the freed bonded labourer.

Burden of Proof

Whenever any debt is claimed by a bonded labourer, or a Vigilance Committee, to be a bonded debt, the burden of proof that such debt is not a bonded debt shall lie on the creditor..

Punishment for Enforcement of Bonded Labour

Whoever compels any person to render any bonded labour shall be punishable with imprisonment far a teas wfacfc any extend to three yens and afeso Trih fine which may extend to tzKsjsaead rupees.

Punishment far Advancement of Bonded Debt

Whoever advances any bonded debt shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term



which may extend to three years and also with fine which may extend to two thousand rupees.

Punishment for Extracting Bonded Labour under the Bonded Labour System

Whoever enforces any custom, tradition, contract, agreement or other instrument, by virtue of which any person or any member of the family of such person or any dependent of such person is required to render any service under the bonded labour system, shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years and also with fine which may extend to two thousand rupees; and, out of the fine, if recovered, payment shall be made to the bonded labourer at the rate of rupees five for each day for which the bonded labour was extracted from him.

Punishment for Omission or Failure to Restore Possession of Property to Bonded Labourers

Whoever, being required by this Act to restore any property to the possession of any bonded labourer, omits or fails to do so, within a period of thirty days from the commencement of this Act, shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year, or with fine which may extend to one thousand rupees, or with both; and, out of the fine, if recovered, payment shall be made to the bonded labourer at the rate of rupees five for each day during which possession of the property was not restored to him.

Abetment to be an Offence

Whoever abets any offence punishable under this Act shall, whether or not the offence abetted is committed, be punishable with the same punishment as is provided for the offence which has been abetted.

Offences to be Tried by Executive Magistrates

The State Government may confer, on an Executive Magistrate, the powers of a Judicial Magistrate of the first class or of the second class for the trial of offences under this Act; and, on such conferment of powers, the Executive Magistrate, on whom the powers are so conferred, shall be deemed, for the purposes of the Code of Criminal Procedure to be a Judicial Magistrate of the first class, or of the second class, as the case may be.

An offence under this Act may be tried summarily by a Magistrate.

Cognizance of Offences

Every offence under this Act shall be cognizable and bailable.

Offences by Companies



Where any offence under this Act has been committed by a company, every person who, at the time the offence was committed, was in charge of, and was responsible to, the company for the conduct of the business of the company, as well as the company, shall be deemed to be guilty of the offence and shall be liable to be proceeded against and punished accordingly.

Where any offence under this Act has been committed by a company and it is proved that the offence has been committed with the consent or connivance of, or is attributable to, any neglect on the part of, any director, manager, secretary or other officer of the company, such director, manager, secretary or other officer shall be deemed to be guilty of that offence and shall be liable to be proceeded against and punished accordingly.

Protection of action taken in good faith

No suit, prosecution or other legal proceeding shall lie against any officer of the State Government or any member of the Vigilance Committee for anything which is in good faith done or intended to be done under this Act.

Jurisdiction of Civil Courts Barred

No civil court shall have jurisdiction in respect of any matter to which any provision of this Act applies and no injunction shall be granted by any civil court in respect of anything which is done or intended to be done by or under this Act.

Suggestion for effective Identification & Rehabilitation of freed bonded labour workers

Identification of Bonded Labour

There is need for undertaking efforts for identification of bonded labour and to this effect action is required on the following:-

- (i) Identification may be done through house- - hold surveys by the Revenue Department with the help of available field agencies like the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Zonal Directorate, Backward, Classes, Welfare, Tribal Research Burr and such other like agencies.
- (ii) Such identification can also be done during the survey/census being undertaken for identifying target groups for allotment of house sites/houses.
- (iii) Such survey could also be integrated with the preparation of village plans under the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP).
- (iv) Intensive studies and surveys may be undertaken in respect of stone quarries and brick kilns to locate bonded labour.
- (v) Due cognizance maybe given to newspaper reports highlighting the existence and problems of bonded labour.



(vi) Publicity campaign to bring about better awareness about the problem of identification and rehabilitation of bonded labour among all concerned should be launched and wherever already launched should be intensified.

(vii) Identification and rehabilitation of bonded labour are being dealt with in different Departments in different States. It is necessary that the activities of the Vigilance Committees at the District and sub-divisional levels are monitored, coordinated and evaluated at the State level by a State Level Standing Committee on bonded labour (like the Central Standing Committee) under the Chairmanship of the Minister in charge.

Rehabilitation of freed bonded labourers

The rehabilitation has following four main features:

(i) Psychological rehabilitation must go side by side with physical and economic rehabilitation;

(ii) the physical and economic rehabilitation has major components namely allotment of house-sites and agricultural land, provision of low cost dwelling units, provision of credit, horticulture, animal husbandry, training for acquiring new skills and developing existing skills, promoting traditional arts and crafts, provision of wage employment and enforcement of minimum wages, collection and processing of forest produce, health, medical care and sanitation, supply of essential commodities, education of children of bonded labourers and protection of civil rights;

(iii) There is scope for bringing about an integration among the various central and centrally sponsored schemes and the ongoing schemes of the State Governments for a more qualitative rehabilitation. The essence of such integration is to avoid duplication i.e. pooling resources from different sources for the same purpose.

(iv) While drawing up any scheme/programme of rehabilitation of freed bonded labour, the latter must necessarily be given the choice between the various alternatives for their rehabilitation and such programme should be finally selected for execution as would need the total requirements of the families of freed bonded labourers to enable them to cross the poverty line on the one hand and to prevent them from sliding back to debt bondage on the other.

Such integration is essential not only in the interest of securing a better livelihood for the freed bonded labourers, but also to help them to realize the dignity, beauty and worth of human existence.

Since the Collector of the District happens to be the Chairman of the District Level Vigilance



Committee as also the Chairman of the District Rural Development agency, such integration will be possible if some amount of initiative, enthusiasm and resourcefulness is displayed by the Collector himself.

Rehabilitation Programmes

Allotment of house-site and agricultural land

(1) It should be the primary responsibility of the State Government concerned to ensure that land ceiling laws are properly implemented at each stage till the delivery of undistributed and peaceful possession of the lands to the allottees.

(2) All lands owned by the Central or State Governments or any other public authority or institutions which are not required for any public purpose and Bhoodan and Gramdan lands should be distributed among the landless poor agricultural labourers with due priority for the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes.

(3) Long lease of temple lands, wherever they exist, should be given to the landless, poor agricultural labourers with high priority to the Scheduled Castes.

(4) In the distribution of lands, Scheduled Castes should receive due priority in either of the two ways:

(a) The percentage of the surplus lands allotted to the Scheduled Castes may be fixed as equal to their percentage among the agricultural labourers of the State plus atleast an additional 10% margin in recognition of the extraordinary social disadvantage suffered by them for centuries.

(b) All available surplus lands must be first given to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and only after fully meeting their requirements, should allotments be made to other categories.

(ii) Land development

There may be cases where the freed bonded labourer has already in his possession a plot of agricultural land but it suffers from locational disadvantages like undulating landscape, poor quality of soil, lack of irrigation facility, agro-climatic conditions, etc. In all such cases, a comprehensive and integrated programme for the total development of the land holdings of the freed bonded labourers should be formulated. In such efforts, resources from all other developing departments/agencies and financial institutions should be pooled. Resources like the IRDP, NREP (on a community basis), special central assistance under the development of SC & ST could also be pooled for this purpose.



Several demonstration/pilot projects for land development are already in existence in different States. It will be a step in the right direction that whenever such a pilot project is taken up, the freed bonded labourers should be the first beneficiary thereof.

(iii) Low-Cost dwelling units:

Provision of low-cost dwelling units is another essential component of rehabilitation. The programme of construction of low - cost dwelling units should be based on local designs, local material and local skills. Such a programme can be undertaken by combining the efforts of the State Government who may give some housing subsidy, the agencies executing the works under the N.R.E.P. and the freed bonded labourers contributing their own labour for constructing their houses.

While allotting a house-site on a plot of agricultural land, care should be taken to see that segregation and isolation are avoided and that all freed bonded labourers are rehabilitated at one place in such a way that different communities are interspersed with each other and true integration among different communities is possible. It should also be ensured that common facilities and back-up services like drinking water, electricity, drainage and convenient access to the main road, to dispensaries and educational institutions are provided. This is to ensure that while each freed bonded labourer has an independent identify, he has also a sense of belonging and a feeling for the community in which he lives.

(iv) Agriculture

The programme for distribution/handing over possession of agricultural land should be backed by provision of a complete package of various services and facilities such as a provision of plough, bullocks and agricultural implements to the freed bonded labour provision of irrigation facilities which will have a directly beneficial impact on the freed bonded labour, digging of a shallow tube-well or aug-well and supply of production puts i.e. seeds, fertilizers and pesticides, it should be the endeavour of the State Government to ensure that all the land holdings of freed bonded labourers are covered with irrigation wells to the fullest possible extent.

(v) Credit

The bonded labourer who generally belong to the category of landless agricultural labourers, has, even after release from debt bondage turn up to the various money lenders of the village (some of whom may happen to be his erstwhile masters) for loan which he needs for various purposes ranging from daily necessities to purchase of agricultural inputs like seeds, fertilizers and pesticides etc., social ceremonies such as son's/daughter's marriage etc. The money-lenders do give loan but at an exorbitantly high rate of interest (sometimes ranging



between 30% to 40%) due to which the principal multiplies very fast. If it is ensured that the freed bonded labourers do not slide back into debt bondage, the vicious grip of the money lenders on the village economy in general and on the freedom of the freed bonded labourers in particular must be completely broken.

(vi) Horticulture

This has a special relevance for the freed bonded labourers particularly in the tribal areas. In such areas where the land is extensive and undulating with high incidence of soil erosion, an extensive programme of plantation of fruit trees can be profitably undertaken which besides checking soil erosion can be a source of good income for the freed bonded labourer and his family.

(vii) Animal husbandry, dairy, fodder cultivation, etc!

Some subsidiary activities will have to be thought of which can provide the freed bonded labourers with alternative sources of livelihood. The one in this regard is the animal husbandry sector, such as provision of milch animals, i.e. cows and buffaloes, sheep units, goat units, piggery and poultry etc. The animal husbandry programme has a special significance for the freed bonded labourers belonging to the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe.

(viii) Training in acquiring new skills and developing existing skills

Before contemplating rehabilitation of the bonded labour (after release from debt bondage) through an economically viable individual beneficiary scheme, it will be worthwhile to provide some elementary training for the beneficiaries. The training of rural youth for self-employment has an important role to play in this regard. For this purpose, a specific exercise by each sectoral department/agency must be undertaken to identify the opportunities and the potential in each area for schemes in the cottage and village industries, handicrafts small trade and business and thereafter to establish a linkage with training programmes.

(ix) Developing the Traditional Arts and Crafts

There are large numbers of bonded labourers who have the requisite background and skills in various traditional crafts. Due to want of opportunities for making such skills marketable, many of the traditional craftsmen have given up their crafts and turned to agricultural labour. There is need to develop the traditional arts and crafts for rehabilitation of freed bonded labour.

(x) Wage Employment

It is necessary to think of provision of wage employment throughout the year which alone can provide some subsistence income to the freed bonded labourers and his family



members. Programmes like the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act can be very helpful. At the same time, such programmes should be selected as will help in building up of community assets.

(xi) Collection of minor forest produces

Bonded labourers who belong to the Scheduled Tribes used to collect of minor forest produce for their subsistence for many years but they are deprived of this income since major portion of the forest produce is siphoned off by middlemen. They should, therefore, be provided with necessary institutional support to eliminate middlemanship.

(xii) Health, Medical care and sanitation

Through years of bondage, the bonded labourers and their family members might have suffered from a state of acute malnutrition and consequential loss of health and vigor. Their health, therefore, needs special attention. Immediately on release from debt bondage they should be subjected to medical checkup and such checks should be arranged by doctors of primary health centers holding regular camps in the village where they have been rehabilitated and also by regularly visiting the bonded labour households for check up. Special health surveys of hamlets with bonded labour households known for high incidence of general or specific diseases should be launched. Similar and equally important attention may be directed towards preventive side, sanitation and hygiene along with the curative side.

Since supply of protected drinking water is a basic need for health, it is extremely important to ensure to provide a drinking water in every locality where freed bonded labourers have been rehabilitated.

(xiii) Supply of essential commodities

It is very essential that arrangements are made by the district/block authorities to open Fair Price Shops in the hamlets or the vicinity thereof, where freed bonded labourers have been rehabilitated for supply of essential commodities like rice, wheat, sugar, kerosene, etc. at controlled prices. This is on account of two reasons: (a) the freed bonded labourer whose daily average earnings are low needs to be compensated by supply of ration at concessional rates, (b) Since he remains busy throughout the day in wage employment or collection of minor forest produce or such other occupations, the fair price shops should be easily accessible to him so that he does not have to spend lot of time in travelling a long distance for purchase of ration. To go a step further, it will be a great help if the dealership of some of these shops is allowed to atleast one member from such families who has got the minimum educational standard for this purpose.

**(xiv) Education of children of freed bonded labourers**

Opening of schools in the hamlets where freed bonded labourers have been rehabilitated for primary education of their children is very essential. State Government need to promote adult literacy since the freed bonded labourers will remain busy in pursuing avenues of their economic livelihood throughout the day; such classes will have to be held at night only. While planning the adult literacy drive, more stress should be laid on non-formal education. The preparation of curricula and reading material need sensitive and perceptive handling and due care must be taken of the culture, the ethos and the assimilative faculties of the persons from the bonded labour households to be inducted into such non-formal education.

(xv) Protection of Civil Rights

There is need for providing them a protective cover against the possibility of atrocities being committed on them by the powerful and influential groups in the village community who once held them in bondage and who dominate the village life even today. Caste and feudal factors being at the root of the very existence of the bonded labour system, it is quite possible that even after abolition of the system by law and release of bonded labour, these groups would be nursing a grievance against them and would even now not hesitate to subject them to the various social and civil disabilities to which they have been subjected for generations.

Strength & Weakness and Challenges

The strength & weakness and challenges in applying of the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976 can be seen from the observations of the Supreme Court, the Apex Court of India in following cases.

Bandhua Mukti Morcha Case

Bandhua Mukti Morcha adds new dimension to the concept of litigation in the area of identification, release and rehabilitation of bonded labour. The petitioner made a survey of some of stone quarries in Faridabad district near Delhi and discovered that a large number of labourers from different states of the country were working in those stone quarries under inhuman and intolerable conditions and a majority of them were bonded labourers. A letter was addressed to one of the judges of the Supreme Court containing signatures and thumb marks of the alleged bonded labourers. The petitioner alleged violation of the provisions of the Constitution and nonimplementation of the laws relating to the labourers working in these stone quarries. The letter was treated as a writ petition by an order of the court and the court was pleased to appoint commissioners to inquire into the matter and to submit a report to this effect. The report which was submitted to the court pointed out *inter alia* that all



these workers were bonded labourers who were not permitted to leave the job. Most of the labourer complained that they got very little wages from the mine lessees or owner of the stone crushers.

One of the preliminary objections raised by the Government related to the maintainability of the petition under Article 32 of the Constitution. The court expressed surprise over the manner in which the State Government showed its urgency to raise this objection so as to avoid an enquiry by the court as to whether the workmen are living in bondage and under inhuman condition. The court stated that if a complaint is made on behalf of workmen that they are held in bondage and living in miserable condition, it is difficult to understand how such a complaint can be thrown out on the ground that it is not violation of the fundamental right of the workmen.

, ...The Court was deeply shocked that the provisions of various statutes dealing with the labourers have been violated and State of Haryana showed its reluctance even in admitting the existence of bonded labour knowing fully the fact that it was very much prevalent in the area. The Court found that the mode of payment to the workmen employed in stone quarries and crushers was such that after deduction of the amounts spent on explosives and drilling of holes, what was left to the workmen was less the minimum wage.

Dealing with the question whether labour or service which is engaged for less than minimum wage would come within the meanings of forced labour, the court observed that the word 'force' should be taken to include not only physical or legal force but also force arising from the compulsion of economic circumstances which leaves no choice of alternative to a person in want and compel him to provide labour or service for remuneration which is less than the minimum wage. If the person is made to work for remuneration which is less than the minimum wage the labour or service provided by him clearly falls within the scope and ambit of the words, 'forced labour' under article 23.

The court regretted that the Government has not constituted any vigilance committee in this regard. The court observed that it was a serious omission on the part of the State in not having constituted the vigilance committee. Whether the bonded labour existed or not but the constitution of the Committee was a statutory obligation. This in fact has impeded the process of identification. The court drew the attention of the government towards effective rehabilitation of bonded labourer. In the opinion of the court, the concept of rehabilitation should have the following four main features:

(a) Psychological rehabilitation must go side by side with physical and economic rehabilitation.



- (b) The physical and economic rehabilitation should include all major components like, agricultural, animal husbandry, promotion of traditional arts and craft wage employment, health, education, medical care and protection of civil rights.
- (c) The different components of the rehabilitation schemes sponsored by the central and state governments require skillful integration so as to avoid duplication,
- (d) The bonded labourers selected for rehabilitation should have a choice between the various alternatives for their rehabilitation so that they do not slide back to debt bondage.

The court directed the Government to draw up a scheme or programme for, “a better and more meaningful rehabilitation of the bonded labourers.” The court expressed the hope that if the directions issued by it are implemented sincerely, it would improve the life conditions of these workmen and ensure social justice to them.

Neerja Chaudhary vs State of Madhya Pradesh is another decision of the apex Court where the judiciary has taken a serious note of the indifferent and callous attitude of the State Administration in identifying, releasing and rehabilitating the bonded labour in the country. The petitioner stated those bonded labourers who were working in the stone quarries had been released by an order of the Supreme Court and brought back to their respective villages with a promise of rehabilitation by the Government, had not yet been rehabilitated. The petitioner stated that these released bonded labourers were without land and work, facing immense hardship and were at the verge of starvation. When the petitioner interviewed some of these bonded labourers they said that they would rather go back to stone quarries for work than starve and added: “We might have been killed there, but we are also dying here.” The petitioner also pointed out that some of the released bonded labourers owned land at one time but they had lost it to the money lenders and some of them had pledged their jewellery and other small belongings to raise money for their subsistence. The petitioner further said that there were some rehabilitation schemes like Integrated Rural Development plan and the 20-Point Economic Programmed but “the benefits had been concerned by those with political influence and the well to do in the village.” Therefore, the petitioner argued that it was statutory obligation of the State Government to ensure rehabilitation of the freed bonded labourers and failure to do the same amounted to violation of the fundamental right of the freed bonded labourer under Article 21 of the Constitution. The petitioner prayed for a direction to the State government to take steps for the economic and social rehabilitation of the freed bonded labourers.

The court asked the State government for providing information regarding schemes for rehabilitation including constitution of vigilance committees as well as the steps taken for



rehabilitating released labourers living in the village. Government informed the court of the various steps taken by the State Government for identification, release and rehabilitation of bonded labourers. Though the State could not specify the actual number of rehabilitated bonded labourer but simply that steps were being taken for their rehabilitation. The court expressed its disapproval of the information supplied by the State government. It found that the attitude of the State government was indifferent and the state was not willing to admit the existence of bonded labour as according to it unless a workmen was able to show that he is forced to provide labour to the employer in lieu of an advance received by him, he cannot be regarded as a bonded labour within the meaning of the definition of that term as laid down in the Act of 1976. The court stated "It would be cruel to insist that a bonded labourer in order to derive the benefits of this social welfare legislation should have to go through process of trial with the normal procedure for recording the evidence. That would be a totally futile process because it is obvious that a bonded labourer can never stand up to rigidity of the legal process due to his poverty, illiteracy and social and economic backwardness and if such a procedure were required to be followed, the State Government might as well obliterate this Act from the statute book.

Justice Bhagwati observe that whenever it is shown that a labourer is made to provide forced labour, the court would raise a presumption that he is required to do so in consideration of an advance received by him and is therefore a bonded labourer. Unless the employer or the government rebuts this presumption, the court shall presume that the labourer is a bonded labourer entitle to the benefit of a provision of the Act. The court expressed surprise over the assertion of the State government that it was seeking the cooperation of the members of the legislative assembly and panchayats in the task of identification, release and rehabilitation of bonded labourers. The court observed that these agencies can be of no help in this task. Even Commissioner and collector, who usually remain very busy because of multifarious duties cannot be of much use in eradicating this practice because they have to relied upon their subordinates like Tehsildars or Patwaris who may be more sympathetic towards the exploiting class and not the exploited. Similarly, Panchayats, being dominated by vested interests can play a very little role. In view of this the court stressed the need for involving social action groups operating at the grass root level in the task of identification, release and rehabilitation of bonded labour.

The Court issued direction to the State government to include in the vigilance committees representatives of Social Action Groups for identification, release and



rehabilitation of bonded labour. The court suggested the following steps to be taken:

- (a) The officers appointed for handling problems of bonded labour should be properly trained and sensitized so that they feel attached to the misery and suffering of the poor and carry those work with total dedication which may inspire confidence in the minds of the poor included the bonded labour.
- (b) There should be constant check and supervision over the activities of the officers handling the problems of bonded labourers.
- (c) An intensive survey of the areas which have been traditionally prone to the “system of the debt bondage should be undertaken by the vigilance’ committees with the help of social action groups operating in such areas.

The Court, therefore, impressed up.; - the State Government to implement the suggestions and also provide immediate assistance for rehabilitation of freed bonded labourer. Reminding the state of its constitutional obligation, the court asserted: “It is plainest requirement of Articles 21 and 23 of the Constitution that bonded labourers must be identified and released and on release, they must be suitably rehabilitated. The *Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976*, has been enacted pursuant to the Directive Principles of State Policy with a view to ensuring basic human dignity to the bonded labourers and any failure of the action on the part of the State Government in implementing the provisions of this legislation would be the clearest violation of Article 21 apart from Article 23 of the Constitution.”

The observations of the apex Court in *Neerja Chaudhary* made in the context of rehabilitation of freed bonded labourers provides a new impetus to the observance of provisions of labour welfare legislation as any failure on the part of the state to implement the same would contravene the provisions of Article 21 of the Constitution

Problem of Identification

It must be stated at the very outset that poverty, illiteracy and helplessness are some of the determining factors for the prevalence of the system of bonded labour. These factors make them voiceless and deter them from coming forward for obtaining justice. This makes the problem of identification of bonded labourer very difficult. Another factor which stands in the way, as pointed out by justice Bhagwati in *Bhandua Mukti Morcha Case* is that the State administration has been found reluctant in admitting the existence of bonded labour even though it exists in its territory. Soundings this note, Bhagwati J. observed:

"We fail to see why the administration should feel shy in admitting the existence of bonded labour, because it is not the existence of bonded labour that is a slur on the administration but in



THE CONTEXT

This study examines the processes, outcomes and problems associated with the migration of women workers from South Asia to the Gulf region. The Gulf region has had long-standing connections with South Asia in terms of both trading links and the movement of persons. The South Asian region has emerged as the most important source of migrant labour in general and female migrants in particular to the Gulf. The countries of this region share a common history of colonial domination and a long history of labour mobility both within and outside the region, but have different economic growth and development experiences.

The current spurt in labour migration to the Gulf needs to be situated within the long-term trend of international migration in the age of globalisation, specifically in the last three decades. International migration has become both an outcome and a driver of increasing global integration (Martin et al., 2006; United Nations [UN], 2006; United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2009a). Labour migration from South Asia, which had played a dominant role defining the 19th century international migration trends, has once again emerged at the forefront of the new wave of global migration in the last decades of the 20th century (Mckeown, 2004). While 19th century labour migration was mainly intra imperial and primarily to the British colonies, the destinations of the current international migration flows from the region are mainly the Gulf and North America.

A distinctive feature of the current international migration is that almost half the population movement consists of women, which is in contrast to the relatively lower proportion of female migrants in 19th century migration. In this regard, however, it should be noted that migration of women from South Asia has been lower than the international averages even though the gap has been consistently declining over time. Increasing feminisation of international migration in general and from South Asia in particular has thrown up new issues and poses new challenges relating to institutions, processes and outcomes associated with female migration. While our study will focus on the structural and procedural aspects of female migration, we aim to look at the issues from a rights based perspective that takes into account the agency and empowerment of female migrants both as a desired outcome and as a policy driver.

Large-scale migration of women workers from South Asia has well documented



historical roots in the colonial period. Indentured migration to the plantation colonies in the 19th century, for instance, was governed by the strict requirement stipulated by the colonial government of a minimum of 40 women per 100 men. Most women who migrated were single, with only a minority travelling with their families, and this had very important consequences for the character of household and community formation in the destination economies. This also affected the way migration was looked at in the sending regions, with sentiments of national honour often attached to the treatment of women migrants. The exploitation of women in the plantations triggered massive nationalist agitations against indentured migration and eventually led to its abolition in 1916. Regulation of female migration was thus crucial both at the inception and at the end of migration systems of the 19th century (Northrup, 1995; Tinker, 1974).

Contemporary female migration shares an interesting feature with historical migration, namely that a majority of the female migrants are single. The working conditions and the nature of occupation of the women labourers in contemporary Gulf migration expose them to a variety of vulnerabilities which are not dissimilar to those faced by women in the 19th century plantations. No wonder then that policy measures for protection and restriction have been emphasised to a greater extent than those for promotion of female migration in the South Asian region as a whole. This has had the unintended consequence of increasing undocumented and irregular migration of women, which has further aggravated the vulnerabilities of women migrants.

The occupation of the majority of the female migrants from South Asia is essentially low skilled in nature. A majority of women are engaged as domestic workers and low-end service providers (housemaids, babysitters, caregivers, cleaners, etc.); a relatively lower percentage is composed of semi-skilled or skilled workers (para-medicals, accountants, teachers, etc.). Several factors trigger a demand for low-end domestic and allied jobs in the Gulf countries. The first is the relatively low female labour force participation rate (LFPR) among the local workforce due to cultural and social reasons. Allied to this, the rapid prosperity and expansion of the service economy has meant that there has been consistent and increasing demand for low-end service providers. The labour market in the Gulf mirrors the dominant sexual division of labour, with relatively lower-end positions being increasingly filled by migrant women.

Domestic workers in particular are always at risk of physical, sexual and emotional abuses, including confinement, underpayment or non-payment of wages, as well as a range of other abuses, since their living and working conditions are entirely dependent on the personal



relationship between the worker and the employer. To make the situation worse, workers are tied to their employers by the *kafala* (sponsorship) system prevalent in the Gulf countries, which allows very little scope to end abusive working conditions.

Despite the conditions of vulnerability faced by the migrant female workforce from South Asia, the increasing feminisation of Gulf migration has had positive impacts on several regions of South Asia. At the macro level, increasing remittances by female migrants have reframed the development narratives (e.g. in Sri Lanka and Nepal). The empowering aspects of female migration are also evident at the local or micro level in the labour sending regions where subtle but important changes are taking place in the gender balance of power both at the household and societal levels.

Assessments of international migration flows have often discounted the crucial role of regulatory regimes in shaping the processes and outcomes of migration and individual choices. Regulatory regimes of both the sending and the receiving countries respond to contradictory pressures and changing economic environments. Host countries have to balance the demand for cheap and low skilled labour with the increasing demand for indigenisation and anti-immigrant sentiments. Similarly, labour surplus sending countries have to balance the need for a vent for large-scale unemployment and critical foreign remittances with protection against rampant exploitation of their workers. Regulatory regimes have thus adopted often contradictory policy measures, simultaneously encompassing restriction, protection and promotion of migration. The complexity of the migration processes, the contradictory pressures of the regulatory regimes, and the ambiguous position of women migrants with regard to their vulnerability at the workplace and changing gender roles at home have posed several new challenges for both State and non-State institutions. These range from the emergence of new institutional actors to new instruments and measures adopted by existing institutional actors. We have attempted to provide a detailed review of changes over the last four decades in the regulatory regimes governing migration between these two regions, especially in the context of female migration,

A fuller picture of the complexities of the migration issue can be obtained by analysing the impact of the recent global economic downturn on Gulf migration. Beginning in 2008, the downturn adversely affected economic activities in the Gulf countries and one of the immediate impacts was a decline in migration to the Gulf and an increase in return migration from the Gulf. However, interestingly female return migration was much lower than male return migration, reflecting the persistent demand for women migrants in certain sectors like care, domestic service, etc., and indicating the degree to which this type of migration may be



crisis-proof. The crisis period also witnessed a worsening of working conditions of migrant workers by way of pay cuts, delay in payment, withdrawal of fringe benefits, etc. The Gulf economies have been experiencing faster recovery and growth since 2010 mainly because of an increase in oil prices. One of the key concerns that remain is whether this recovery has improved the working conditions of the migrant workers or not.

Perhaps the most important impediment to an understanding of female migration to the Gulf has been a complete lack of systematic data and information on crucial dimensions of the migration process (including reliable data on the magnitude of migrants and their wages, earnings and remittances). We have tried to fill the gaps in information by collating and combining all the latest available data at macro and regional levels with information garnered from micro level qualitative studies. We have also used the available data to project future trends in female migration from South Asia to the Gulf, taking into account the growth patterns of both these regions. This would provide valuable indicators to policy makers of the kind of jobs required and need for upgradation of skills to maximise outcomes for female migrants.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

In summary, this study intends:

- To trace the trends and patterns of international migration in general and female migration in particular from South Asia to the Gulf, in the context of feminisation of international migration
- To understand the migration cycle and the challenges faced by female migrants from the departure phase to reintegration

To assess how far the stakeholder responses are effective and to identify the good practices that could be adopted to improve female migration outcomes

To project future labour force requirements in the host countries for female migrant workers

To prepare detailed migration fact sheets of five major sending countries of South Asia and six major receiving countries of the Gulf

Considering the global trends of the feminisation of migration and the increased uncertainties faced by women, particularly in the changed economic and political situation, the study focuses on female labour migrants from South Asia to the Gulf. The study highlights the importance of a comprehensive approach to ensure positive outcomes of female migration and the need for strategies that locate women as agents of change, respecting the rights of individual migrants. The report is essentially based on a review of secondary literature such as scholarly and academic studies, reports of various international organisations, government

reports and documents on changing demographic profiles, socio-economic and political situations, including policies on migration, and reports and writings emanating from various non-governmental and human rights organisations. As part of the review process, we held extensive consultations with experts and policy makers engaged with issues relating to international labour migration.

1.4 OUTLINE OF THE REPORT

After the presentation of the context of the study and the approach and objectives in the present chapter, Chapter 2 provides an overview of migration from South Asia to the Gulf with the backdrop of trends in international migration. Chapter 3 focuses specifically on trends and patterns of female migration from South Asia to the Gulf in the light of feminisation in labour flows. Given the background, Chapter 4 examines the migration process of female migrant workers, narrating their vulnerabilities at different stages of the migration cycle: pre-departure, as a migrant and in the post-migration phase. The roles and initiatives of different stakeholders at the international, national and local levels to improve migration outcomes of women and hurdles in the process are discussed in Chapter 5. An attempt is made in Chapter 6 to assess the prospects of increasing female migration flows in the future, considering the labour market situations in the host and sending countries. Finally, the study concludes with certain policy contours that would situate international female migration in a rights based perspective, thereby closely integrating migration as a tool for development. The report also provides detailed fact sheets of the demographic, economic and migration profiles of five sending countries of South Asia (Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) and six receiving countries of the Gulf region (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates [UAE]).



“ବାନ୍ଧୁରୁଣୀମେରା

ସୌରାବନ୍ଧୁ କର

ମିତ୍ୟାସା ଅନେକ ଦିନ ପରେ ଗାଁକୁ ଫେରିଛି । ବଣ ପାହାଡ଼ ଘେରା ସେଇଗାଁ ଯେଉଁଠି ଦିନେ ସେ ତା’ର ଯୌବନକୁ ପତ୍ର କଅଁଳି ଗଛ ଝଙ୍କାଳିଆ ହେବା ପରେ ସାଇତି ରଖୁଥିଲା । କନ୍ଧଗୋକା ଥିଲା ସେ । ଏକା ଦମ୍ଭରେ ପାହାଡ଼ ଚଢ଼ି ପାରୁଥିଲା । ଗଛ ହଲେଇ ଦେଇ ଜାମୁକୋଳି ସାଉଁରୁଥିଲା । ପାହାଡ଼ ତଳି ଝର ପାଣିରେ ଅଧା ଖରାବେଳଟା ବିତେଇଦେବାରେ ତା’ର ଥିଲା ଆନନ୍ଦ ।

ପାହାଡ଼ କଡ଼ ଜମି ସଫାକରି ତିଆରି କରିଥିଲା ଜମି । ମକା, ବାଜରା, ବାଇଗଣ ଲଗାଇ ଫସଲ ଉତାରିବା ବେଳେ ତା’ ଦେହରୁ ବାହାରୁଥିଲା ଗମ୍ ଗମ୍ ଝାଳ । ମିତ୍ୟାସା ମାଝି ତା ଦେହକୁ ଚାହିଁ ଫିକ୍ କିନା ହସି ଦେଇଥିଲା ।

ଭେଣ୍ଟିଆ ଟୋକା ସିଏ । ତା ଗାଁ ସାଙ୍ଗତମାର ତାଗତା ଟୋକା । ତା’ ସାଙ୍ଗ ଟୋକାଗୁଡ଼ିକ ତା’କୁ ଟାହିଟାପରା କରି କହିବେ, “ ମିତ୍ୟାସା ! ତୁ ଗୋଟେ ଭାରି ମରଦ । ତୋ ମାଇକିନିଆ ଆମ ଗାଁରେ ନାହିଁ । ଏଇ ପାହାଡ଼ କଡ଼ ଗାଁ ବୁଟଲର ଗାଁ । ସେଠି ଭଲ ଚିରିଲା ତୋ ପାଇଁ ମିଳିବେ । ସେମାନଙ୍କ କଥାରେ ହସି ପକାଏ ମିତ୍ୟାସା । ଏ ଟୋକାଗୁଡ଼ିକ ନିଉଛୁଣା । ନିଶ ଉଠିବା ଆଗରୁ ଧେଙ୍ଗଡ଼ି ପଛରେ ଗୋଡ଼ାଇବା ଏମାନଙ୍କର ଅଭ୍ୟାସ । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଦେହ ଜୋର ନାହିଁ । ଦିନସାରା ପେଟେ ପେଟେ ହାଣ୍ଡିଆ, ଆଉ ରାତିକୁ ଧେଙ୍ଗଡ଼ିଙ୍କ ସାଥୀରେ ଥେଇ ଥେଇ ହେବେ ।

ଶାଳଗଛ ପରି ଲମ୍ବା, ଶକ୍ତ ଟୋକାଗୁଡ଼ିକର ନହକା ଚେହେରା ଦେଖିଲେ ମିତ୍ୟାସା ମାଝିର ମନ ଚିତ୍ତି ଉଠେ । ତାଙ୍କ ଅଙ୍ଗକୁ ହସରେ ଉଡେଇ ଦେଇ କହେ, “ହଇବେ; ଶାଳଗଛ ଚେହେରାକୁ ଆଣି ଗବଗଛରେ ପରିଣତ କଲଣି । ଆଉ କେତେଦିନ ଗଲେ ବୁଦ୍ଧିଶୁଦ୍ଧି ହେବ । ପାଠ ପଢ଼ୁନ ବୋଲି କ’ଣ ପ୍ରକୃତିକୁ ଚିହ୍ନି ପାରୁନ ।”

ତା’ କଥାକୁ କେହି ଶୁଣି ପାରନ୍ତିନି । ଶୁଣିଲେ ବି ଖାତିର କରନ୍ତିନି । ହାଣ୍ଡିଆ ନିଶା ଜୋର । ପାହାଡ଼ ତଳେ ଜମି ତିଆରିରେ ଲାଗି ପଡ଼ିଥାଏ ମିତ୍ୟାସା । ଯେମିତି କେଉଁକାଳରୁ ଏହି ଜମି ଖଣ୍ଡକ ସହିତ ତା’ର ସମ୍ପର୍କ ରହିଛି । ତା’ ବାପର କିଛି ଜମି ନାହିଁ । ଏଇ ଜମି ଖଣ୍ଡକରେ ସେ ତା’ ଟୋକାବେଳେ ଫସଲ ଉତାରୁ ଥିଲା । ହେଲେ ପାରିଲାନି । ମିତ୍ୟାସାକୁ ଦଶବର୍ଷ ବେଳକୁ ଏଠି ଅନାବନା ଗଛ ସବୁ ଉଠି ଗୋଟେ ବିକଟ ଜଙ୍ଗଲର ରୂପ ନେଲା । ଡରିଗଲା ମିତ୍ୟାସା ବାପ । ଅନେକ ସାପ ଜନ୍ତୁର ଭୟରେ ବିଲଖଣ୍ଡିକ ଉଜୁଡ଼ି ଯାଇଥିଲା କେଉଁକାକୁ ।

ମିତ୍ୟାସା ଗଜାଭେଣ୍ଟା । ତା’ର ଡର କାହାକୁ ? ଜମି ଆବାଦ କଲା । ଝାଳ ଦେହରୁ ଗମ୍ ଗମ୍ ହୋଇ ସେଇ ମାଟି ସହି ମିଶିଗଲା । ଅନେକ ଦିନର ପରିଶ୍ରମର ଫଳ ଏଇ ଜମି ଖଣ୍ଡିକ ତା’ର । ତା’ ମା’ କହିଲା, “ ଭଲ କଲୁରେ ମିତ୍ୟାସା । ଆମ ଦେଖାନ୍ତିରେ ଜମି ତିଆରି କଲୁ । ଯା ନାଁ ଦେବା “ ବାନ୍ଧୁରୁଣୀ ମେରା ”, କହିଲା ମିତ୍ୟାସା ।

ମା’ ବୁଢ଼ା ହେଲାଣି । ବାପ ବୁଢ଼ା । ମିତ୍ୟାସା ଦି’ ହାତ ହେଲା । ବୁଟଲାର ଗାଁରୁ କନିଆଁ ଆଣିଲା । କନିଆଁ ଖୋଜିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିଲାନି । ମିତ୍ୟାସା ନାଁ ଶୁଣି କନ୍ଧଝିଅ ଗୁଡ଼ାକ ତା’କୁ ବାହାହେବା ପାଇଁ ହାଇଁପାଇଁ ହେଲେ ।

ବାହାଘର ଦିନ ଭୋଜି ହେଲା । କୁକୁଡ଼ା କଟାଗଲା । ଧେଙ୍ଗଡ଼ିମାନେ ନାଚିଲେ । ନାଚି ନାଚି ଥକି ଗଲେ । କେତେକ ଧେଙ୍ଗଡ଼ାଙ୍କ କୋଳରେ ନଥ୍ ନଥ୍ କରି ଶୋଇପଡ଼ିଲେ ସେଇ ନାଚିବା ଜାଗାରେ । ସେଦିନ କିନ୍ତୁ ମିତ୍ୟାସା ଟିକିଏ ପିଇ ଦେଇଥିଲା ହାଣ୍ଡିଆ । ମାଇକିନିଆଁର ଫୁଙ୍ଗୁଳା ଦେହକୁ ଦେଖି ତା’ ଦେହରୁ ଝାଳ ବୋହିଗଲା ।

ମିତ୍ୟାସା ଭାବିଲା ମନେ ମନେ “ ଏଇ ଦେହକୁ ଦେଖି ଧେଙ୍ଗଡ଼ାଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଏଇମିତି ଗବଗଛ ପାଲଟି ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି । ସେ ବି କ’ଣ ଗବଗଛ ହୋଇ ଯିବ କି ?”

ତା’ ଭାରିଜା ତା’ର ଫୁଙ୍ଗୁଳା ଦେହଟାକୁ ଡିବିରି ଆଲୁଅ କଡ଼ରେ ଲମ୍ଫେଇ ଦେଇ ମିଟିମିଟି କରି ଚାହୁଁଥିଲା । କେତେ ବଡ଼ ଶାଳଗଛ



ପରି ଏ ମଣିଷ ମିତ୍ୟାସା । ତା'କୁ ଦେଖିବା ଦିନୁ, ସେଇ ତାର ଧେଙ୍କତା ହେବ ବୋଲି ମନରେ କେତେ ଆଶା କରି ଗାଁ ମୁଣ୍ଡ କାତ୍ୟାୟନୀଚଣ୍ଡି ପାଖରେ ଭୋଗ ଲଗେଇ ଥିଲା ।

“ଏମିତି କ’ଣ ଭାବୁଛି ମିତ୍ୟାସା । ହାଣ୍ଡିଆ ପିଇ ନାରୁଥିଲା ବୋଲି ତା’ ଦେହରେ ବଳ ନାହିଁକି ? ”

ନିଜର ସେଇ ପୁଞ୍ଜୁଳା ଦେହଟାକୁ ନେଇ ଚାପି ଧରିଲା ମିତ୍ୟାସା ଦେହରେ ଗୁରେଇ । ଅନେକବେଳୁ ଖରା ଚାଳଘର ଫାଙ୍କରେ ତାଙ୍କ ଦୁହଁଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ପଡୁଥିଲା । ମିତ୍ୟାସା ଆଖିରେ ନିଦ । କେଉଁ କାଳରୁ ଯେମିତି ସେ ଶୋଇନି । ମିତ୍ୟାସା ଧେଙ୍କତି ଗୁରେଇ ଦୂରେ ଲୋଚାକୋଚା ହୋଇ ପଡିଥିବା କଷ୍ଟା ଲୁଗାଟିକୁ ଗୋଟେଇବାରେ ଲାଗିଥିଲା ।

ମିତ୍ୟାସା ମାଝି ଆଜି ଅନେକ ବର୍ଷ ପରେ ତା ଗାଁକୁ ଫେରିଛି । ଗବଗଛ ତାକୁ ଦେଖି ହସୁଛି । । ଥଙ୍ଗା କରିବା ପରି କହୁଛି, “କିରେ; ତୋ’ର ତ ଭାରି ବହୁପ ଥିଲା ତୋ’ ଦେହ ଉପରେ । ମୋତେ ଚାହୁଁ ନଥିଲୁ । ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ଦେଖକ’ଣ ହେଉଛି ।”

ଅନେକ ବର୍ଷ ପରେ ତା’ ଗାଁ ସାଙ୍ଗତମାଙ୍କୁ ସେ ଫେରିଛି । ତା’ ଗାଁରେ ବାଲିଗୋଡ଼ିର ରାସ୍ତା ଲମ୍ବ ହୋଇପଡିଛି । ରାସ୍ତାକଡ଼ରେ ବିକ୍ତୁଳି ଆଲୁଅ । ପାଣିପିନ୍ଧୁ ପାଣି ବାହାରୁଛି । ପ୍ରଥମେ ଚିହ୍ନି ପାରିଲାନି ତା’ ଗାଁକୁ ସେ । ଆଜିକୁ ତିରିଶବର୍ଷ ହେଲାଣି, ସେ ଗାଁ ମାଟିମାଡିନି । ଗାଁ ସାଙ୍ଗତମା ତା’ ପାଇଁ ସପନ ହୋଇଛି । ମିତ୍ୟାସା ଗାଁ ଭିତରକୁ ପଶିଲାବେଳେ, ତାକୁ ଲାଗୁଥିଲା କାହିଁକି ଫେରିଛି ? କିଏ ଅଛି ଏଠି ? ତା’ ତିରିଲା ତିନିତିନିଟା ଛୁଆ ତିନି ବର୍ଷରେ ଜନ୍ମ କରିଥିଲା । ତା’ ଶାଳଗଛ ଚେହେରା ପାଇଁ ଖୁସିରେ ଗାଁ ପାହାଡକଡ଼ ଜମିରେ ଛୁଆତିନିଟାକୁ ଗଛରେ ଝୁଲେଇ ଦେଇ ମକ୍ତା ଲଗାଇବାରେ ମନ ଦେଇ ଲାଗି ପଡୁଥିଲା । ଝରଣା ପାଣିରେ ଗାଧୋଇବା ବେଳେ ମିତ୍ୟାସା କହେ, “କୁଝିଲୁ ତୁ ଗୁରେଇ ଧେଙ୍କତି; ତୁ ଯେମିତି ଫଳତିଗଛ ହୋଇ ବର୍ଷକୁ ବର୍ଷ ତିନିଟା ଧେଙ୍କତାକୁ ଜନ୍ମ କରି ପକାଇଲୁ, ଠିକ୍ ସେମିତି ମୋର ଏଇ ‘ବାନ୍ଦରୁଙ୍ଗା ମେରା’ । ଦେଖୁନୁ, କେତେ ମକା । ଚଢ଼େଇ ଗୁଡ଼ିକ କିଟିରି ମିଟିରି ହେଇ ମକା ଖାଇବାକୁ କେମିତି ଡେଉଁଛନ୍ତି ।”

ତିନିଟା ଛୁଆକୁ କାଖରେ, କାନ୍ଧରେ ଓ ପିଠିରେ ଥୋଇ ଗୁରେଇ ମୁହଁହାଣ୍ଡି କରି କହିବ, “ଏମିତି କିଆଁ କହୁଛୁନି । ହଁ ମୁଁ ମାନୁଛି ତୋ’ ବାନ୍ଦରୁଙ୍ଗା ମେରାରେ ଭଲ ଫସଲ ହେଇଛି । ତା’ ବୋଲି ମୋ’ ଛୁଆଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ତୋର ନଜର ପକାନା । ଭଗବାନ ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି ନା ।”

ରୁପ୍ ହୋଇଯାଏ ମିତ୍ୟାସା:। ଚାରି ଛୁଆ ଏମାନେ । ଚାହେଁ ବାନ୍ଦରୁଙ୍ଗା ମେରାରେ ଲହଲହ କରୁଥିବା ମକାଡାଳକୁ । ଚଢ଼େଇଗୁଡ଼ା ପରସ୍ପର ମଧ୍ୟରେ କିଟିରି ମିଟିରି କରି, ପାଖକୁ ପାଖ ଲାଗି ବସିଥା’ନ୍ତି । କେତେ ଅସୁମାରୀ ଚଢ଼େଇ । ଚାରି ଏଇ ତିନିଟା ଛୁଆଙ୍କପରି । ମଣିଷଗୁଡ଼ା ସିଆଣା ବୋଲି ବେଶି ଜନ୍ମ କରନ୍ତିନି ।

ମିତ୍ୟାସା ବାନ୍ଦରୁଙ୍ଗା ମେରା ।

ମିତ୍ୟାସାକନ୍ଧର ପୁରୁଷପୁରୁଷର ବାନ୍ଦରୁଙ୍ଗାମେରା ।

ମିତ୍ୟାସାମାଝିର ରକ୍ତକୁ ପାଣିକରି ଗଢିଥିବା ବାନ୍ଦରୁଙ୍ଗାମେରା ।

ସାଙ୍ଗତମା ଗାଁ ସାରା ସମସ୍ତେ ଜାଣନ୍ତି ମିତ୍ୟାସା ଓ ବାନ୍ଦରୁଙ୍ଗାମେରା ଯେମିତି ଏକ ।

କେହି କାହାଠୁ ଅଲଗା ନୁହଁନ୍ତି ।

ଝର ଶୁଖିଯାଇଛି । ମିତ୍ୟାସାର ଝାଳ ନଥନଥୁ ଦେହ ଉପରେ, ପାଣିବିନ୍ଦୁଏ ପଡିବାକୁ ସେ ଝରଣାପାଣିକୁ ଆଉ ଗୋଡ଼ ପୁରେଇ ପାରୁନି । କି ପ୍ରଚଣ୍ଡ ଖରା । ଖରାଧାସରେ ସବୁ ଶୁଖି ଯାଇଛି । ପାଣିଟୋପେ ପିଇବାକୁ ମିଳୁନି । ବାନ୍ଦରୁଙ୍ଗାମେରା ଶୁଖି ଠକ୍ ଠକ୍ । ଦେହସାରା ଫାଟି ଥାଁ କରିଛି । ଫାଉଡା, କୋଡ଼ି ଓ ଲଙ୍ଗଲର ମୂନ ତା ଦେହ ଉପରେ ଚାଲିବାର ସାହସ କରୁନାହାନ୍ତି । ବାନ୍ଦରୁଙ୍ଗାମେରାର ହସ ଲିଭିଯାଇଛି । ଆଉ ଚଢ଼େଇମାନେ କିଟିରିମିଟିରି ହେଉ ନାହାନ୍ତି ।

କନ୍ଧମାଳ ଜିଲ୍ଲା ସାରା ମରୁଡ଼ି । ଗଡ଼ମା, ସାଙ୍ଗତମା, ବୁଟଲାରଗାଁ, କିରାମା, କଡାମା ପାହାଡ଼ କଡ଼ର ସବୁ ଗାଁ ମରୁଡ଼ି ।

ବାନ୍ଦରୁଙ୍ଗାମେରା ଫାଟି ଥାଁ କରିଛି । ମିତ୍ୟାସାର ଚାରା କ’ଣ ? କିନ୍ତୁ ତା’ର ପିଲା ତିନିଟା । ତା ଭାରିଜା ଗୋବରା । ଏମାନଙ୍କ ମୁହଁ



ଶୁଖିଲା ପତ୍ର ପରି ଦେଖାଯାଉଛି । ମକାଜାଉ ପେଟରେ ପଡ଼ିନି ଆଜିକୁ ତିନିଦିନ ହେଲା । ମିତ୍ୟାସା ଚାହିଁଲା ଗୋବରା ମୁହଁକୁ । ଛୁଆ ତିନିଟାଙ୍କର ଡହଳବିକଳ ଚାହାଣୀ । ଗୋବରା ଛାତିରେ ଜଣକପରେ ଜଣେ ଶୁଖିଯାଇଥିବା ଜଳାଧାରକୁ ଅଣ୍ଟାଲୁଥିବାର ଅସହାୟ ଚେଷ୍ଟା ।

ମିତ୍ୟାସା ବାପା ଗୁରେଇ ସିନା ଜନ୍ମ ଦେଇଛି, ସେମାନେ ତ ତାରି ଛୁଆ । ସେମାନେ ତ ତାରି ପରିବାର ।

ବାନ୍ଦରୁଜ୍ଞାମେରାକୁ ସେ ତିଆରି କରିଛି । ବାନ୍ଦରୁଜ୍ଞାମେରା ତା'କୁ ଫସଲ ଦେଉଛି, ତା' ପିଲାଗୁଡ଼ିକୁ ବି ଫସଲ ଦେବ । ତା' ବାପାକୁ ବି ଫସଲ ଦେଇଥିଲା ।

ଛୁଆ ତିନିଟା ବଡ଼ ହେଇଗଲେ ବଳେ ଲୋଭ ଆସିଯିବ ବାନ୍ଦରୁଜ୍ଞାମେରା ଉପରେ । ମକାର ଲହଲହ ପେଣ୍ଡା, ଚଢ଼େଇମାନଙ୍କ କିଚିରିମିଚିରି ଶବ୍ଦ ସହିତ ତାଳଦେଇ ଚାଲିବ । ବାନ୍ଦରୁଜ୍ଞା ମେରା କଡ଼ରେ ଝରଣା । ପାହାଡ଼ ଡିମା । ସେଇଠି ବସିଥିବ ସେ । ସୁରୁଜଦେବତାଙ୍କର ନାଲି ହସ ଭିତରେ ଚଢ଼େଇଙ୍କର କିଚିରିମିଚିରି ହଜିଯାଇଥିବ । ମିତ୍ୟାସା ଦେଖୁଥିବ ତିନିତିନିଟା ଶାଳଗଛ ବିରାଟ ବିରାଟ ଆକୃତି ତା' ବାନ୍ଦରୁଜ୍ଞାମେରାକୁ ବଢ଼େଇଦେଇଛି କେତେଦୂରକୁ । ଆଉ ଆଖି ପାଉନି ମିତ୍ୟାସାର ।

“ଏ ଛୁଆ ମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ବାନ୍ଦରୁଜ୍ଞାମେରା । ସେ କ'ଣ ତା' ନିଜ ପାଇଁ ତିଆରି କରିଛି କି ?” ମକା ମଞ୍ଜି ବୁଣୁଥିବା ବେଳେ ଗୁରେଇ କହିବ, “ବୁଝିଲୁନା ! ତୋ' ଭେଣ୍ଡିଆପଣର ଦିଲଟା ସତ୍ତକ । ଗୋଟେ ତୋ'ର ବାନ୍ଦରୁଜ୍ଞାମେରା । ଅନ୍ୟଟି ଏଇ ଛୁଆ ତିନିଟା ।”

“ତୁ ଶାଳପାଂଶୁ ।”

ସାଙ୍ଗତମା ଗାଁ ନୁହେଁ, ପୁରା ଝାଞ୍ଜିରାଗୁଡ଼ା ପଞ୍ଚାୟତର ।

ବାପ ଗୋସାପର ବାନ୍ଦରୁଜ୍ଞାମେରାକୁ ନୁଆ ଜନ୍ମ ଦେଇଥିଲା ମିତ୍ୟାସା । ତା' ବୁଢ଼ା ବାପା ପ୍ରାୟ ସବୁଦିନ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାରେ ଆସୁଥିଲା ବାନ୍ଦରୁଜ୍ଞାମେରାକୁ । ପଥର ଡିମା ଉପରେ ବସି ରହିଥିଲା ମିତ୍ୟାସାକୁ ।

ମରୁଡ଼ି ଯେମିତି ତା'ର ସବୁ ସ୍ଵପ୍ନକୁ ଓଲଟ ପାଲଟ କରିଦେଲା । ଛୁଆଙ୍କ ମୁହଁରେ ତୋରାଣି ମୁଦାଏ ଦେବ କେମିତି, ସେହି ଚିତ୍ରା ଦିନକୁ ଦିନ ଘାରିଲା ତା'କୁ ।

ବାନ୍ଦରୁଜ୍ଞାମେରାକୁ ଚାହିଁ ପାରୁନଥିଲା ସେ ।

ଗାଁଟା ସାରା ‘ପାଣି’ ‘ପାଣି’ର ଡହଳ ବିକଳ ଚିତ୍କାର । କିଏ ଶୁଣିବ ?

“ବା’, ‘ବା’, ‘ବା’

ତିନୋଟି ଛୁଆ ଏକା ସାଙ୍ଗରେଡାକୁଥିଲେ ।

ଗୁରେଇ ମାଟିପିଣ୍ଡ ଉପରେ ବାଉଁଶ ଖୁଣ୍ଟକୁ ଡେରି ହୋଇ ବସି ଚାହିଁଥିଲା କାହିଁ କେତେ ଦୂରକୁ ।

ଆଖିରେ ଭରି ରହିଥିଲା ନିର୍ଜୀବ ଶୂନ୍ୟତା ।

ବାନ୍ଦରୁଜ୍ଞାମେରାକୁ ବନ୍ଧାପକାଇଦେବ ମିତ୍ୟାସା । ମକା କିଣିବ ଛୁଆଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ । ବିଦେଶ ଚାଲିଯିବ କାହିଁ କେତେଦୂର । ଅନେକ ଟଙ୍କା ରୋଜଗାର କରିବ । ତା' ଦେହର ବଳ ଖଟାଇ ସେ ଅଣ୍ଟିପୁରା ଟଙ୍କା ଆଣିବ । ମୁକାଲିଦେବ ବାନ୍ଦରୁଜ୍ଞାମେରାକୁ । ଧଳା କାଗଜରେ ଟିପିଦେଲା ମିତ୍ୟାସା । ମଣ୍ଡ ମନ୍ତା ତା ହାତକୁ ଦଶ ଟଙ୍କିଆ ଦଶ ଖଣ୍ଡ ନୋଟ ବଢ଼େଇ ଦେଇ କହିଲେ, ‘ନେ, ନେ, କଳନ୍ତର ସହ ଶୁଝିଦେବୁ । ମାସକୁ ଶହେ ଟଙ୍କାରେ ଦଶ ଟଙ୍କା । ବର୍ଷକୁ ବର୍ଷ କଳନ୍ତର ଦେବୁ । ଜମି ବନ୍ଧା ଆମେ ରକ୍ଷ କରିବୁ । ରଣ ସୁଝିଦେଲେ ବାନ୍ଦରୁଜ୍ଞାମେରା ତୋ'ର’

ଝଲି ଝଲି ଝାଞ୍ଜିରାଗୁଡ଼ା ହାଟକୁ ଗଲା । ମକା, ଝଉଳ କିଣିଲା । ଗୋଟିଏ ମୋଟା ଥାନ, ଲୁଗା ଓ ନାଲି ଗାମୁଚା ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଆଣିବାକୁ ଭୁଲିଲା ନାହିଁ । ଗୁରେଇ ହାତକୁ ବଢ଼େଇ ଦେଲା ଝଉଳ ଓ ମକା । ଆଖିରୁ କେଇ ଟୋପା ଲୁହ ବି ଖସିପଡ଼ିଲା ।

ଅନେକ ଦିନ ଗଲାଣି ତା'ର ସାଙ୍ଗତମା ଗାଁରୁ ଯିବା । ବୁଢ଼ୁପୁର ଠାରୁ ଟ୍ରେନରେ ଝଲିଗଲା କାହିଁ କେତେଦୂର ଗୁଜରାଟ । ପଛରେ



ରହିଯାଇଥିଲା ସାଙ୍ଗତମା, ବାନ୍ଦରୁଜ୍ଞାମେରା, ଗୁରେଇ, ତା ତିନି ଛୁଆ ଓ ବୁଢ଼ା ବାପା ମା' ଇଟା ଭାଟିରେ ଖଟିଲା । ଲୁଗା କଳରେ ଶ୍ରମିକ ହେଲା । ଦିନ ସାରା ପରିଶ୍ରମ କରି ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟା ନଇଁ ଆସିବା ବେଳକୁ ବସ୍ତିକୁ ଫେରି ଆସି ଗୁମ୍ଫୁମ୍ଫୁ ହୋଇ ଥିବା ମାରୁଥିଲା । ମାସକୁ ମାସକୁ କଳନ୍ତର ଟଙ୍କା ସୁଝିବାକୁ ସାଇତି ରଖୁଥିଲା ମଜୁରିରୁ ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ ଯାଇ ରହୁଥିବା ବଳକା ଟଙ୍କା ।

ଦୀର୍ଘ ତିରିଶି ବର୍ଷ କେମିତି ସମୟ ଚାଲିଗଲା କେଜାଣି । ମନେ ପଡୁଥିଲେ ଗୁରେଇ, ବାନ୍ଦରୁଜ୍ଞାମେରା, ତା'ର ଛୁଆମାନେ । ମଣ୍ଡମନ୍ତା ଫେରେଇ ଦେଇଥିବ ତା' ଜମି । ତା' ଛୁଆମାନେ ବଡ଼ ବଡ଼ ହୋଇଯାଇଥିବ । ନହନହକା ମକା ଗଛ ପାହାଡ଼କର ସୁଲୁସୁଲିଆ ପବନରେ ଦୋହଲୁଥିବ । କିରିମିଚିରି କରି ଚଢ଼େଇଗୁଡ଼ା ବସିଥିବେ ମକା ଗଛ ଉପରେ । ଝରଣାର ଥିବ ଢେରପାଣି । ଗୁରେଇ ତା' କଳା ମୁରୁମୁରୁ ଦେହକୁ ଘଷି ମାଜି ସଫା କରିଦେଉଥିବ ।

ସ୍ଵପ୍ନ ଦେଖେ ସବୁଦିନ ମିତ୍ୟାସା । ରାତିରେ ବିଲିବିଲେଇଇ ଉଠେ । ସାଙ୍ଗତମା ଠାରେ ରହିଯାଇଥିବା ତା' ପରିବାର ଓ ତା' ବାନ୍ଦରୁଜ୍ଞାମେରା ତା' ମନକୁ କିଲିକିଲି କରିପକାଏ । ଧର ପାହୁଣ୍ଡ ପକାଉଥିଲା ମିତ୍ୟାସା । ଦେହରେ ବଳ ଥିଲେ ଡଗ ଡଗ ହୋଇ ଚାଲି ଥା'ନ୍ତା । ଗୁରେଇକୁ ଗୋଟାପଣେ ନେଇ ବାନ୍ଦରୁଜ୍ଞାମେରା ପାଖକୁ ଚାଲିଯାଇଥା'ନ୍ତା ।

ଗାଁ ଦାଣ୍ଡରେ ନାଲି ଗୋଡ଼ି ବିଛାଯାଇଛି । ବିକୁଳି ଆଲୁଅ ଖୁଣ୍ଟ ଚାହିଁ ହସୁଛି । ଯେମିତି ଥିବା କରି କହୁଛି, “ତୁ କିଏବେ ! ଏ ସାଙ୍ଗତମା ତୋ' ଗାଁ ନୁହେଁ । ତୋ' ବାନ୍ଦରୁଜ୍ଞାମେରାର ନାଁ ବଦଳିଗଲାଣି । ତୁ ତାକୁ ଖୋଜିଲେ ପାଇବୁନି । ତୋ' ଗୁରେଇର କଳାମୋଟ ଦେହଟା ଗବଡ଼ାଙ୍ଗ ପାଲଟିଗଲାଣି । କାହାନ୍ତି ତୋ ଛୁଆଗୁଡ଼ାକ ।”

ଆଖି ତରାଟି ଚାହିଁଲା ମିତ୍ୟାସା । ତା' ଘର ଦୂରରୁ ଦେଖାଯାଉଛି । ସେଇ ଚାଳଘର ଦୂରରେ ଅନେକ ପକାଘର ଆଗରୁ ସେଇ ଘର ସବୁ ନଥିଲା । ନାଲି, ନେଳି ଲୁଗା ପିନ୍ଧି ଧୋଙ୍ଗାଡ଼ିଗୁଡ଼ା ଯାଉଛନ୍ତି । ଚିହ୍ନିପାରୁନି ସେ କାହାକୁ । ଆଜିକୁ ତିରିଶି ବର୍ଷ ତଳେ ସେ ସାଙ୍ଗତମା ଗାଁରୁ ଚାଲିଯାଇଥିଲା କାହିଁ କେତେଦୂର । ଆଜି ଫେରିଛି ସେ । ବାନ୍ଦରୁଜ୍ଞାମେରା ପାଖ ଜିମା ଉପରେ ବସି ଚାହିଁବ ତା'ର ମକା କ୍ଷେତକୁ । ତା' ଛୁଆମାନେ କାମ କରୁଥିବେ । ଗୁରେଇ ତା' ପାଖରେ ବସି କହିଚାଲୁଥିବ ଏ ତିରିଶି ବର୍ଷର ତା'ର ଅଙ୍ଗେ ନିଭାଇଥିବା କଥା ।

ଘର ଭିତରକୁ ପଶିଲା ମିତ୍ୟାସା । ରୁଲି ପାଖରେ ବସିଛି ଗୁରେଇ । ଚିହ୍ନି ହେଉନି ତାକୁ । ଗବଡ଼ାଙ୍ଗ ଖଣ୍ଡିଏ । ଗୁରେଇ ଚାହିଁଲା ମିତ୍ୟାସାକୁ । ତିରିଶି ବର୍ଷ ତଳର ଯଦ୍ଦାନ ଭେଣ୍ଡା । ମିତ୍ୟାସାର ବାଳ ପାଟିଯାଇଥିଲା । ଅଣ୍ଟା ନଇଁ ପଡ଼ିଥିଲା । ଆଖି ଖୋସିହୋଇ ପଶିଯାଇଥିଲା ଗହର ଗାତଟିଏ କରି । ରୁଲିମୁଣ୍ଡରୁ ଉଠିଲା ଗୁରେଇ । ମିତ୍ୟାସାକୁ ଦେଖୁ ତା'ର କାନ୍ଦିବାକୁ ମନହେଉଥିଲା । ଏହି ତିରିଶି ବର୍ଷ ଭିତରେ ସେ ତ ସବୁ ହଜାଇଦେଲା କ'ଣ ଆଉ କାନ୍ଦିବ ? ଆଖିରେ ଲୁହ ଥିଲେ ତ ! ତା'ରି ଆଖି ଆଗରେ ତା' ଶାଶୁ ଶ୍ଵଶୁର ଚାଲିଗଲେ । ଭୋକ ଦାଉରୁ ସମ୍ଭାଳି ପାରିଲେନି ଛୁଆ ତିନିଟା ।

ଜଣ ଜଣ କରି କୁଆଡ଼େ ହଜିଗଲେ ଯେ ଫେରିବାର ବାଟ ଚାହିଁ ଚାହିଁ ବେଳ ଉଛୁର ହୋଇଗଲା । ମୁଣ୍ଡ ମନ୍ତା ମାସକୁ କଳନ୍ତର ନେଇ ନେଇ ବାନ୍ଦରୁଜ୍ଞାମେରା କୁ ତା' ନାଁରେ କରିପକାଇଲା । ବାନ୍ଦରୁଜ୍ଞାମେରାର ନାଁ ହୋଇଗଲା ଜନାଇକିଆଁ । ଏ କଥା କ'ଣ କହିପାରିବ ଗୁରେଇ ।

ମିତ୍ୟାସା ଫେରିଛି । ଫେରିବ ବୋଲି ମଧ୍ୟ ତା'ର ପରତେ ନଥିଲା । ଗୁରେଇ ଚାହିଁଲା ମିତ୍ୟାସାକୁ । ମିତ୍ୟାସା ଗୁରେଇକୁ । ତିରିଶି ବର୍ଷର ଅକୁହା କଥା ସେହି ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ, ସେହି କ୍ଷଣିକ ଦେଖାରେ ଯେମିତି ଝରଣା ଝର ଝର କରି ଝରିଗଲା ।

‘ବାନ୍ଦରୁଜ୍ଞାମେରା’ ରେ ହସୁଛି ମକାଗଛ ତା' ଗଣ୍ଡିକୁ ଦୋହଲାଇ । କିରିମିଚିରି କରି ପକ୍ଷୀଗୁଡ଼ା କହୁଛନ୍ତି, ମିତ୍ୟାସା ତୋତେ କିଏ କହିଥିଲା, “ଆମ ଘରକୁ ବନ୍ଧା ପକାଇବାକୁ । ତୁ କ'ଣ ଜାଣିନଥିଲୁ ଏ ଝରଣା, ଏ ମକା ଗଛ ଆମର ବୋଲି । ଆମକୁ ଟିକିଏ ପଚାରିଲୁନି ? ଶାଶୁଣାକୁ ଆଣି ଏଠି ରଖେଇଲୁ । ଶାଶୁଣା ତୋ' ମା'ସକୁ ଝୁଣି ଝୁଣି ଖାଇଲା । ତୋ' ଛୁଆଁକୁ ଗୋଟା ସୁନ୍ଦା ଗିଳିଦେଲା । ତୋ ଧୋଙ୍ଗାଡ଼ିର ଦେହରୁ ରକ୍ତ ଶୋଷି ନେଲା । ତୁ ଫେରିଆସିଛୁ କ'ଣ ଆମକୁ ଦେଖିବାକୁ । ଆମେ ତ ତୋ'ର ‘ବାନ୍ଦରୁଜ୍ଞାମେରା’ ରେ ନାହିଁ । ଆମେ ବନ୍ଦି ହୋଇ ରହିଛୁ ଜନାଇକିଆଁରେ । ଆମେ ମୁକ୍ତ ନାହିଁ । ପୁରାପୁରି ପରାଧିନ । ତୋ ପାଇଁ କି ଗାତ ଗାଇବୁ ? ବରଂ ତୁ ଏଠାରୁ ପଳା । ମିତ୍ୟାସା ଚାହିଁଲା ଗୁରେଇକୁ । ଝରଣାରେ ଝର ଝର ସ୍ଵର ଚୁମ୍ ଚୁମ୍ ହୋଇ ପଡୁଥିଲା । ନାରୁଥିଲା ତାଣ୍ଡବ ନୃତ୍ୟ । ମିତ୍ୟାସା କେବଳ ହଜେଇ ଦେଇଛି ଗୁରେଇକୁ । ଦେଖୁଛି ସାଙ୍ଗତମା ଗାଁ କଡ଼ ପାହାଡ଼ ଖାଁ ଖାଁ । ଗଛରେ ପତ୍ର ନାହିଁ, ଥୁଣ୍ଡା ।



ରହିଯାଇଥିଲା ସାଙ୍ଗତମା, ବାନ୍ଦରୁଜ୍ଞାମେରା, ଗୁରେଇ, ତା ତିନି ଛୁଆ ଓ ବୁଢ଼ା ବାପା ମା’ ଇଟା ଭାଟିରେ ଖଟିଲା । ଲୁଗା କଳରେ ଶ୍ରମିକ ହେଲା । ଦିନ ସାରା ପରିଶ୍ରମ କରି ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟା ନଇଁ ଆସିବା ବେଳକୁ ବସ୍ତିକୁ ଫେରି ଆସି ଗୁମ୍ଫୁମ୍ଫୁ ହୋଇ ଥକା ମାରୁଥିଲା । ମାସକୁ ମାସକୁ କଳନ୍ତର ଟଙ୍କା ସୁଝିବାକୁ ସାଧନ ରଖୁଥିଲା ମଜୁରିରୁ ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ ଯାଇ ରହୁଥିବା ବଳକା ଟଙ୍କା ।

ଦୀର୍ଘ ତିରିଶି ବର୍ଷ କେମିତି ସମୟ ଚାଲିଗଲା କେଜାଣି । ମନେ ପଡୁଥିଲେ ଗୁରେଇ, ବାନ୍ଦରୁଜ୍ଞାମେରା, ତା’ର ଛୁଆମାନେ । ମଣ୍ଡମନ୍ତୀ ଫେରେଇ ଦେଇଥିବ ତା’ ଜମି । ତା’ ଛୁଆମାନେ ବଡ଼ ବଡ଼ ହୋଇଯାଇଥିବ । ନହନହକା ମକା ଗଛ ପାହାଡ଼କର ସୁଲୁସୁଲିଆ ପବନରେ ଦୋହଲୁଥିବ । କିଚିରିମିଚିରି କରି ଚଢ଼େଇଗୁଡ଼ା ବସିଥିବେ ମକା ଗଛ ଉପରେ । ଝରଣାର ଥିବ ଢେରପାଣି । ଗୁରେଇ ତା’ କଳା ମୁରୁମୁରୁ ଦେହକୁ ଘସି ମାଜି ସଫା କରିଦେଉଥିବ ।

ସ୍ଵପ୍ନ ଦେଖେ ସବୁଦିନ ମିତ୍ୟାସା । ରାତିରେ ବିଳିବିଲେଇଇ ଉଠେ । ସାଙ୍ଗତମା ଠାରେ ରହିଯାଇଥିବା ତା’ ପରିବାର ଓ ତା’ ବାନ୍ଦରୁଜ୍ଞାମେରା ତା’ ମନକୁ କିଲ୍‌ବିଲ୍ କରିପକାଏ । ଧୂର ପାହୁଣ୍ଡ ପକାଉଥିଲା ମିତ୍ୟାସା । ଦେହରେ ବଳ ଥିଲେ ତଗ ତଗ ହୋଇ ଚାଲି ଥା’ନ୍ତା । ଗୁରେଇକୁ ଗୋଟାପଣେ ନେଇ ବାନ୍ଦରୁଜ୍ଞାମେରା ପାଖକୁ ଚାଲିଯାଇଥା’ନ୍ତା ।

ଗାଁ ଦାଣ୍ଡରେ ନାଲି ଗୋଡ଼ି ବିଛାଯାଇଛି । ବିକୁଳି ଆଲୁଅ ଖୁଣ୍ଟ ଚାହିଁ ହସୁଛି । ଯେମିତି ଥକା କରି କହୁଛି, “ତୁ କିଏବେ ! ଏ ସାଙ୍ଗତମା ତୋ’ ଗାଁ ନୁହେଁ । ତୋ’ ବାନ୍ଦରୁଜ୍ଞାମେରାର ନାଁ ବଦଳିଗଲାଣି । ତୁ ତାକୁ ଖୋଜିଲେ ପାଇବୁନି । ତୋ’ ଗୁରେଇର କଳାମୋଟା ଦେହଟା ଗବତାଙ୍ଗ ପାଲଟିଗଲାଣି । କାହାନ୍ତି ତୋ ଛୁଆଗୁଡ଼ାକ ।”

ଆଖି ତରାଟି ଚାହିଁଲା ମିତ୍ୟାସା । ତା’ ଘର ଦୂରରୁ ଦେଖାଯାଉଛି । ସେଇ ଚାଳଘର ଦୂରରେ ଅନେକ ପକାଘର ଆଗରୁ ସେଇ ଘର ସବୁ ନଥିଲା । ନାଲି, ନେଲି ଲୁଗା ପିନ୍ଧି ଧୋଳାଡ଼ିଗୁଡ଼ା ଯାଉଛନ୍ତି । ଚିହ୍ନିପାରୁନି ସେ କାହାକୁ । ଆଜିକୁ ତିରିଶି ବର୍ଷ ତଳେ ସେ ସାଙ୍ଗତମା ଗାଁରୁ ଚାଲିଯାଇଥିଲା କାହିଁ କେତେଦୂର । ଆଜି ଫେରିଛି ସେ । ବାନ୍ଦରୁଜ୍ଞାମେରା ପାଖ ଢିମା ଉପରେ ବସି ଚାହିଁବ ତା’ର ମକା କ୍ଷେତକୁ । ତା’ ଛୁଆମାନେ କାମ କରୁଥିବେ । ଗୁରେଇ ତା’ ପାଖରେ ବସି କହିଚାଲିଥିବ ଏ ତିରିଶି ବର୍ଷର ତା’ର ଅଙ୍ଗେ ନିଭାଇଥିବା କଥା ।

ଘର ଭିତରକୁ ପଶିଲା ମିତ୍ୟାସା । ଚୁଲି ପାଖରେ ବସିଛି ଗୁରେଇ । ଚିହ୍ନି ହେଉନି ତାକୁ । ଗବତାଙ୍ଗ ଖଣ୍ଡିଏ । ଗୁରେଇ ଚାହିଁଲା ମିତ୍ୟାସାକୁ । ତିରିଶି ବର୍ଷ ତଳର ଯବୀନ ଭେଣ୍ଡା । ମିତ୍ୟାସାର ବାଳ ପାଟିଯାଇଥିଲା । ଅଣ୍ଟା ନଇଁ ପଡ଼ିଥିଲା । ଆଖି ଖୋସିହୋଇ ପଶିଯାଇଥିଲା ରହିର ଗାତଟିଏ କରି । ଚୁଲିମୁଣ୍ଡରୁ ଉଠିଲା ଗୁରେଇ । ମିତ୍ୟାସାକୁ ଦେଖି ତା’ର କାନ୍ଦିବାକୁ ମନହେଉଥିଲା । ଏହି ତିରିଶି ବର୍ଷ ଭିତରେ ସେ ତ ସବୁ ହଜାଇଦେଲା କ’ଣ ଆଉ କାନ୍ଦିବ ? ଆଖିରେ ଲୁହ ଥିଲେ ତ ! ତା’ରି ଆଖି ଆଗରେ ତା’ ଶାଶୁ ଶଶୁର ଚାଲିଗଲେ । ଭୋକ ଦାଉରୁ ସମ୍ଭାଳି ପାରିଲେନି ଛୁଆ ତିନିଟା ।

ଜଣ ଜଣ କରି କୁଆଡ଼େ ହଜିଗଲେ ଯେ ଫେରିବାର ବାଟ ଚାହିଁ ଚାହିଁ ବେଳ ଉଛୁର ହୋଇଗଲା । ମୁଣ୍ଡ ମନ୍ତା ମାସକୁ କଳନ୍ତର ନେଇ ନେଇ ବାନ୍ଦରୁଜ୍ଞାମେରା କୁ ତା’ ନାଁରେ କରିପକାଇଲା । ବାନ୍ଦରୁଜ୍ଞାମେରାର ନାଁ ହୋଇଗଲା ଜନାଇକିଆଁ । ଏ କଥା କ’ଣ କହିପାରିବ ଗୁରେଇ ।

ମିତ୍ୟାସା ଫେରିଛି । ଫେରିବ ବୋଲି ମଧ୍ୟ ତା’ର ପରତେ ନଥିଲା । ଗୁରେଇ ଚାହିଁଲା ମିତ୍ୟାସାକୁ । ମିତ୍ୟାସା ଗୁରେଇକୁ । ତିରିଶି ବର୍ଷର ଅକୁହା କଥା ସେହି ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ, ସେହି କ୍ଷଣିକ ଦେଖାରେ ଯେମିତି ଝରଣା ଝର ଝର କରି ଝରିଗଲା ।

‘ବାନ୍ଦରୁଜ୍ଞାମେରା’ ରେ ହସୁଛି ମକାଗଛ ତା’ ଗଣ୍ଡିକୁ ଦୋହଲାଇ । କିଚିରିମିଚିରି କରି ପକ୍ଷୀଗୁଡ଼ା କହୁଛନ୍ତି, ମିତ୍ୟାସା ତୋତେ କିଏ କହିଥିଲା, “ଆମ ଘରକୁ ବନ୍ଧା ପକାଇବାକୁ । ତୁ କ’ଣ ଜାଣିନଥିଲୁ ଏ ଝରଣା, ଏ ମକା ଗଛ ଆମର ବୋଲି । ଆମକୁ ଟିକିଏ ପଛରିଲୁନି ? ଶାଗୁଣାକୁ ଆଣି ଏଠି ରଖେଇଲୁ । ଶାଗୁଣା ତୋ’ ମାଂସକୁ ଝୁଣି ଝୁଣି ଖାଇଲା । ତୋ’ ଛୁଆଁକୁ ଗୋଟା ସୁନ୍ଦା ଗିଳିଦେଲା । ତୋ ଧୋଳାଡ଼ିର ଦେହରୁ ରକ୍ତ ଶୋଷି ନେଲା । ତୁ ଫେରିଆସିଛୁ କ’ଣ ଆମକୁ ଦେଖିବାକୁ । ଆମେ ତ’ ତୋ’ର ‘ବାନ୍ଦରୁଜ୍ଞାମେରା’ ରେ ନାହିଁ । ଆମେ ବନ୍ଦି ହୋଇ ରହିଛୁ ଜନାଇକିଆଁରେ । ଆମେ ମୁକ୍ତ ନାହିଁ । ପୁରାପୁରି ପରାଧିନ । ତୋ ପାଇଁ କି ଗାତ ଗାଇବୁ ? ବରଂ ତୁ ଏଠାରୁ ପଳା । ମିତ୍ୟାସା ଚାହିଁଲା ଗୁରେଇକୁ । ଝରଣାରେ ଝର ଝର ସ୍ଵର ଦୁମ୍ଫୁ ଦୁମ୍ଫୁ ହୋଇ ପଡୁଥିଲା । ନାରୁଥିଲା ତାଣ୍ଡବ ନୃତ୍ୟ । ମିତ୍ୟାସା କେବଠୁ ହଜେଇ ଦେଇଛି ଗୁରେଇକୁ । ଦେଖୁଛି ସାଙ୍ଗତମା ଗାଁ କଡ଼ ପାହାଡ଼ ଖାଁ ଖାଁ । ଗଛରେ ପତ୍ର ନାହିଁ, ଥୁଣ୍ଡା ।



ଗୁରେଇ ଦେଖୁଥିଲା ମିତ୍ୟାସାକୁ । ‘ବାନ୍ଦରୁଜାମେରା’ ର ମିତ୍ୟାସା ଏ ନୁହେଁ । ସାଙ୍ଗତମା ଗାଁର ମିତ୍ୟାସା ଏ ଗାଁରୁ କେବଳ ପଳାଇଗଲାଣି । ରକ୍ତ ଶୋଷିଥିବା ଶାଗୁଣା ତା’କୁ ବାନ୍ଦରୁଜାମେରା ଓ ସାଙ୍ଗତମା ଗାଁରୁ ବିଦା କରିଦେଇଛି ।

ଗୋଟେ ନୁହେଁ, ପଳ ପଳ ଶାଗୁଣା ମାତି ଆସୁଥିଲେ । ପକ୍ଷୀ ମାନଙ୍କର କିଚିରିମିଚିରି ସ୍ଵର କେତେବେଳୁ ରୁପ୍ ହୋଇଯାଇଥିଲା । ଶାଗୁଣା ଗୁଡା ତାଙ୍କ ତାମ୍ବ ଅଣ୍ଟରେ ଖୁମ୍ପି ଝଲୁଥିଲେ ରକ୍ତହୀନ ମିତ୍ୟାସା ଓ ଗୁରେଇର ଶୁଖିଲା ଗବ ଦେହକୁ । ବାନ୍ଦରୁଜାମେରା ଥିଲା କେବଳ ମୃକ ସାକ୍ଷୀ ।

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STOP CHILD LABOUR

ଶିଶୁ ଶ୍ରମିକ ପ୍ରଥା ଏକ ସାମାଜିକ କଳଙ୍କ

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



ଆନ୍ତଃରାଜ୍ୟ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ

*ନରହରି ମିଶ୍ର

ଗୋଟିଏ ରାଜ୍ୟର ଶ୍ରମିକ ଅନ୍ୟ ରାଜ୍ୟକୁ ଯାଇ ସେଠାରେ ଶ୍ରମିକ ଭାବେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କରୁଥିଲେ ସେହି ଶ୍ରମିକକୁ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ କୁହାଯାଏ । ଏହି ଶ୍ରେଣୀର ଶ୍ରମିକ ମାନଙ୍କର ବିଭିନ୍ନ ସମସ୍ୟା ପ୍ରତି ଦୃଷ୍ଟି ଦେଇ ସରକାର ଅନ୍ତଃରାଜ୍ୟ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ (ନିଯୁକ୍ତି ନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରଣ ଓ ସେବା ସର୍ଭିସ) ଆଇନ ୧୯୭୯ ପ୍ରଣୟନ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଯଦି କୌଣସି ଠିକାଦାର ସଂସ୍ଥା ବା ତା'ର ଏଜେଣ୍ଟ ମଧ୍ୟସ୍ଥିତ ଦ୍ୱାରା ବର୍ଷର ଯେକୌଣସି ଦିନରେ ୫ କିମ୍ବା ତା'ଠାରୁ ଅଧିକ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ ନିଯୁକ୍ତି ଦେଇଥାଏ ଏବଂ ବାହାର ରାଜ୍ୟକୁ ଚାଲାଇ କରିଥାଏ, ଏହି ଆଇନ୍ ସେଠାରେ ଲାଗୁ ହୋଇଥାଏ ।

ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକଙ୍କୁ ନିଯୁକ୍ତି ଦେଇଥିବା ସଂସ୍ଥା କିମ୍ବା ଠିକାଦାରଙ୍କ ମୁଖ୍ୟ ଦାୟାଦ୍ୱାରା ରହିଛି । ଠିକାଦାର ମାନେ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ ସଂଗ୍ରହ ନିମନ୍ତେ ଅନ୍ୟ ରାଜ୍ୟକୁ ମୁଖ୍ୟ ନିଯୁକ୍ତିଦାତାଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ ଅନୁମତି ପତ୍ର ଆଣିଲେ ଏବଂ ଯେଉଁ ଜିଲ୍ଲାରୁ ଶ୍ରମିକ ନେବେ ଓ ସେ ଜିଲ୍ଲାର ଶ୍ରମ ଅଧିକାରୀଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ ବିଦ୍ୱିବନ୍ଧ ଭାବେ ଆବେଦନ କ୍ରମେ ଗୋଟିଏ ଲାଇସେନ୍ସ ଆଣିବେ । ଶ୍ରମିକ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଆନ୍ତଃରାଜ୍ୟ କିମ୍ବା ଅନ୍ୟ ରାଜ୍ୟକୁ ନେବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ଶ୍ରମିକଙ୍କ ଗୋଟିଏ ଫଟୋ ସହ ପାସପୋର୍ଟ ଶ୍ରମିକଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରଦାନ କରିବେ । ସେଥିରେ ଶ୍ରମିକଟି କେଉଁଠାରୁ କେଉଁଠିକୁ ଯାଉଛି, କେତେଦିନ ପାଇଁ ଯାଉଛି, କେଉଁ ପ୍ରକାର, କାମ କରିବ, କେତେ ମଜୁରୀ ମିଳିବ, ସ୍ଥାନ ଚ୍ୟୁତି ଭରା ଓ ଯାତାୟତ ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ ବହନ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ବିଷୟରେ ସ୍ପଷ୍ଟ ଭାବରେ ଲେଖା ହେବା ଜରୁରୀ ହୋଇଥାଏ ।

ଯଦି ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକଟିଏ ଲାଇସେନ୍ସ ଠିକାଦାର ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ବାହାର ରାଜ୍ୟକୁ ଯାଇ ସେଠାରେ ଆକସ୍ମିକ ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ମୁଖରେ ପଡେ, ତେବେ ଏହି ଆଇନରେ ଥିବା ସର୍ଭ ମୃତାବକ ମୃତ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିର ପରିବାରକୁ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ଓ କ୍ଷତିପୂରଣ ମିଳିବ । ଏହାଛଡା ଶ୍ରମିକ କ୍ଷତିପୂରଣ ଆଇନ ୧୯୭୩ ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ମାଲିକଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ କ୍ଷତିପୂରଣ ପାଇବା ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ଅଛି । ମୃତ ଶ୍ରମିକଙ୍କ ପରିବାର ଏହି ଆଇନ ଅନୁସାରେ ତାଙ୍କ ନିଜ ରାଜ୍ୟରେ କିମ୍ବା କାମ କରୁଥିବା ରାଜ୍ୟରେ ଶ୍ରମିକଙ୍କ କ୍ଷତିପୂରଣ ଆଇନ ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ଆବେଦନ କରିପାରିବେ । ଆମ ରାଜ୍ୟରେ ଯୁଗ୍ମଶ୍ରମ ଆୟୁକ୍ତ, ଉପଶ୍ରମ ଆୟୁକ୍ତ, ସହକାରୀ ଶ୍ରମ ଆୟୁକ୍ତ ଏବଂ ଅତିରିକ୍ତ ଜିଲ୍ଲା ମାଜିଷ୍ଟ୍ରେଟ୍ ମାନେ ଶ୍ରମିକ କ୍ଷତିପୂରଣ କମିଶନର ଭାବେ ଏହି ମାମଲା ଗୁଡିକ ବିଚାର କରି କ୍ଷତିପୂରଣ ପ୍ରଦାନ ନିମନ୍ତେ ଆଦେଶ ଦେଇପାରିବେ ।

ଆମ ରାଜ୍ୟରେ ଲୋକ ମାନଙ୍କୁ କାମଧରା ଯୋଗାଇ ଦେବା ପାଇଁ ଶ୍ରମ ବିଭାଗରେ କୌଣସି ଯୋଜନା ନାହିଁ । କେବଳ ଶ୍ରମିକ ମାନଙ୍କ ଶ୍ରମ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଅସୁବିଧା ହେଲେ ଶ୍ରମ ବିଭାଗ ସେଥିରେ ହସ୍ତକ୍ଷେପ କରିବ ।

ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଏହି ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ ମାନଙ୍କ ସମସ୍ୟା ବହୁତ । ଓଡ଼ିଶାରୁ ଅଧିକାଂଶ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ ଲାଇସେନ୍ସ ପ୍ରାପ୍ତ ଠିକାଦାର ମାନଙ୍କ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ନିଯୁକ୍ତ ହୋଇ ଲୁଚିଛନ୍ତି ଅଧିକ ରୋଜଗାର ଆଶାରେ ଅନ୍ୟ ରାଜ୍ୟକୁ ଯାଇ କାମ କରୁଛନ୍ତି । ଲାଇସେନ୍ସ ନପାଇଥିଲା ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିମାନଙ୍କର ଦଲାଲି କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଯୋଗୁଁ ଅନେକ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ ଅନ୍ୟ ରାଜ୍ୟକୁ ଯାଇ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ପ୍ରକାର ଦୁଃଖ, କଷ୍ଟ ଓ ଯନ୍ତ୍ରଣା ଭୋଗ କରୁଛନ୍ତି । ସେମାନେ ସେଠାରେ ଦାଦନ ଶ୍ରମିକ ହିସାବରେ ବହୁ ନିର୍ଯାତନାର ଶିକାର ହେଉଛନ୍ତି । ଦଲାଲ ମାନେ ଅନ୍ୟରାଜ୍ୟର ନିଯୁକ୍ତିଦାତାଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ ଅଗ୍ରମ ଟଙ୍କା ନେଇଯାଉଛନ୍ତି ଏବଂ ବୋକା, ଅପାଠୁଆ, ଅଜ୍ଞ ଶ୍ରମିକ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଠକି ଦେଉଛନ୍ତି । ଦଲାଲ ପଇସା ନେଇ ଚାଲିଯାଉଛନ୍ତି । ବିଚରା ଦାଦନ ଶ୍ରମିକଟି ନିଯୁକ୍ତିଦାତାଙ୍କ ହାତରେ ଶୋଷଣର ଶିକାର ହେଉଛି । ନାନା ଅନ୍ୟାୟ, ଅତ୍ୟାଚାର ଭୋଗିବାକୁ ହେଉଛି । ନିଜ ଭିତ୍ତିପାତ ଛାଡି ଅଧିକ ଅର୍ଥ ରୋଜଗାର ପ୍ରଲୋଭନରେ ପଡି ବାହାର ରାଜ୍ୟରେ ଅକଥନାୟ ଅତ୍ୟାଚାର ର ସମ୍ମୁଖୀନ ହେଉଛି ।

ଆମ ରାଜ୍ୟର ବଲାଙ୍ଗିର, କଳାହାଣ୍ଡି, ନୂଆପଡା, ବରଗଡ, ଗଞ୍ଜାମ, ଗଜପତି ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ଜିଲ୍ଲାରୁ ଅଧିକ ସଂଖ୍ୟାରେ ଦାଦନ ଶ୍ରମିକ ବାହାର ରାଜ୍ୟକୁ ଯାଇ ଦଲାଲ ଓ ନିଯୁକ୍ତି ଦାତାଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା ଶୋଷଣର ଶିକାର ହେଉଛନ୍ତି । ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ଦିନ ଖବର କାଗଜ ବୈଦୁତିକ ଗଣମାଧ୍ୟମ ମାନଙ୍କରେ ଏହିପରି ନିର୍ଯାତିତ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକଙ୍କର କରୁଣା କାହାଣୀ ପଢିବାକୁ ଓ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ମିଳୁଛି ।

ଅଧିକାଂଶ ସମୟରେ ଦେଖାଯାଇଛି ଯେ ଅପାଠୁଆ ଶ୍ରମିକ ମାନେ ହିଁ ବେଶି ନିର୍ଯାତନା ଭୋଗ କରୁଛନ୍ତି । କାରଣ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଅଜ୍ଞତାରୁ ଦଲାଲ ମାନେ ଫାଇଦା ଉଠାଉଛନ୍ତି । ମାତ୍ର ଅଭାବି ବେରୋଜଗାରୀ ଶ୍ରମିକଟିଏ ସର୍ବସ୍ୱ ହରେଇ ଦୁଃଖ-ଯନ୍ତ୍ରଣାରେ ସମୟ ଅତିବାହିତ କରୁଛି କିମ୍ବା ମୃତ୍ୟୁବରଣ କରୁଛି । ବେଆଇନ୍ ଦଲାଲ ଓ ନିଯୁକ୍ତିଦାତା ଶ୍ରମିକଙ୍କ ପଇସାରେ ମଧୁଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକାରେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ରହୁଛନ୍ତି । ଏଣେ ନିଃସହାୟ ଶ୍ରମିକଟିର ଦୁଃଖ-ଯନ୍ତ୍ରଣା ବଢିବାରେ ଲାଗିଛି ।



ଦାଦନ ଶ୍ରମିକ ମାନଙ୍କର ଏବେ ସବୁ ସମସ୍ୟାକୁ ଉପଲକ୍ଷ କରି ଆମ ରାଜ୍ୟ ସରକାର ସେମାନଙ୍କ ହିତ ପାଇଁ ବହୁବିଧ ପଦକ୍ଷେପ ମାନ ନେଇଛନ୍ତି । ଯଥା :-

୧. ଆନ୍ତର୍ଜାତୀୟ ଶ୍ରମ ସଂଗଠନ ସହାୟତାରେ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକଙ୍କ ମଙ୍ଗଳ ନିମନ୍ତେ ୨୦୧୩ ମସିହାରେ ବଲାଙ୍ଗୀର ଜିଲ୍ଲାରେ ଏକ ପାଇଲଟ ପ୍ରୋଜେକ୍ଟ କରାଯାଇଥିଲା । ଏହି ଜିଲ୍ଲା ଅନ୍ତର୍ଭୁକ୍ତ ଗ୍ରାମପଞ୍ଚାୟତ ସ୍ତରରେ ସଚେତନତା ଶିବିର ଆୟୋଜନ କରାଯାଇଥିଲା । ଜିଲ୍ଲାସ୍ତରୀୟ ଅନ୍ୟ ବିଭାଗ ଗୁଡ଼ିକର ଅଧିକାରୀ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ ଏକ ସମନ୍ୱୟ ବୈଠକ ଅନୁଷ୍ଠିତ ହୋଇଥିଲା । ଗ୍ରାମପଞ୍ଚାୟତ ସ୍ତରରେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କରୁଥିବା ପଞ୍ଚାୟତ ଅଧିକାରୀ ମାନଙ୍କର ଏକ ଜିଲ୍ଲାସ୍ତରୀୟ ପ୍ରଶିକ୍ଷଣ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ବଲାଙ୍ଗୀର ଠାରେ ଆୟୋଜନ କରାଯାଇଥିଲା । ଏଥି ସହିତ ରାଜ୍ୟ ସ୍ତରରେ ପ୍ରବର୍ତ୍ତନ ଅଧିକାରୀଙ୍କ ନିମନ୍ତେ ଏକ ପ୍ରଶିକ୍ଷଣ ଶିବିର ଓ ଆଲୋଚନା ଚକ୍ର ଅନୁଷ୍ଠିତ ହୋଇଥିଲା ।

୨. ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକଙ୍କ ସର୍ତ୍ତେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ରାଜ୍ୟ ଶ୍ରମ ସଂସ୍ଥାନକୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ଆର୍ଥିକ ସହାୟତା ଯୋଗାଇ ଦିଆଯାଇଛି । ଏହି ସର୍ତ୍ତେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ବଲାଙ୍ଗୀର ଜିଲ୍ଲାରେ ଶେଷ ହୋଇଅଛି ଏବଂ ଅନ୍ୟ ଜିଲ୍ଲାର ସର୍ତ୍ତେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ହାତକୁ ନିଆଯାଇଛି ।

୩. ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ ମାନଙ୍କ କଲ୍ୟାଣ ପାଇଁ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର ଓ ଆନ୍ଧ୍ର ସରକାର ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଏକ ବୁଝାମଣା ପତ୍ର ସ୍ୱାକ୍ଷର ହୋଇଛି । ୨୦୧୩ ଏବଂ ୨୦୧୪ ବର୍ଷରେ ଆନ୍ଧ୍ରପ୍ରଦେଶ ଓ ତେଲେଙ୍ଗାନା ଶ୍ରମ ବିଭାଗ ଅଧିକାରୀ ଓ ଇଜାଭାଟି ମାଲିକଙ୍କ ସହ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଶ୍ରମ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶାଳୟର ଅଧିକାରୀ ଏବଂ ବଲାଙ୍ଗୀର, ନୂଆପଡ଼ା ଓ କଳାହାଣ୍ଡି ଜିଲ୍ଲା ପ୍ରଶାସନ ଅଧିକାରୀଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ ବଲାଙ୍ଗୀର ଠାରେ ଏକ ବୈଠକ ମଧ୍ୟ ବସିଥିଲା ।

୪. ଜିଲ୍ଲା ମାନଙ୍କରେ ବ୍ୟାପକ ସଚେତନତା କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମ ନିମନ୍ତେ ୧୧ଟି ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ ପ୍ରବଣ ଜିଲ୍ଲାମାନଙ୍କର ଜିଲ୍ଲାପାଳ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଆର୍ଥିକ ସହାୟତା ରାଶି ଯୋଗାଇ ଦିଆଯାଇଅଛି ।

୫. ୨୦୧୪-୧୫ ଆର୍ଥିକ ବର୍ଷରେ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକଙ୍କ ହିତ ପାଇଁ ଏକ ତିନି ବର୍ଷିଆ ଆକୃନ୍ ପ୍ଲାନ ସରକାର ଅନୁମୋଦନ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଏହି ବର୍ଷ ୫ କୋଟି ଟଙ୍କା ବ୍ୟୟ ଅଟକଳ କରାଯାଇଥିଲା ଏବଂ ଏହି ଟଙ୍କା ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ ମାନଙ୍କର ସୁରକ୍ଷା ଓ ନିରାପତ୍ତା ପାଇଁ ଆକୃନ୍ ପ୍ଲାନ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ କରାଯାଇଅଛି ।

୬. ୨୦୧୩-୧୪ ଆର୍ଥିକ ବର୍ଷରେ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକଙ୍କ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ପାଠପଢ଼ା ନିମନ୍ତେ ରାଜ୍ୟ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ ଏବଂ ଗଣଶିକ୍ଷା ବିଭାଗ ତରଫରୁ ୧୧୨ ଟି ରତ୍ନକାଳୀନ ଛାତ୍ରାବାସ ଖୋଲାଯାଇଥିଲା । ୨୦୧୪-୧୫ ଆର୍ଥିକ ବର୍ଷରେ ଏଥିପାଇଁ ମଧ୍ୟ ଆର୍ଥିକ ସହାୟତା ପ୍ରଦାନ କରାଯାଇଅଛି ।

୭. ୨୦୧୫-୧୬ ବର୍ଷର ଆକୃନ୍ ପ୍ଲାନ ମଧ୍ୟ ସରକାର ସ୍ୱୀକୃତି ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି । ଏଥିପାଇଁ ବ୍ୟୟ ଅଟକଳ ହୋଇଛି ୫ କୋଟି ୯୪ ଲକ୍ଷ ଟଙ୍କା ଏବଂ ଏହି ଅର୍ଥ ଶ୍ରମ କମିଶନରଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରଦାନ କରାଯାଇଅଛି ।

୮. ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକଙ୍କ ସହାୟତା ପାଇଁ ଏକ ନିଃଶୁଳ୍କ ସହାୟତା ନମ୍ବର ୧୫୫୩୬୮ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟହ ସକାଳ ୬ ଘଣ୍ଟା ଠାରୁ ରାତ୍ର ୧୦ ଘଣ୍ଟା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଶ୍ରମ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶାଳୟରେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କରୁଅଛି । ଏହି ହେଲ୍ପଲାଇନ୍ ପ୍ରସାର / ପ୍ରଚାର ପାଇଁ ସମସ୍ତ ଜିଲ୍ଲାପାଳ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଆର୍ଥିକ ରାଶି ପ୍ରଦାନ କରାଯାଇଅଛି ।

୯. ୧୧ ଟି ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ ପ୍ରବଣ ଜିଲ୍ଲାରେ ମହାତ୍ମା ଗାନ୍ଧି ଜାତୀୟ ନିଷ୍ଠୁତ ଗ୍ରାମୀଣ କର୍ମଯୋଗାଣ ଯୋଜନାରେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଦିବସକୁ ୧୦୦ ଦିନରୁ ୧୫୦ ଦିନକୁ ବୃଦ୍ଧି କରାଯାଇଛି ।

୧୦. ରାଜ୍ୟ ସରକାରଙ୍କ ନିଷ୍ପତ୍ତି ଆନୁଯାୟୀ ଓଡ଼ିଶା କୋଠାବାଡ଼ି ଓ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ନିର୍ମାଣ ଶ୍ରମିକ କଲ୍ୟାଣ ବୋର୍ଡ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ନିର୍ମାଣ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟରତ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ହିତାଧିକାରୀ ଭାବେ ପଞ୍ଜିକୃତ କରି ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଯୋଜନା ଅନ୍ତର୍ଗତ ଆର୍ଥିକ ସହାୟତା ପ୍ରଦାନ କରାଯାଇଅଛି ।

୧୧. ବେଆଇନି ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ ଚାଲାଣ ରୋକିବାକୁ ସମସ୍ତ ଜିଲ୍ଲାପାଳ, ଆରକ୍ଷା ଅଧିକାରୀ ଓ ଜିଲ୍ଲା ଶ୍ରମ ଅଧିକାରୀ ମାନଙ୍କୁ କଡ଼ା ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶ ପ୍ରଦାନ କରାଯାଇଅଛି । ବସ୍ ରହଣୀ ପ୍ଲାନ, ରେଳ ଷ୍ଟେସନ୍ ଓ ଗ୍ରାମ୍ୟ ହାଟ ବା ବଜାର ମାନଙ୍କରେ ପୋଲିସ୍ ତରଫରୁ ସତର୍କତା କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ହାତକୁ ନିଆଯାଇଅଛି ।



ଆନ୍ତଃରାଜ୍ୟ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ ଆଇନ୍ ୧୯୭୯ ର ଧାରା ୨୫ ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ଉକ୍ତ ଆଇନ୍‌ରେ ଖିଲାପକାରୀ ଠିକାଦାର ମାନଙ୍କ ବିରୁଦ୍ଧରେ ସର୍ବାଧିକ ଏକ ବର୍ଷ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଜେଲ୍ ଦଣ୍ଡ ଏବଂ ୧୦୦୦ ଟଙ୍କା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଜୋରିମାନା ଅଥବା ଉଭୟ ଦଣ୍ଡ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ରହିଛି । ଏଥି ସହିତ ଧାରାବାହିକ ଭାବେ ଉକ୍ତ ଆଇନର ଖିଲାପକାରୀଙ୍କ ବିରୁଦ୍ଧରେ ଦୈନିକ ୧୦୦ ଟଙ୍କା ଜୋରିମାନା ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ରହିଛି ।

ଏଥିପାଇଁ ଜନ ସଚେତନତା ଜରୁରୀ ଅଟେ ।

*ରାଜ୍ୟ ଶ୍ରମ ବିଭାଗ, ସେକ୍ରେଟାରିଏଟ୍, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର

ଶ୍ରମ ଦର୍ପଣ ପାଇଁ ଲେଖା ଆବଶ୍ୟକ....

ରାଜ୍ୟ ଶ୍ରମ ସଂସ୍ଥାନ, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର ଆନୁକୁଲ୍ୟରେ ପ୍ରକାଶିତ ହେଉଥିବା ତ୍ରିମାସିକ ପତ୍ରିକା ଶ୍ରମ ଦର୍ପଣ ପାଇଁ ଲେଖକ/ଲେଖିକାମାନଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ ନିଜସ୍ୱ ଲେଖା ଆବଶ୍ୟକ କରୁଛି । ଶ୍ରମ ଆଇନ ସଂପର୍କିତ ଲେଖା, ଆଇନର ବିଶ୍ଳେଷଣ ସମ୍ପର୍କିତ ଲେଖା ଏଥିରେ ପ୍ରକାଶିତ ହେବ । ଯାହା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଅପ୍ରକାଶିତ ହୋଇଥିବା ଆବଶ୍ୟକ । ହାତଲେଖା କିମ୍ବା ଡିଟିପି ହୋଇଥିବା ଲେଖା ସହିତ ଲେଖକ / ଲେଖିକାଙ୍କର ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଠିକଣା ଓ ମୋବାଇଲ ନମ୍ବର ଆଇ ନିମ୍ନ ଠିକଣାରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିବା ଆବଶ୍ୟକ । ଚୟନ ହୋଇଥିବା ଲେଖା ଗୁଡ଼ିକ ପ୍ରକାଶ ପାଇବା ପରେ ଲେଖା ବାବଦକୁ ଲେଖକ/ଲେଖିକାଙ୍କୁ ଟ ୫୦୦୦ (ପାଞ୍ଚଶହ ଟଙ୍କା) ପାରିତୋଷିକ ଦେୟ ଟେକ୍ ଆକାରରେ ପ୍ରଦାନ କରାଯିବ ।

ସର୍ତ୍ତାବଳୀ

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

ରାଜ୍ୟ ଶ୍ରମ ସଂସ୍ଥାନ, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର

ଜନପଥ, ଖାରବେଳ ନଗର, ଯୁନିଟ୍-୩
 ଗୁରୁଦ୍ୱାରା ପାର୍କ, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର-୭୫୧୦୦୧
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ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ ସମ୍ପର୍କୀତ ତଥ୍ୟ

*ଭେଙ୍କଟେଶ୍ୱର ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ

ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ କାହାକୁ କୁହାଯାଏ ?

୧. ଯେଉଁ ଶ୍ରମିକମାନେ ନିଜ ଭିତାମାଟି ଛାଡି ନିଜ ଜିଲ୍ଲାରୁ ଅନ୍ୟ ଜିଲ୍ଲାକୁ ଗ୍ରାମରୁ ସହରକୁ, ରାଜ୍ୟରୁ ଅନ୍ୟ ରାଜ୍ୟକୁ, ଗୋଟିଏ ଦେଶରୁ ଆଉ ଗୋଟିଏ ଦେଶକୁ ନିଜ ଇଚ୍ଛାରେ ଗମନ କଲେ ଆମେ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ କହୁ ।

ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ କେଉଁ ପରିସ୍ଥିତିରେ ନିଜ ଗ୍ରାମକୁ ଛାଡି ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ ହୁଅନ୍ତି ?

ପ୍ରାକୃତିକ ବିପର୍ଯ୍ୟୟ ଯଥା : ମରୁଡି, ବନ୍ୟା କିମ୍ବା ନିଜ ଗ୍ରାମ ନିକଟରେ କାମ ନମିଳିଲେ, ରଣ ମୁକ୍ତ ହେବାକୁ ହେଲେ, ଅଧିକ ରୋଜଗାର ପାଇଁ ଶ୍ରମିକ ମାନେ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ ହୁଅନ୍ତି ।

ପ୍ରବାସୀ ହେବା ସମୟ

ପ୍ରବାସୀ ହେବା ସମୟ ସାଧାରଣତଃ ଖରିଫ ଋତୁ ପରେ ହୋଇଥାଏ କିନ୍ତୁ ଏହି ପ୍ରବାସନ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ନୂଆଖାଇ ପରେ ହୋଇଥାଏ । ଏହି ସମୟରେ ଇଚ୍ଛାଭାବିତ ମାଲିକ ମାନଙ୍କର ପ୍ରତିନିଧି (Agent) କିମ୍ବା ଶ୍ରମିକଙ୍କ ଠିକାଦାର (Contractor) ଜିଲ୍ଲାର ବିଭିନ୍ନ ସ୍ଥାନରେ ପହଞ୍ଚି ଶ୍ରମିକମାନଙ୍କୁ ୫୦୦୦ ଓ ତତ୍ତୁଧ ଟଙ୍କା ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଏକ ମୋଟା ପାଉଣା ଦେଇ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ବାହାରର ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଯାଗାରେ କାମ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ଶ୍ରମିକ ସଂଗ୍ରହ କରିଥାନ୍ତି । ୧୯୭୯ ଆନ୍ତର୍ଜାତିକ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ ନିୟମରେ ଲେଖାଅଛି ଯେ, ଶ୍ରମିକମାନେ ବିନା ଫେରସ୍ତ ଭିତ୍ତିରେ ସ୍ଥାନାନ୍ତର ଭରା, ମାସିକ ମଜୁରୀର ୩୫ କିମ୍ବା ୫୦ ଭାଗ ପାଇବେ ଓ ଏହା ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକଙ୍କ ମଜୁରୀରୁ କଟାଯିବ ନାହିଁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଅଗ୍ରାମ ଆକାର ଟଙ୍କା ଦିଆଯାଇ ମଜୁରୀରୁ କଟାଯାଉଛି । ଏହାଛଡା ମୌଖିକ ଭାବରେ ଅଧିକ ମଜୁରୀ ପାଇବା ସୂଚନା ଦିଅନ୍ତି । ଅଗ୍ରାମ ଟଙ୍କା ମୌଖିକ ପ୍ରତିଶ୍ରୁତି ପାଇ ଶ୍ରମିକ ମାନେ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟାବିତ ହୋଇ ନିଜ ରାଜ୍ୟ ବାହାରକୁ ଯିବା ପାଇଁ ରାଜି ହୁଅନ୍ତି ।

କାହା ଦ୍ୱାରା ପ୍ରବାସୀ ହୁଅନ୍ତି ।

ସ୍ୱଇଚ୍ଛାରେ, କୌଣସି ବନ୍ଧୁଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ ସୂଚନା ପ୍ରାପ୍ତ ହୋଇ କିମ୍ବା ମାଲିକଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତିନିଧି କିମ୍ବା ଦଲାଲ, ଶ୍ରମିକଙ୍କ ଠାକାଦାରଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା ପ୍ରବାସୀ ହୁଅନ୍ତି । ଠାକାଦାରଙ୍କ ଜରିଆରେ ଯାଉଥିବା ଶ୍ରମିକଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଅନ୍ତଃରାଜ୍ୟ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ (ନିୟୁକ୍ତ ନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରଣ ଓ ସେବା ସର୍ଭି) ଆଇନ ୧୯୭୯ ଉପଯୁକ୍ତ ।

ପ୍ରବାସନର କାରଣ :-

- କ) ନିଜ ଗ୍ରାମ ନିକଟରେ କାମ ନମିଳିଲେ
- ଖ) ନିଜ ଅଞ୍ଚଳରେ ହୋଇଥିବା ସୁଖିବା ପାଇଁ ।
- ଗ) ବାହାଘର, ପର୍ବପର୍ବାଣୀ ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ ବହନ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ।
- ଘ) ମରୁଡି, ବନ୍ୟା ଭଳି ପ୍ରାକୃତିକ ବିପର୍ଯ୍ୟୟ ଘଟିଲେ ରୋଜଗାର ପାଇଁ ମଜୁରିଆ ମାନେ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ହୁଅନ୍ତି ।
- ଙ) ନିଜ ଗ୍ରାମ ଅପେକ୍ଷା ଅନ୍ୟ ଠାରେ ଅଧିକ ମଜୁରୀ ପାଇବା ପାଇଁ
- ଚ) ଜମିହାନ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି
- ଛ) କ୍ଷୁଦ୍ର ପରିମାଣର ଋଷଜମି ରହିଥିବା ହେତୁ
- ଜ) ଋଷ ଜମି ପାଇଁ ସ୍ୱଳ୍ପ ପରିମାଣର ଜଳସେଚନର ସୁବିଧା

ପ୍ରବାସୀ ମାନଙ୍କ ଉତ୍ତର ସମସ୍ୟା ଓ ତାର ପ୍ରତିକାର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା

ସାଧାରଣତଃ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଥିବା ଜିଲ୍ଲାମାନଙ୍କର ଶ୍ରମିକମାନେ ରାଜ୍ୟବାହାର ଆନ୍ତ୍ରପ୍ରଦେଶର ଚିତ୍ତୋର, ନେଲୁର, ରଙ୍ଗାରେଡି ଜିଲ୍ଲା,



ବିଜୟନଗର, ଖାଇକାଗ, ହାଇଦ୍ରାବାଦ, କରିମନଗର, ସିକନ୍ଦରାବାଦର ଇଟାଭାଟିରେ ଯାଇ କାମ କରନ୍ତି ।

ଏହାଛଡା ରାଜ୍ୟବାହାରେ ସୁରଟ, ନାଗପୁର, ରାଇପୁରକୁ ନିର୍ମାଣ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ଯାଆନ୍ତି ।

ସେମାନେ ରାଜ୍ୟ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଥିବା ସହରମାନଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟ କଟକ, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର, ବ୍ରହ୍ମପୁର, ବରପାଲି, ଝାରସୁଗୁଡା ଇତ୍ୟାଦିରେ କାମ କରନ୍ତି ।

ସମସ୍ୟା

. ପ୍ରଥମତଃ ଦାଦନ ଖଟି ଯାଉଥିବା ଶ୍ରମିକମାନେ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଦାଦନ ଶ୍ରମିକ ଅଧିକାର ଓ ସମସ୍ୟାର ସମାଧାନ ପାଇଁ ଯେଉଁ ଆଇନଗତ ସୁରକ୍ଷା ଅଛି ତାହା ବିଷୟରେ ସେମାନେ ଅଭିଜ୍ଞତ ।

. ଶ୍ରମିକଙ୍କୁ ନେବା ସମୟରେ ଠିକାଦାର, ଗ୍ରାମରେ ଥିବା ରେଜିଷ୍ଟରରେ ରୁକ୍ତିପତ୍ର ସ୍ୱାକ୍ଷର କରିବା ଉଚିତ୍ । ଯେଉଁଥିରେ କି ସରପଞ୍ଚ କିମ୍ବା ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚନେତ୍ରଙ୍କ ଦସ୍ତଖତ ରହିବା ଦରକାର କିନ୍ତୁ ଏହାକୁ ପରିତ୍ୟାଗ କରାଯାଉଛି ।

. ଶ୍ରମିକଙ୍କୁ ଚାଲାଣ କରୁଥିବା ଠିକାଦାରଙ୍କ ଗୋଟିଏ ଲାଇସେନ୍ସ ଥିବା ନିହାତି ଆବଶ୍ୟକ । କିନ୍ତୁ ବିନା ଲାଇସେନ୍ସରେ ଠିକାଦାରମାନେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଶ୍ରମିକଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ ଯାଆନ୍ତି ।

. ଠିକାଦାରଙ୍କଠାରୁ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ଶ୍ରମିକ ପ୍ରବାସ ସଂପର୍କିତ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ବିବରଣୀ ସହିତ ଗୋଟିଏ ପରିଚୟ ପତ୍ର ପାଇବା ଆବଶ୍ୟକ । ଏହା କିନ୍ତୁ ଠିକାଦାର ନେଇ ନଥାନ୍ତି ।

. ଜିଲ୍ଲା ଶ୍ରମ ଅଧିକାରୀଙ୍କ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟାଳୟରେ ଥିବା ରେଜିଷ୍ଟରରେ ପ୍ରବାସ ସଂପର୍କିତ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ବିବରଣୀ ଉଲ୍ଲେଖ କରିବା କଥା କିନ୍ତୁ ତାହା ଜାଣନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । ଠିକାଦାର ଚାଲାଣ କରୁଥିବା ବହୁ ଶ୍ରମିକମାନଙ୍କ ଯାଗାରେ ଖୁବ୍ କମ୍ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ନାମ ରେଜିଷ୍ଟ୍ରିଭୁକ୍ତ କରନ୍ତି ।

. ଶ୍ରମିକଙ୍କ ଯାତାୟତ ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ ନିଜ ଗ୍ରାମରୁ କର୍ମସ୍ଥଳକୁ ଯିବା ଓ ଫେରିବା ଏବଂ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଖାଇବା ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ ଠିକାଦାର ବହନ କରିବେ ଏବଂ ଏହା ଶ୍ରମିକମାନଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ କର୍ମସ୍ଥଳରେ ମଜୁରିରୁ କଟାଯାଇ ପାରିବ ନାହିଁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଏହା କର୍ମସ୍ଥଳରେ ମଜୁରିରୁ କଟାଯାଉଛି ।

. ଶ୍ରମିକମାନେ କର୍ମସ୍ଥଳରେ ରହିବାପାଇଁ ଠିକାଦାର ସବୁ ସୁବିଧା ଥିବା ଉପଯୁକ୍ତ ବାସଗୃହ ଯୋଗାଇ ଦେବେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଶ୍ରମିକମାନେ ଗତବ୍ୟ ସ୍ଥଳରେ ଅପରିଷ୍କାର ବସ୍ତିରେ ରହନ୍ତି ଓ ରୋଗାକ୍ରାନ୍ତ ହୁଅନ୍ତି ।

. କର୍ମସ୍ଥଳରେ ମାଲିକ ଶୀତ ଦିନରେ ଶୀତବସ୍ତ୍ର ଯୋଗାଇ ଦେବା କଥା । କିନ୍ତୁ ଏହାକୁ ମାଲିକ ,ମାନେ ମାନନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ ।

. ଶ୍ରମିକର ଦେହ ଅସୁସ୍ଥ କିମ୍ବା ଦୁର୍ଘଟଣା ଘଟିଲେ, ଚିକିତ୍ସା ପାଇଁ ସମସ୍ତ ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ ଠିକାଦାର ବହନ କରିବା କଥା । କିନ୍ତୁ ଏହା ହୁଏ ନାହିଁ ।

. କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଔଷଧ ଓ ଉପକରଣମାନ ଥାଇ ଗୋଟିଏ ପ୍ରାଥମିକ ଚିକିତ୍ସା ବାକ୍ ରହିବ । ଶ୍ରମିକଙ୍କର କୌଣସି ଆଘାତ ଘଟିଲେ ତାହାର ଉପଚାର ପାଇଁ ଏହା ବ୍ୟବହୃତ ହେବ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଏହା କରାଯାଏ ନାହିଁ ।

. ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଓ ପୁରୁଷ ଶ୍ରମିକ ସମାନ କାମ ପାଇଁ ସମାନ ମଜୁରି ପାଇବେ । କିନ୍ତୁ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଏହାର ପ୍ରଭେଦ ରହିଥାଏ ।

. ରୁକ୍ତି ଅନୁସାରେ ମଜୁରି ପ୍ରଦାନ କରିବା ଆବଶ୍ୟକ । ଏହା ଦୈନିକ, ସାପ୍ତାହିକ, ପାଖିକ କିମ୍ବା ମାସିକ ଭିତ୍ତିରେ ଦିଆଯିବା ଉଚିତ୍ । ଶ୍ରମିକ ଯେପରି ନିୟମିତ ଭାବେ ମଜୁରି ପାଇବ ତାହା ଠିକାଦାର ନିଶ୍ଚିତ କରିବା ଦରକାର । କିନ୍ତୁ ଏହାର ବିଚ୍ୟୁତି ଘଟୁଛି ।

. ଶୋଷଣର ଶୀକାର ହେଲେ ସଙ୍ଗେ ସଙ୍ଗେ ଜିଲ୍ଲା ଶ୍ରମ ଅଧିକାରୀଙ୍କ ନିକଟରେ ଅଭିଯୋଗ ଦାଖଲ କରିବାକୁ ହେବ । ଅନେକ ଶ୍ରମିକ ଶୋଷଣର ଶୀକାର ହୁଅନ୍ତି ଓ ଗ୍ରାମକୁ ଫେରିଲା ପରେ ଅଭିଯୋଗ କରନ୍ତି ।

. ଗର୍ଭାବସ୍ଥାର ଶେଷ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟାୟରେ ଜଣେ ମହିଳା ଶ୍ରମିକଙ୍କୁ ଦିନକୁ ଦୁଇଥର ବିଶ୍ରାମ ସମୟ ଦିଆଯିବ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଏହାକୁ ମାନୁ ନାହାନ୍ତି ।

ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ

. ଯଦି ଜଣେ ଶ୍ରମିକର କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଦୁର୍ଘଟଣା ଜନିତ ଆଘାତ କିମ୍ବା ରୋଗହେତୁ ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ହୋଇଯାଏ ତେବେ ତାର ସମ୍ପର୍କୀୟମାନେ କ୍ଷତିପୂରଣ ପାଇବେ । ଏହା ମଧ୍ୟ ପୂରଣ କରାଯାଉ ନାହିଁ ।



. ଠିକାଦାର କିମ୍ବା ମାଲିକଙ୍କ ଆଇନ ଅମାନ୍ୟ ପାଇଁ ଜେଲ ଦଣ୍ଡର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ଅଛି । କିନ୍ତୁ ସମସ୍ୟା ଗୁଡ଼ିକୁ ଲିଖିତ ଆକାରରେ ଶ୍ରମ ଅଧିକାରୀଙ୍କୁ ଜଣାଯାଏ ନାହିଁ ।

ସରକାରଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକାରୀ ହେଉଥିବା ସାମାଜିକ ସୁରକ୍ଷା ଯୋଜନା ଗୁଡ଼ିକ ହେଉଥିବା ପ୍ରବାସୀଙ୍କୁ ଅଟକାଇ ପାରୁଛି । ତା'ର ଏକ ବିବରଣୀ ନିମ୍ନରେ ଲେଖାଗଲା ।

ମହାତ୍ମାଗାନ୍ଧୀ ଜାତୀୟ ଗ୍ରାମୀଣ ନିର୍ବିତ କର୍ମନିଯୁକ୍ତି ଯୋଜନା (MGNREGS) :

ଏହି ଯୋଜନା ମୁଖ୍ୟତଃ ଗ୍ରାମାଞ୍ଚଳର ଦରିଦ୍ରତମ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ଖାଦ୍ୟ ନିରାପତ୍ତା ସହିତ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ସାମାଜିକ ଓ ଆର୍ଥିକ ବିକାଶ ଏବଂ କାମଧନ୍ୟା ଅନ୍ୱେଷଣରେ ଲୋକେ ଭିତ୍ତିପାତ୍ର ହୋଇ ଯେପରି ଚାଲିନଯାଆନ୍ତି ତାହାକୁ ଆଖି ଆଗରେ ରଖି ଚାଲିଛି । ଏହା ଏକ ବିଶାଳ ଓ ଲୋକାଭିମୁଖୀ ଯୋଜନା ହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଅଳ୍ପ କିଛି ଦୁର୍ବଳତା ରହିଛି । ଖୋଲା ବଜାରରେ ଅଧିକ ମଜୁରି ମିଳୁଥିବା ବେଳେ ଏହି ଯୋଜନାର ମଜୁରି କମ୍ । ଗୋଟିଏ ପଟେ ମଜୁରି କମ୍ ରହିଥିବା ବେଳେ ଅନ୍ୟପଟେ ବିଲମ୍ବରେ ବ୍ୟାଙ୍କ ଓ ପୋଷ୍ଟ ଅଫିସ୍ ଜରିଆରେ ମଜୁରି ପାଇବା ପାଇଁ କିଛି ଦିନ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରିବାକୁ ପଡୁଛି ।

ସରକାରଙ୍କ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଜନମଙ୍ଗଳ ଓ ସୁରକ୍ଷିତ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମ :

ସରକାରଙ୍କ ଜନମଙ୍ଗଳ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଇନ୍ଦିରା ଆବାସ ଯୋଜନା, (IAY), ମୋ କୁଡ଼ିଆ, ମଧ୍ୟାହ୍ନ ଭୋଜନ, ବାର୍ଷିକ୍ୟ, ବିକଳାଙ୍ଗ ଓ ବିଧବା ଭତ୍ତା, ସ୍ୱର୍ଣ୍ଣଜୟନ୍ତି ଗ୍ରାମ ସ୍ୱରୋଜଗାର ଯୋଜନା (SGSY), ଅନ୍ତେଦୟ ଅନ୍ନ ଯୋଜନା (AAY) ସାଧାରଣ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ବି.ପି.ଏଲ କାର୍ଡ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ଅନ୍ତର୍ଭୁକ୍ତ ରହିଛି । ଏ ଯୋଜନା ଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଥିବା ସତ୍ତ୍ୱେ ଶ୍ରମିକ ମାନେ ଅନ୍ୟ ରାଜ୍ୟକୁ କାମ କରିବାକୁ ଯାଉଛନ୍ତି ।

ପ୍ରତିକାର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା

(୧) ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ ଅଗ୍ରାମ ଟଙ୍କା କାମ କରିବାକୁ ଯିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ପାଇଥାନ୍ତି । ଏହି ଟଙ୍କାର ସଦ୍‌ବିନିଯୋଗ ପାଇଁ, ତାହା ସରକାରଙ୍କ ତରଫରୁ ଗୋଟିଏ ଯୋଜନା ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ କରିବା ଦରକାର ।

(୨) ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନର ଦୈନିକ ଅଣକୃଷି ମଜୁରି ୨୦୦ ଟଙ୍କାରୁ ବଢାଇ ଖୋଲା ବଜାରରେ ମଜୁରି ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ସମାନ କରିବା ଦରକାର । ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ଖୋଲାବଜାରରେ ମଜୁରି ୩୦୦ ଟଙ୍କା ରହିଛି । ତାହାକୁ ବିଚାରକୁ ନେବା ଦରକାର ।

(୩) ବି.ପି.ଏଲ ତାଲିକା ଭଳି ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକମାନଙ୍କ ଏକ ତାଲିକା ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ କରି ସେମାନଙ୍କ ସରକାରଙ୍କ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଦାରିଦ୍ର୍ୟ ଦୂରୀକରଣ ଯୋଜନାରେ ଅନ୍ତର୍ଭୁକ୍ତ କରିବା ଦରକାର ।

(୪) ଏମ୍.ଜି.ଏନ.ଆର.ଇ.ଜି.ଏସ୍ ଯୋଜନା ଦୈନିକ ମଜୁରି ୨୫୦ ଟଙ୍କା କରି ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାରେ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ମଜୁରି ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନ କରିବା ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରିବା ଦରକାର । କାରଣ ଖୋଲାବଜାରରେ ଶ୍ରମିକମାନେ କାମ ସାରି ଦିନ ଶେଷରେ ମଜୁରି ନିଅନ୍ତି ।

(୫) ଶ୍ରମିକମାନଙ୍କ ନିଜର ବୃତ୍ତିକୁ ତାଲିମ ଦ୍ୱାରା ପ୍ରଶିକ୍ଷଣ କରି ବଜାରରେ ନିଯୁକ୍ତି ପାଇଁ ସୁଯୋଗ ଦେବା ଦରକାର ।

(୬) ଆଉ ଗୋଟିଏ ପ୍ରଧାନ କଥା ହେଉଛି, ପୁରୀ ପରିବାର ଇଟାଭାଟି କାମରେ ଲାଗନ୍ତି । ଏହିପରି ସୁଯୋଗ ଅନ୍ୟଠାରେ ନ ମିଳିବାରୁ ଏମାନେ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ହୁଅନ୍ତି । ପରିବାରର ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ସାଧାରଣକୁ କାମ ଯୋଗାଇବା ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରିବାକୁ ହେବ । ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଧର୍ମାତ୍ମକ ବୃତ୍ତିର ପ୍ରଶିକ୍ଷଣ ଦେଇ କର୍ମନିଯୁକ୍ତି ପାଇଁ ସକ୍ଷମ କରିବା ଦରକାର । ପରିବାରର ୬-୧୪ ବର୍ଷର ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟରେ ନାମ ଲେଖାଇ ପାଠ ପଢେଇବା ଦରକାର ।

(୭) ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକମାନଙ୍କ ୬-୧୪ ବର୍ଷ ପିଲାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଆବାସଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଆବଶ୍ୟକ । ଯେଉଁଥିରେ କି ସେମାନେ ରହି ପାଠ ପଢିବେ । ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ସରକାର ଆରମ୍ଭ କଲେଣି । ଏଗୁଡ଼ିକର ସଂଖ୍ୟା ଆବଶ୍ୟକ ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ବୃଦ୍ଧି ହେବା ଦରକାର ।

(୮) ମୁଖ୍ୟ କଥା ହେଉଛି ବାହାର ରାଜ୍ୟ ଓ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ରାଜ୍ୟ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଯୋଗାଯୋଗ ନିତ୍ୟାନ୍ତ ଜରୁରୀ । ବାହାର ରାଜ୍ୟ ମଧ୍ୟ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର,



ଶ୍ରମିକମାନଙ୍କ ଅସୁବିଧା ପ୍ରତି ନଜର ରଖିବା ଦରକାର । ଶୋଷଣ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ମାଲିକ ପ୍ରତି କାର୍ଯ୍ୟନୁଷ୍ଠାନ କରିବା ଉଚିତ୍ । ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଶ୍ରମ ଅଧିକାରୀମାନେ ଅନ୍ୟ ରାଜ୍ୟକୁ ଯାଇ ପ୍ରବାସୀଙ୍କ ସୁବିଧା ପ୍ରତି ନଜର ରଖିବା ନିହାତି ଆବଶ୍ୟକ । ଏହାପାଇଁ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ରାଜ୍ୟସରକାର ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ କ୍ଷମତା ଦେବା ଦରକାର ଓ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଗଣ୍ଠ ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ ଓ ଯୋଗାଯୋଗ ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ ପାଇଁ ବଜେଟରେ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ନିତ୍ୟାନ୍ତ ଦରକାର ।

(୯) ଉପରୋକ୍ତ ପ୍ରତିକାର ଛଡ଼ା ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ପ୍ରବାସୀ କାମ କରିବାକୁ ଯିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ରେଜିଷ୍ଟ୍ରେସନ୍ ହେବା ଦରକାର । ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଗୋଟିଏ ଲେଖା ପରିଚୟପତ୍ର ଦେବା ଆବଶ୍ୟକ ।

(୧୦) ପ୍ରବାସୀ ସଂପର୍କିତ ନିୟମ ଓ ଆଇନ କଡ଼ାକଡ଼ି ଭାବେ ପାଳନ କରିବା ଉଚିତ୍ । ଏହି ସବୁ ନିୟମ ପ୍ରବାସୀମାନେ ଜାଣିବା ଦରକାର ଓ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଏସବୁ ବିଷୟରେ ବିଭିନ୍ନ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମ ଓ ଆ.ଇ.ସି (IEC) ଜରିଆରେ ପୁରାପୁରି ସଚେତନ କରିବାକୁ ହେବ ।

(୧୧) ରାଜ୍ୟ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଓ ବାହାର ରାଜ୍ୟର ବିଭିନ୍ନ ବିଭାଗ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଏକାଭିମୁଖତା ଓ ସହଯୋଗିତା ଆବଶ୍ୟକ ।

*ପରାମର୍ଶ ଦାତା, ରାଜ୍ୟ ଶ୍ରମ ସଂସ୍ଥାନ, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର

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ଶିଶୁ ଶ୍ରମିକ ପ୍ରଥା ଏକ ସାମାଜିକ କଳଙ୍କ

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



ପରବାସୀ ବନ୍ଧୁ ମୋର ଆସେ ଲୋ...

*ଛନ୍ଦା ମିଶ୍ର

ସୁଖମା, କଇଁ କଇଁ ହୋଇ କାନ୍ଦୁଥିଲା । ତା’ କାନ୍ଦ ଦେଖି ବାବୁଲାର ଛାତି ଫାଟିଯାଉଥିଲେ ବି, ସେ ନିଜକୁ କଲା ଦୃଢ଼ । ବୁଢ଼ୀ ମା’ ଟା ଶୁନ୍ୟ ନୟନ ନେଇ ଦାଣ୍ଡ ବାରଣ୍ଡାରେ ବସିରହିଥିଲା । ତା’ ଆଖିରୁ ଲୁହ ସବୁ ଶୁଖି ସାରିଥିଲା । ମଝିରେ ମଝିରେ କେବଳ ଆକାଶକୁ ଚାହିଁ ସେ ଛାଡ଼ୁଥିଲା ଦୀର୍ଘନିଶ୍ୱାସ । ଦୁଃଖ ସହି ସହି, ମନଟା ତା’ର ପାଲଟି ଯାଇଛି ପଥର । ଯମ, ଯାହା ନେଇନାହିଁ ବୋଲି ପବନ ଟିକକ ଆସୁଛି ଆଉ ଯାଉଛି । ନହେଲେ ‘ଜୀବନ’ କହିଲେ କ’ଣ ତାହା ଅନେକ ଦିନ ତଳୁ ଭୁଲିସାରିଛି ସେ । ଗରିବର ପୁଣି ‘ଜୀବନ’ ଗୋଟେ କ’ଣ ଯେ ! ଯେଉଁଠି ଜୀବନ ନାହିଁ ସେଠି, ‘ଇଚ୍ଛା’ ଓ ‘ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ’ ପରି ଶବ୍ଦ ସବୁ ବା, କି ମୂଲ୍ୟ ରଖେ ?

ଗରିବ ମାନଙ୍କ ଜୀବନର ତୋରୀ ତ ଧନୀଙ୍କ ହାତରେ ହୋଇଛି ବନ୍ଧା । ସେମାନେ ଚାହୁଁଲେ ଗରିବ ହସିବେ ଓ କାନ୍ଦିବେ, ସେମାନେ ଚାହୁଁଲେ ଗରିବ ବଞ୍ଚିବେ ଓ ମରିବେ...

ଛଅମାସ ତଳୁ ଏଇ ସୁଖମାକୁ ବିଭାହେବ ବୋଲି, ବାବୁଲା, ଠିକାଦାର ପାଖରୁ ପଚାରିଛନ୍ତା ଟଙ୍କା ଆଣିସାରିଛି, କଥା ଦେଇଛି, କାମ ସରିଲେ ଆଉ ପଚାରି ପାଇବ ବୋଲି । କାମ ନକଲେ ଚଳିବେ କେମିତି, ଖାଇବେ କ’ଣ ସେମାନେ ? ପଇସା ଆସିବ କେଉଁଠୁ । ଆଜି ସିନା ସେମାନେ ତିନିଜଣ, କାଲିକି, ତିନିରୁ ଚାରି ହେବେ ପାଞ୍ଚ ହେବେ । ନାଁ... ନିଜ ହୃଦୟକୁ କାଠକରି ଘରୁ ବାହାରିଲା ବାବୁଲା । ବୃନ୍ଦବତୀ କ୍ଷମା ପାଖରୁ ମାଟି ଚିମୁଟାଏ ଆଣି ବାବୁଲା ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ଲେପି ଦେଲା ବାବୁଲା ବୋଉ । ଆଉ ପଛକୁ ନେଇ ଆଗକୁ ଆଗକୁ ପାହୁଣ୍ଡ ପକାଇଲା ସେ ।

ଗାଁ ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ଠିଆ ହୋଇଥିଲା ବସନ୍ତ । ବସ୍ ପାଖରେ ବେଶ୍ ଭିଡ଼ । ତା’ରି ଭଳି ସନିଆ, ରମେଶ, ହାଡ଼ୁ, ପ୍ରତାପ ଆଦି ନିଜ ନିଜ ଜିନିଷପତ୍ର ସହ ଚାଲୁଥିଲେ ବସକୁ । ଠିକାଦାର ଜେନାବାବୁ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଡାକି କର ବସରେ ବସାଉଥିଲେ । ବସ ଚାଲିଲା ସହର ଅଭିମୁଖେ । ସେଠାରୁ ରେଳରେ ବସି ସେମାନେ ଯିବେ ପଞ୍ଜାବ, ସେଠାରେ କେଉଁ ଗୋଟେ ବଡ଼ ଇଟା ଭାଟିରେ କାମ ମିଳିଛି ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ । କାମ କରିବାକୁ ଡରେନା ବାବୁଲା, ମାଟିର ମଣିଷସେ, ମାଟିକୁ ଘାଣ୍ଟି ଚକଟି ଇଟା ଗଢ଼ିବାକୁ ଡରିବ କାହିଁକି ଯେ !

ବସରେ ବସି ବାବୁଲା, ଝରକା ଦେଇ ବାହାରକୁ ଚାହିଁଛି । ଗାଁ ମହାଦେବଙ୍କ ମନ୍ଦିର, ଆମ୍ବତୋଟା, ତାଳବଣ, ଝୁଲଣ ମଣ୍ଡପ, ନୂଆ ପୋଖରୀ ଓ ବଗଦିଆଁ ପ୍ରଭୃତି ପଛକୁ ଧାଇଁ ଚାଲିଛନ୍ତି । ସତେଯେପରି ବସ୍ ଠାରୁ ଦୂରେଇ ଗଲେ ହିଁ ସେମାନେ ଶାନ୍ତିରେ ନିଶ୍ୱାସ ଟିକେ ମାରିବେ । ଝରକାର କାଚରେ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଦେଇ ବାବୁଲା ବି ଧାଇଁ ଚାଲିଛି ତା’ ପିଲା ଦିନକୁ । ଯେଉଁ ପିଲାଦିନକୁ ମନେପକାଇ, ସେ କାଟିଦେଇଛି ଜୀବନର ଦୁଃଖ ଦିନ ଗୁଡ଼ିକୁ । ସତରେ ଶୈଶବ ସ୍ମୃତି କେତେ ସୁଖଦ ଥିଲା ସତେ !

ବାପା, ବୋଉଙ୍କ ବାରବର୍ଷର ଦୀର୍ଘ ଅପେକ୍ଷା ପରେ ବାବୁଲା କୋଳକୁ ଆସିଥିଲା ବୋଲି, ସେମାନେ ତା’ ଦେହରେ ଧୂଳି ଟିକେ ଲାଗିବା ପାଇଁ ଦେଉନଥିଲେ । ପେଟକୁ ଖାଇ, ସଞ୍ଚୟ କରି ବି ହେଉଥିଲା । ଭଲ ଦୋଫସଲି ଜମି ଚାରିମାଣ, ହଲେ ବଳଦ ଓ ତିନୋଟି ଦୁଧୁଆଳୀ ଗାଈ, ପେଟ ତିନୋଟିଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଥିଲେ ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ । ତା’ର ଏବେ ବି ମନେ ଅଛି, ଗାଁ ସ୍କୁଲରେ ତୃତୀୟ ପଢ଼ିଲା ବେଳେ, ହରିମାଷ୍ଟ କହନ୍ତି- “ ବାବୁଲାର କି ଚିତ୍ତା, ସେ ତ ଘିଅରେ ଖାଇ ଦୁଧରେ ହାତ ଧୋଉଛି...” । କିଛି ଉତ୍ତର ନଦେଲେ ବି, ବାବୁଲାକୁ ଏଇ କଥାଗୁଡ଼ାକ ଭାରି ଭଲଲାଗେ । ହେଲେ ଏ ସୁଖ ତା’ର ବେଶୀ ଦିନ ରହିଲା ନାହିଁ । ଆଉ ସୁଖ ଯାଇ, ଯେଉଁ ଦୁଃଖ ଆସିଲା, ସତେଯେପିତି ସେ ବାବୁଲାକୁ ଛାଡ଼ି ଯିବ ନାହିଁ ବୋଲି ମନେ ମନେ ପ୍ରତିଜ୍ଞା କରିଥିଲା ।

ଗାଁ ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ କେଉଁ ଏକ ଷ୍ଟିଲ୍ ଫ୍ୟାକ୍ଟି ବସାଇବାର ହୋଇଥିଲା ଯୋଜନା । ସହରରୁ ବଡ଼ ବଡ଼ ବାବୁ ମାନେ ଆସିଥିଲେ । ଗାଁ ଲୋକଙ୍କୁ ବୁଝାଇଥିଲେ, ଫ୍ୟାକ୍ଟି ହେଲେ ଗାଁ ହେବ ସହର ଭଳି, ପକ୍କା ସଡ଼କ, ଚକଝକ୍ ଦିନରାତି ମଟର ଗାଡ଼ି, ତା’ ସହିତ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ଘରୁ ଜଣକୁ ଫ୍ୟାକ୍ଟିରେ ଚାକିରୀ । ଏହିପରି ସୁନ୍ଦର ଚିତ୍ରର ଲୋଭନୀୟ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନରେ ବିଭୋର ହୋଇଥିଲେ ଗ୍ରାମବାସୀ । ହେଲେ ଅଦିନିଆ ମେଘଭଳି, ଗୁଡ଼ିଏ ଘଡ଼ଘଡ଼ି ଚତଚତି ମାରି ମିଲେଇ ଯାଇଥିଲା ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ସବୁ । ଫ୍ୟାକ୍ଟି ତିଆରି ହୋଇ ଚାଲିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁହିଁ କେଉଁ ଗୋଟେ କୋର୍ଟ ଝାମେଲା ପାଇଁ ସେଥିରେ ପଡ଼ିଲା ସରକାରୀ ତାଲା । ସ୍ୱପ୍ନାଳ ଆଖି ଗୁଡ଼ିକରେ ଛାଇ ଯାଇଥିଲା ହତାଶାର ହାହାକାର । ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଭଳି ବାବୁଲାର ବାପା ମଧ୍ୟ ଜମି ବିକ୍ରି କରି ପାଇଥିଲା ପୁଲ୍‌ଏ ଟଙ୍କା । ମାତ୍ର ଅର୍ଥକୁ ଅନର୍ଥ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ତା’ ସହ ଯୋଡ଼ି ହୋଇଗଲେ ଅନେକ ଗୁଡ଼ିଏ ବନ୍ଧୁ, ଜୁଆ ଓ ନିଶାପାଣିର



ମୋହରେ ସେ ଭୁଲିଲା, ସ୍ତର ମୁଣ୍ଡକୁଳ୍ କରିଥିବା ଶପଥ ଓ ତା ସହିତ ବାବୁଲାର ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ । ଶେଷରେ କେଉଁ ଏକ ଅଜଣା ରୋଗରେ ପଡି ସେ ପୋଛିଦେଇ ଯାଇଛି ବାବୁଲା ମା' ମୁଣ୍ଡରୁ ସିନ୍ଦୂରଚିକକ ଓ ବାବୁଲାକୁ ସଜାଇ ଦେଇଛି ବାରବୁଲା କରି ।

ମା' ତାର ପରଘରେ ବାସନ ମାଜିଛି, କ୍ଷେତରେ ତଳୀ ରୋଇଛି, ମୁଣ୍ଡଫଟା ଖରାରେ ଅନ୍ୟର ଗାଇ ଛେଳି ଜଗିଛି, ଗୋବର ଗୋଟେଇ ଘସି ପାରିଛି, କେବଳ ଗୋଟିଏ ଆଶାରେ, ବାବୁଲା ତା'ର ମଣିଷ ହେବ । ହେଲେ ମାଟ୍ରିକ୍ ଫେଲ୍ ବାବୁଲାକୁ କିଏ ବା' କେଉଁ ଋକିରୀ ଦେବ । ତେବେ, ବାବୁଲା ନିଜ ହାତ ପାପୁଲିରେ ଗଡିତୋଳିଛି ନିଜର ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ । ଅନ୍ୟର ବିଲରେ ହଳ କରିବାଠାରୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରି ମାଟି ହାଣିବା, କାଠ କାଟିବା ଆଦି ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ କାମକୁ ହୋଇଛି ଆଗଭର । ତାର କର୍ମ ପ୍ରବଣତା ଓ ସଜୋଟପଣିଆ ପାଇଁ ଗାଁ ଲୋକେ ବି ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ କାମରେ ପ୍ରଥମେ ଖୋଜିଛନ୍ତି ବାବୁଲାକୁ । ବାବୁଲା ବି କାହାକୁ ନିରାଶ କରିନି, ତା'ର ଦୁଇହାତ ବି ଏଥିରେ ତାକୁ ଖୁବ୍ ସାହସ ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି । ଜଣେ ଯଦି ହଳ ପଇସା ଗଣିଦେଉଛି, ବାବୁଲା କାହିଁକି କାମରେ ଖୁଲାପ କରିବ । ତେଣୁ ଛୋଟ ବଡ ନଭାବି, ବାବୁଲା ସବୁ କାମରେ ନିଜର କାନ୍ଧ ଲଗାଇ ଦେଇଛି ଓ ସେଥିପାଇଁ ସାଉଁଟିଛି ଅନେକ ପ୍ରଶଂସା, ହେଲେ ପ୍ରଶଂସାରେ କି ପେଟପୁରେ ! ତେବେ, ଗାଁରେ ଧିରେ ଧିରେ କାମ ମିଳିବା ହୋଇପଡିଲା ସାତ ସପନ । ସହର ଯେତେଯେତେ ଗାଁର ନିକଟତର ହେଲା, ଲୋକେ ଗାଁ ଛାଡି ଯାଇ ସହରରେ ରହିବାକୁ ପସନ୍ଦ କଲେ । ଗାଁର ଯେଉଁ ଅଳ୍ପକିଛି ଋଷଜମି ରହିଯାଇଥିଲା, ତା' ମଧ୍ୟ ପଡିଆ ପଡିଲା । ଗାଁ ଛାଡି, ବାବୁଲା, ସହରକୁ କାମ କରି ଯିବ ବୋଲି କହିଲାରୁ, ବୁଢ଼ୀମା' ତାର କଳିକଜିଆ କରି ତିନିଦିନ ନଖାଇ ନପିଇ ହରତାଳ କଲା ।

ବାବୁଲା, ଏବେ କ'ଣ କରିବ ତାକୁ ଆଉ କିଛି ବୁଝିବାଟ ଦିଶୁନଥିଲା । ଦିନ ଦିନ ଧରି ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ ନିରାଶାର ବାଣୀ ଶୁଣି ଶୁଣି ଅଭାବ ଅନାଟନ ଭିତରେ ରହି ରହି ଜୀବନ ହାରିବ ବୋଲି ନିଷ୍ପତ୍ତି ନେଲା ବେଳକୁ, ତା' ପାଖରେ ଦେବଦୂତ ହୋଇ ଛିଡା ହୋଇଥିଲେ ଠିକାଦାର ଜେନାବାବୁ । ହାତରେ ତା'ର ପାଁଶ ଟଙ୍କା ଗୁଞ୍ଜିଦେବା ସହ, କାନ୍ଧପାପୁଡାଇ ବତାଇଥିଲେ ତା'ର ସାହସ । ତେଣୁ ବେଳ ଅବେଳରେ ସେ ତାଙ୍କ ପାଖେ ଗୋଡ ଭାଙ୍ଗି ଠିଆହୋଇଛି । ଦିନେ, ସେହି ଜେନାବାବୁ କହିଲେ, “ଆରେ ବାବୁଲା ନିଜତି ମନୁ କୁ କେହି ଋହେନାହିଁ କି ନିଜତି ଦରିଦ୍ରେ କେହି ଦିଏ ନାହିଁ । ଚଲ ମୋ ସହିତ ପଞ୍ଜାବ, ସେଠି କାମ କଲେ, ତତେ ଆଠମାସ ପାଇଁ ପରଶ ହଜାର ଟଙ୍କା ଦେବି ।

“ପରଶ ହଜାର...” କ'ଣ ଶୁଣୁଛି ବାବୁଲା ! ସେ ଆଉ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଦେଖୁନାହିଁ ତ ! ଘରକୁ ଯାଇ ମା'କୁ ସବୁକଥା କହିଛି । ମା' କହିଛି- ବାବୁଲାରେ ରୁ ଯାହା କରୁଛୁ କର, ହେଲେ ଗାଁ ଛାଡି କୁଆଡେ ଯା'ନା, ଶାଗ ପେଜ ଗଣ୍ୟ ପଛେ ମିଳୁ..... ।” ହେଲେ ବାବୁଲାକୁ କିଛି ଶୁଭିନଥିଲା । ଜେନା ବାବୁର ‘ପରଶ ହଜାର’ କଥାଟି ତା' ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଭିତରେ, ନାଲିନେଳି ଆଲୁଅରେ ଲୟଧନୁର ଛଟକ ଦେଖାଇ ତାକୁ କରୁଥିଲା ବିମୋହିତ । ଅନ୍ୟ ଉପାୟ ନପାଇ, ଶେଷରେ ବୁଢ଼ୀ ମା', ସୁନ୍ଦରୀ ଝିଅଟିଏ ଖୋଜି ହାତଛନ୍ଦି ଦେଲେ, ତା'ରି ମାୟାରେ ଛନ୍ଦିହୋଇ ବାବୁଲା ଘରେ ରହିବ ବୋଲି ଭାବି, ପାଖ ଗାଁର ବାପାମା ଛଉଣ୍ଡ ସୁଷମାକୁ ଆଣି ତା' ବେକରେ ଛନ୍ଦିଦେଲା ।

ଏବେ, ବାବୁଲା ମୁଣ୍ଡରୁ ପରଶ ହଜାର ଭୂତ ବାହାରିବା ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତେ, ଆହୁରି ଭଲ ଭାବେ ନିଜ ଆସ୍ଥାନକୁ କଲା ସୁଦୃଢ ।
ଗ୍ରେନ୍ ଝଲିଥିଲା ପଞ୍ଜାବ ଅଭିମୁଖେ.....

ଏପଟେ ସୁଷମାର ଦିନରାତି ଥିଲା ଏକାକାର । ସବୁବେଳେ ଗୋଟିଏ ଚିନ୍ତାରେ ଘାରି ହେଉଥିଲା ସେ, “ବାବୁଲା କେବେ ଫେରିବ ? ପ୍ରଥମେ ପ୍ରଥମେ ତିନିଋରି ଦିନରେ ଥରେ ସୁଷମା ପାଖକୁ ଫୋନ୍ କରୁଥିଲା ବାବୁଲା । ଧିରେ ଧିରେ ଫୋନ୍ କରିବା କମିଲା । ସୁଷମା ଫୋନକଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ, ଅନେକ ସମୟରେ ପାଉନଥିଲା ବାବୁଲା କୁ । ମନକୁ ତା'ର ପାପ ଛୁଇଁଥିଲା । ବାହାଘରର ତିନିମାସ ପରେ ବର ତା'ର ଯାଇଛି ଯେ ଯାଇଛି, ସେ ଭାବୁଥିଲା “କେମିତି ଏମିତି ଅଚିନ୍ତା ହୋଇ ରହିପାରିଛନ୍ତି ? ମୋ କଥା ନହେଲେ ନାହିଁ, ବୁଢ଼ୀ ମା'ଟା ଦିନସାରା ନାମ ଜପ କଲା ଭଳି ବାବୁଲା..... ବାବୁଲା ହେଉଛି, କ'ଣ ତାକୁ ବି ଭୁଲିଗଲେ, ଏଥର ଆସନ୍ତୁ ଆଉ ଛାଡିଦିନି ।” ହେଲେ ବାବୁଲା ସତେଯେପରି ଫେରିବାର ନାଁ ଧରିବନି ବୋଲି ପ୍ରତିଜ୍ଞା କରିଥିଲା । ସେଦିନ ବାଧ୍ୟ ହୋଇ ବୁଢ଼ୀଶାଶୁ କୁ ଧରି ସୁଷମା, ଜେନାବାବୁ କ୍ ଦାଣ୍ଡ ଦୁଆରେ ଯାଇ ଛିଡା ହେଲା । ଜେନାବାବୁ ସବୁ ଶୁଣିଲେ ଓ ବୁଢ଼ୀ ହାତରେ ହଜାରେ ଟଙ୍କା ଦେଲେ ଓ ‘ବାକି ପରେ ନେବ’ କହିଲେ । ବୁଢ଼ୀ “ବାବୁଲା କେବେ ଫେରିବ ?” କହିଲା ବେଳକୁ, ଜେନାବାବୁ, ଜିପରେ ବସି ଯାଇସାରିଥିଲେ ନିର୍ବାଚନ ପ୍ରଘରରେ । ଦୀର୍ଘଶ୍ୱାସ ଛାଡି ବୁଢ଼ୀ, ବୋହୂ କୁ ଧରି ଫେରିଲା । ପେଟରେ ଭୋକ ଥିଲେ, ମୁଣ୍ଡରୁ ଲାଜର ଓଜଣା ଖସିପଡେ । ସେଠୁ ଆସିଲା ପରେ ଘରୁ, ପଦାକୁ ଗୋଡ କାଢିଲା ସୁଷମା । ଝରିମାସ ପରେ ଆସିବ ବୋଲି କହିଯାଇଥିଲା ବାବୁଲା, ବର୍ଷଟାଏ ବିତିଗଲାଣି କିଛି ଖୋଜଖବର ନାହିଁ ତାର.....

“ଏଇଟା କ'ଣ ନାଟ ଲାଗିଛି କି ? ଖଟି ଖଟି ମୋର ଜୀବନ ଗଲାଣି । ବୁଢ଼ୀଟା ଚବିଶିଘଣ୍ଟା କୁହେଇ କୁହେଇ ବାବୁଲା ବାବୁଲା



ହେଉଛି, ହେଲେ ଏ ଜେନାବାବୁଟା ଦାରୁଭୂତ ମୁରାରି ପରି, ଭେଣ୍ଡିଆ ଗୁଡାଙ୍କୁ ପଞ୍ଜାବ ପଠାଇ ଦେଇ ନିର୍ଣ୍ଣିତ ହୋଇ ନାହିଁରେ ତେଲ ଦେଇ ଶୋଇଛି । ଆଜି ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ଏ କଥାର କିଛି ଗୋଟେ ଫାଇସଲା ହେବ । ନହେଲେ ସିଧା ଯିବି ସରପଞ୍ଚ ପାଖକୁ କିମ୍ବା ଥାନାକୁ...” ଏହିପରି ମନେ ମନେ ବିଭି ବିଭି ହୋଇ ସୁଷମା ଯାଇ ପହଞ୍ଚିଲା ଜେନାବାବୁ ଘରେ ।

କାନ୍ଦି କାନ୍ଦି ସବୁକଥା କହିଲା । ସବୁଶୁଣି ଜେନାବାବୁ କହିଲେ- ଆଲୋ ଆଉ ଦୁଇମାସ ସବୁର କର, ଆସିଯିବ ତୋ ବର” ସେଠୁ ଫେରିଲା ପରଠାରୁ ଦିନଗଣୁଛି ସୁଷମା, “ବାବୁଲା ଆସିବ... ହେଇ ଆସିଲେଣି ତ.... ।” ଏହି ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଦେଖୁ ଦେଖୁ ରାତି ପାହିଯାଏ । କାଉ କା’ କଲେ, ଶାଶୁବୁଢ଼ାକୁ ମୁହେ ନାଲି ର ଦେଇ ସୁଷମା ବାହାରିଯାଏ ପରଘରେ ଅଇଁଠା ବାସନ ଘାଣ୍ଟିବାକୁ ।

ହେଇ ସେ ଦିନ ରେଡିଓରେ ଗୀତଟାଏ ବାଜୁଥିଲା - କିଆ କେତକୀ ବନେ କହଲକେ କାନେ କାନେ ପରବାସୀ ବନ୍ଧୁ ମୋର ଆସେଲୋ.....

ମନ ଆନନ୍ଦରେ ନାଚି ଉଠୁଥିଲା ସୁଷମାର । ସତରେ , ଏତେ ଦିନରୁ ଯାଇଥିବା ମଣିଷଟାର କଥା ମନରେ ଭାବି ଶିହରୀ ଉଠୁଥିଲା ସେ.... ।

ଆଜି ବାବୁଲା ଫେରିବ । ଦୁଇଦିନ ତଳେ, ଜେନାବାବୁର ଲୋକଟାଏ ଆସି ଖବର ଦେଇ ଯାଇଥିଲା ।

କାଲିଠୁ ସୁଷମା କହିସାରିଛି ତା’ ବାବୁଆଣୀ ମାନଙ୍କୁ, ସେ ଆଉ କାମକୁ ଆସିବନି । ସେ ଆସି ପରଘରେ ଖଟୁଛି ଜାଣିଲେ, ବାବୁଲା କ’ଣ ଭାବିବ ଯେ ! ତା’ର ବିତ ଗାଁରେ ଗୋଟେ ମାନସମ୍ମାନ ଅଛି !

ଗୋତ ଆଜି ତା’ର ତଳେ ଲାଗୁନଥିଲା । ରେଡିଓଟାକୁ ଖୋଲିଦେଇ, ଭାତ ରାନ୍ଧି, ଶୁଖୁଆ ପୋତି, ଘରଦ୍ୱାର ସଫାସୁତୁରା କରିବାରେ ଲାଗିପଡ଼ିଥିଲା ସୁଷମା । ମାଇକିନିଆ, ଘରୁ ଗୋତ କାଢିଲେ ଯାହା ହୁଏ ! ଘରଦ୍ୱାର ଅପରିଷ୍କାର ହୋଇପଡ଼ିଛି ।

ସିଆଡେ ବୁଢ଼ାଟା ହେଁସରେ ହରିମୁତି ଆଣୁଏ କଲାଣି । ଏଇଟା ଶେଷ କାନ୍ଦୁ । ଏଇଟାକୁ ଲିପିଦେଇ, ସେ ଯାଇ ତାକୁ ଧୁଆଧୋଇ କରିବ, ଯା ଭିତରେ ସୁଷମା, ସାତ ଆଠଥର ଯାଇ ସାଇ ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ଚଢ଼ି ଆସିଲାଣି । ଧିରେ ଧିରେ ମନ ଭିତରଟା ତାର ଭଜାଟ ଧରୁଛି । କାନ୍ଦୁ ଲିପିସାରି କୁଅମୂଳେ ହାତ ଧୋଇଲା ବେଳକୁ ମଟର ଗାଡ଼ିର ଶବ୍ଦ ଶୁଣି ବାହାରକୁ ଧାଇଁ ଆସିଲା ସୁଷମା ।

ଷ୍ଟେଟରରେ ବୁଢ଼ାହୋଇ ବାବୁଲା ଆସୁଥିଲା । ଦୁଇ ହାତ ପାପୁଲି କଟା ହୋଇ ବ୍ୟାଣ୍ଡେଜ ଭିତା ହୋଇଛି । ଶରୀର ଜୀର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଶୀର୍ଣ୍ଣ । ଚବିଶ ବର୍ଷର ଭେଣ୍ଡା ଟୋକାଟା ଗୋଟିଏ ବର୍ଷରେ ପାଲଟି ଯାଇଛି ସରୁରୀ ବର୍ଷର ବୁଢ଼ା । ସୁଷମାର ଗୋତ ଆଉ ଚଳୁନଥିଲା । ସେ ବୁଢ଼ାର ଝାଡ଼ା ସଫା କରିବ ନାଁ ବାବୁଲା କୁ ପାଣି ମୁନ୍ଦାଏ ଦବ, କିଛି ଭାବି ପାରୁନଥିଲା ।

ଖୁଣ୍ଟ ଟାକୁ ଧରି ନିଜେ ଖୁଣ୍ଟ ଟାଏ ପରି ଛିଡ଼ା ହୋଇଥିଲା । ଅନେକ ଦିନରୁ ଛାତିରେ ଜମାଟ ବାନ୍ଧିଥିବା ରକ୍ତସବୁ, ନିଜ ରଙ୍ଗ ବଦଳାଇ ଆଖୁରୁ ଧାର ଧାର ହୋଇ ବୋହି ଚାଲିଥିଲେ..... ।

ରେଡିଓରୁ ଭାସି ଆସୁଥିଲା, “ପରବାସୀ ବନ୍ଧୁମୋର ଆସେ ଲୋ..... ।”

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“ଖବର-ଆଜିର”

*ଶ୍ରୀ ଭାରତୀ ଭୂଷଣ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ

ସାରା ରାଜ୍ୟରେ ହଜିତ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିଥିଲା ଆଜିର-ସମ୍ଭାବ । ଟେଲିଭିଜନର ସବୁ ଚ୍ୟାନେଲ ଯାକୁ ପ୍ରମୁଖ ଖବର ହିସାବରେ ବାରମ୍ବାର ପ୍ରସାରଣ ପୂର୍ବକ ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କର ମତାମତକୁ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରୁଥିଲେ । କଥାହେଲା – ଚାଲାଣ କରିଥିବା ଦଲାଲ ମାନଙ୍କ ସହାୟତାରେ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଦାଦନ ଶ୍ରମିକଙ୍କୁ ମାଲିକର ମର୍ମତୁଣ୍ଡ, ଅକଥନୀୟ ଅତ୍ୟାଚାର, ଯାହାକି ପ୍ରବାସୀ ବାଳ ଶ୍ରମିକଟି ହାତ ହରାଇଲା ପରି ଅବସ୍ଥା ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହୋଇପାରିଛି । ଏ ବିଷୟ ପରିସ୍ଥିତି ରେ କ’ଣ କରାଯାଇ ପାରେ, ଆଲୋଚନା, ପର୍ଯ୍ୟାଲୋଚନା ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଚ୍ୟାନେଲ ମଧ୍ୟ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିଦେଇଥିଲେ । ଏଥିରେ କିଏ ସରକାର କୁ ଦାୟୀ କଲାବେଳେ, କିଏ ସେହି ସୁଧଘୋର ମହାଜନ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଚିହ୍ନଟ କରି ସେମାନଙ୍କର ମନି ଲେଣ୍ଡିଂ ଲାଇସେନ୍ସ କୁ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚିତା କରିବା ଉପରେ ମତ ପୋଷଣ କରୁଥିଲେ ତ, ଆଉ କିଏ ସେଇ ଦାଦନ ପରିବାର କାହିଁକି ବିଦେଶ ବା ରାଜ୍ୟ ବାହାରକୁ ଗଲା ଓ ତା’ର ଅର୍ଥନୈତିକ ଦୁର୍ଗତି ପାଇଁ ଦାୟୀ କିଏ ବୋଲି ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ଉତ୍ତରାପନ କରୁଥିଲେ । ମଂଚ ସଂଚାଳକ ତଥା ଆଲୋଚନା କାରୀଙ୍କ ଉକ୍ତ ପ୍ରସଙ୍ଗ ଉତ୍ତରାପନ ତଥା ମତାମତ ଦିଆନିଆ, ଜବାବ-ସୁଆଲ ପରିସ୍ଥିତି ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଭାବ-ଗର୍ଭକ ଓ ଗମ୍ଭୀର ବାତାବରଣ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରୁଥିଲା । ମଂଚ ଉଠୁଥିଲା, ପଢୁଥିଲା । ଦର୍ଶକମାନଙ୍କ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନବାଣରେ ଜର୍ଜରିତ ହୋଇ ଉଠୁଥିଲେ ଉତ୍ତରଦାତା ଗଣ ।

ଅନ୍ୟ ପକ୍ଷରେ ରାଜ୍ୟ ସରକାରଙ୍କ ସହାୟତାରେ ଗାଁ ଭିଟାମାଟିକୁ ଆସି ଯାଇଥିଲେ ମଙ୍ଗୁଳୁ, ସୀ- ଗୁରୁବାରୀ ଓ ପୁଅ- ସନିଆ । ସନିଆର ଡାକ୍ତରୀ ପରୀକ୍ଷା ପରେ ତା’କୁ ସରକାରୀ ଡାକ୍ତରଖାନା ରେ ଭର୍ତ୍ତି କରାଯାଇଥିଲା । ସରକାରଙ୍କ ତରଫରୁ ତତ୍ତ୍ଵଶୀତ୍ ମିଳିଥିଲା କିଛି ଅର୍ଥ ଓ ଚାଉଳ । ବାଡ଼ିରୁ ଶାଗ-ପତ୍ର ଯୋଗାଡ କରି ଗୁରୁବାରୀ ରାନ୍ଧିଥିଲା ତା’ ତରକାରୀ । ଘର ଦୁଆର ବନ୍ଧର ଦୁଇ ପାଖରେ ଦୁଇ ପ୍ରାଣୀ ନିରାହ ବନ୍ଧାହୋଇଥିବା ପଶୁ ପରିକା ପରସ୍ପର କୁ ଚାହିଁ ରହିଥିଲେ ଅବାକହୋଇ । କାହାର ମୁହଁରେ ଭାଷା ନ ଥିଲା । ବେଳେବେଳେ ଗୁରୁବାରୀ ପଣତକାନିରେ ଆଖିର ଅମାନିଆ ଲୁହକୁ ଯୋଛି ଦେଉଥିଲା ନିଜ ଅଜାଣତାରେ । କିଛି ସମୟ ପରେ ନିରବତାକୁ ଭାଙ୍ଗି ମଙ୍ଗୁଳୁ କହୁଥିଲା ଗୁରୁବାରୀକୁ ବୁଝିଲୁ ଗୁରୁବାରୀ ସେ ମହାଜନ ର ଲୋକଟା ସଇତାନ୍ । ଆମକୁ ଫୁସୁଲେଇ ଆମର ସବୁ ମକା-ଜହ୍ନା, କୋଦୁଅ ମାହାଳିଆ ଭଳିଆ କିଣିନେଲା । ଆମକୁ ଦାଣ୍ଡର ଭିକାରୀ କରିଦେଲା ବୋଲି ଆମେ ଗାଁକୁ ଆସିଲାବେଳେ ଆରସାହିର ଦିନବନ୍ଧୁ ଓ ହରି କକା କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା ହେଉଥିଲେ । ଆଉ..., ଆଉ ସେ ମାଲିକଟା..., ସେଟା ତ ଗୋଟେ ଯମ । ହେଲେ ତା’ର କଣ ଟିକେ ଦୟା ଧର୍ମ ଅଛି । ମାତ୍ରକ ଯା’ର ନାହିଁ । ସେଦିନ ଇଟା ଭାଟି ରୁ ଇଟା ବୋଝରେ ବୋହିଲା ବେଳେ କହିଲା ‘ହେ ରଖ ରଖ, ଦେଖୁଲା ଆଠ ଖଣ୍ଡ ଇଟା ଅଛି, ତାପରେ କହିଲା ଆଉ ଦି’ଟା ସେଥିରେ ରଖୁଦିଅ’ । ତା’ ଖାଇବାକୁ ଦବା କଥା ତ ଛାଡ । ପଇସା କଥା କହିଲେ ମ୍ୟାନେଜର ଯେଛାଡା କଥା କହେ, ମାଡ଼ମାରେ, ମନଇଚ୍ଛା ପଇସାଦିଏ: କଥାକାଟି ଗୁରୁବାରୀ କହୁଥିଲା- “ହେଇ ଶୁଣୁନୁ, ମତେ ପରା କହିଲା, ଦିନ ଦି’ ପହର ଉଦୁଉଦିଆ ଖରାରେ ତୁ କି କାମ କରିବୁ ? ଦି ପହରେ ଖାଇସାରିଲେ ତୁ ଆସୁନୁ, ମୋ ଗୋଡ଼ହାତ ଟିକେ ମୋଡ଼ି ଦେବୁ ।” ଛି, କରିଦେଇଥିଲି ସେଦିନ । ତା’ କଥାକୁ ଶୁଣି ନ ଶୁଣିଲା ପରି ମୁଁ କିନ୍ତୁ ରହୁଥିଲି, ତୁ କ’ଣ ଦେଖୁନୁ ? ତୁ ପାଖରେ ଥାଇ ପରା ! ହେଲେ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ବୋଲି ଜଣେ ମାହାପୁରୁ ଅଛି । ସେ ମରଡ଼ିଆ କୁ କି ଜର କି କଣ ହେଲାକି, ସେ ମରୁ ମରୁ ବଂଚିଲା । ଆଉ କାମକୁ ଆସିଲାନି । ବାରିଆତୁ ଘରକୁ ବୁଲି କୁକୁରଟିଏ ଚାଲି ଆସୁଥିବା ଦେଖୁ ମଙ୍ଗୁଳୁ ଉଠି ପଡ଼ି ଛେଇ ଛେଇ କରି ଘଉଡ଼ାଇବାକୁ ଚାଲିଗଲା ସେ ପଟକୁ । ଆଉ କହୁଥିଲା- “ହେ ଗୁରୁବାରୀ, କଣ ରାନ୍ଧୁଛୁ ପରା, ଆଶୁନୁ ଖାଇବା ।” ଛୋଟ ହୁଁ ଟେକରି କହୁଥିଲା ଗୁରୁବାରୀ- “ହଁ, ଆ, ବେଗି ବେଗି ଖାଇ ଦେଇ ଯିବା ।” ସାହୁକାର ଘର କଣ ବିସୁକୁରୁ, ପାଉଁରୁଟି ମୋ ପୁଅ କୁ ସେତେବେଳେ ଖାଇବାକୁ ଦେଇଥିଲେ. ସିଏ କଣ ଏତେବେଳେ ଯାଏଁ ତା’ ପେଟରେ ଥିବ ।

ରାଉଣ୍ଡରେ ଆସି ବିଭାଗୀୟ ମୁଖ୍ୟ ଡାକ୍ତର ପଚାରୁଥିଲେ ସନିଆକୁ ତା’ର ଦିହ ପା’ କଥା । ଏ ସମୟରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ପଣି ଆସିଲେ କ୍ୟାମେରା ସହ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଚ୍ୟାନେଲ ର ବାର୍ତ୍ତାବହ ଗଣ । ବିଭିନ୍ନ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନର ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଇ ସନିଆ ହାଲିଆ ଜଣା ପଢୁଥିଲା । ତଥାପି ସେ ଧକେଇ ଧକେଇ କହୁଥିଲା- “ମୁଁ କାମ-ପଇସା ମାଗିଲା ବେଳକୁ ସେ ମାଲିକ ମତେ ମାରିଲା, ତେଲଗୁରେ ଯାତୁ, ସ୍ୟାତୁ କଣ ଗାଳିଦେଲା । ମୋ ମା ନାଁରେ ବି କଣ କଣ କହିଲା । ସହିପାରିଲିନି, ଗୋଇଠାଟେ ପକେଇ ଧାଇଁ ଆସିଲାବେଳକୁ ତା’ର ଗୋଟେ ଲୋକ ମତେ ଧରିଦେଲା ଓ ସେ ମାଲିକ ମତେ



ତା’ ମନ ଇଚ୍ଛା ମାରିଲା । ଆଉ ଶେଷରେ ମୋର ହାତଟାକୁ...” କୋହ ସମ୍ବରଣ କରି ନ ପାରି ଭେଁ କିନା କାନ୍ଦି ଉଠିଥିଲା ସନିଆ । ସମସ୍ତେ ବୁଝା-ଶୁଝା କରିବାରେ ସେ ଶାନ୍ତ ହୋଇଥିଲା । ସେ ତା’ର କଥା କହିଲା ବେଳେ ତା’ ଆଖିରୁ ନିଆଁ ଝୁଲି ବାହାରି ଆସିଲା ଭଳିଆ ଲାଗୁଥିଲା । ସେମାନେ ଯେ କେତେ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦୟ, ବର୍ବର, ଅମାନୁଷିକ, ମଣିଷ ପଣିଆ ଠାରୁ କେତେ ତଳେ ରହିଛନ୍ତି, ତାହା ତା’ ଆଖିରେ ଉଙ୍କି ମାରୁଥିଲା । ଏ ସମୟରେ ମଙ୍ଗୁଳୁ, ଗୁରୁବାରୀ ଆସି ପହଞ୍ଚି ମୋ ପିଲାକୁ ଆଉ ହତହତା କରନ୍ତି ବୋଲି କହିଥିଲେ । କ୍ରମଶଃ ଭିତ କମିଥିଲା । ଟେଣ୍ଟ ରିପୋର୍ଟ ଧରି ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦୟ ତାର ହାତ ଅପରେସନ୍ କାଲିକି ହେବ ବୋଲି କହି ଚାଲିଗଲେ ।

ପିଲାର ପିଠିକୁ ଆଉଁସି ଗୋଡ଼ ପାଖରେ ବସିଥିଲା ଗୁରୁବାରୀ ଆଉ ମଙ୍ଗୁଳୁ ମନରେ ଅନେକ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ... “ମୋ ପିଲାର ହାତ କିମିତି ବେଗି ଭଲ ହାଇପିବ ହେ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ, ତମକୁ ହଜାରେ ମୁଣ୍ଡିଆ” ମନେ ମନେ କହି ଚାହିଁ ରହିଥିଲା ପୁଅକୁ ଅପଲକ ନୟନରେ ।

ଡାକ୍ତରଖାନା ସନ୍ନିକଟ ଖେଳ ପଡ଼ିଆରେ ବଡ଼ ଧରଣ ମିଟିଂର ଆୟୋଜନ ଚାଲିଥାଏ । ନେତା, ମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ, କଣ୍ଠାକୂର, ସି.ଡବ୍ଲ୍ୟୁ.ସି, କର୍ମକର୍ତ୍ତା ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ଯେ ଯେଝା କାମରେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତଥାନ୍ତି । ବୁଝିବାରେ ଜଣାଗଲା- ରାଜ୍ୟ ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଓ ପଡ଼ୋଶୀ ଆନ୍ଧ୍ର ରାଜ୍ୟର ଜଣେ ଶ୍ରମ ବିଭାଗ ପ୍ରତିନିଧି, ମାନ୍ୟବର ବିଭାଗୀୟ ମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ତଥା ରାଜ୍ୟର ମାନ୍ୟଗଣ୍ୟ କେତେଜଣ ଭଦ୍ରବ୍ୟକ୍ତି, ଏନ୍.ଜି.ଓ. ସଙ୍ଗଠକ ଉଚ୍ଚ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମକୁ ଆସୁଛନ୍ତି କିଛି ଆଲୋଚନା କରିବେ ଏବଂ ଦାଦନ ଖରୁଥିବା ଓ ସେଥିରେ ଶାରୀରକ, ମାନସିକ ତଥା ଅର୍ଥନୈତିକ ବିପୁଳ କ୍ଷତି ସହୁଥିବା ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କର ଅଭିଯାନ ନିମନ୍ତେ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚା କରିବେ, ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ କିପରି ସରକାରଙ୍କ ବିଭିନ୍ନ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମରେ ସାମିଲ କରି ଏକ ସୁସ୍ଥ ପାରିବାରିକ ଜୀବନ ଯାପନ କରିବାପାଇଁ ପ୍ରୋତ୍ସାହନ ଦେବେ, ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଲାଗି ବାସଗୃହ, ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ, ଗମନାଗମନ, ଜଳ ଯୋଗାଣ ନିମନ୍ତେ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ଏବଂ ସର୍ବୋପରି ରୋଜଗାର କ୍ଷମ କରାଇବାକୁ... ଏକ ନୂତନ ଜୀବନ ଦାନ ଦେବାଲାଗି ପ୍ରଚେଷ୍ଟା କରିବେ ।

ନିର୍ଦ୍ଧାରିତ ସମୟରେ ସଭାକାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହୋଇ ପରିଶେଷରେ ସମାଜର ଏଇ ଅବହେଳିତ, ନିସ୍ୱେଷିତ, ତଥା ସୁଧଖୋର ମହାଜନ ମାନଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା ଦାଦନ ଖଟିବାକୁ ବାଧ୍ୟହେଉଥିବା ପରିବାର ଗୁଡ଼ିକୁ ଯଥାରୀତି ସମ୍ମାନ ଦିଆଯାଇଥିଲା । ପଡ଼ୋଶୀ ରାଜ୍ୟରୁ ଆସିଥିବା ପ୍ରତିନିଧି ସେଠାକାର ଇଟାଭାଟି ମାଲିକ ଉପରେ ଖୁବ୍ ବର୍ଷିଲେ ଓ ମଙ୍ଗୁଳୁକୁ ତା’ର ବକେୟା ପାଉଣା ଚେକ୍ ଆକାରରେ ପ୍ରଦାନ କରିଥିଲେ । ଡାକ୍ତର ବାବୁ ସନିଆ ହାତରେ କୃତ୍ରିମ ଅଙ୍ଗ ରୋପଣ କରି ତାକୁ ସଭାସ୍ଥଳକୁ ଆଣିଲା ବେଳେ ମଂତ୍ରୀମାନ ଓ ସଭା ତଳେ ଥିବା ଦର୍ଶକ ମାନଙ୍କ ହୃଦୟ ଏ ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ଗଭୀର ରେଖାପାତ କରିଥିଲା । ନିରବ୍ଦତା ର ମୂର୍ତ୍ତିମତ୍ତ ଥିଲା ସେ ମଂତ୍ରୀ । ତା’ ପରେ ମାନ୍ୟବର ମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ ସନିଆ ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟରେ କିଛି କହି ତା’ର ଶିକ୍ଷା ଦାକ୍ଷୀ ସମସ୍ତ ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ ସରକାର ବହନ କରିବେ ବୋଲି ପ୍ରତିଶ୍ରୁତି ଦେଇଥିଲେ । ସନିଆ କୃତ୍ରିମ ହାତରେ ଲେଖାପଢ଼ା କରି ଜଣେ ଭଲ ମଣିଷ ହେବ ବୋଲି ମନେମନେ ଭାବୁଥିବା ବେଳେ ଗୁରୁବାରୀ ରୋଜଗାର ପଡ଼ିକାର୍ଡ୍ କୁ ଆଉ ମଙ୍ଗୁଳୁ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରଶାମକରି ସଭାକୁ ଆସିଥିବା ସମସ୍ତ ସୁଧଜନଙ୍କ ହିତ ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟରେ ତା’ର ଅନ୍ତର ର ଗଭୀରତମ ପ୍ରଦେଶରୁ ଝରିଆସୁଥିବା ଆବିଳତା ହୀନ ଭାବନା କୁ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତ କରୁଥିଲା ଭାବ ଗଦ୍‌ଗଦ୍ ହୋଇ ।

୨-ବି, ଅରୋଗ୍ରାମସ୍ ଆପାର୍ଟମେଣ୍ଟ (ଓମ୍‌ଫେଡ଼ ପ୍ଲାଣ୍ଟ ପଛ ପାଖ) ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ବିହାର,
ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର-୭୫୧୦୧୭ । ମୋ- ୭୨୦୫୫୭୭୮୮୭



ପ୍ରବାସୀ

*ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ସଂଘମିତ୍ରା ନାୟକ

ଇତିହାସ କି ରଖୁଅଛି
 ତାହାର ଠିକଣା ?
 ହିସାବକି ରହିଅଛି,
 କିଏ ଅବା ମରିହଜି ଗଲେ
 ସେ ନୂର ବିଦେଶରେ ? ?
 କାହା ପିଲାଛୁଆ ଅବା ନ ପାଇଲେ ଭିକ ? ? ?
 କେତେ ଆଶା ନେଇ ଯାଇଥିଲା ସିଏ ଦେଶାନ୍ତର ହୋଇ !
 ଭରିଦେବ ଘର ତାର ଟଙ୍କା ପଇସାରେ;
 ଆଉ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ପାଇଁ ଆଣିଦେବ ନୂଆ ନୂଆ ଅଙ୍ଗୀ
 ତାହା ସଙ୍ଗେ ପିଲା ପାଇଁ ପାଠପଢ଼ା ବହି ॥
 ଯାଇଥିଲା ଆଲୋକକୁ ଅନୁସରି
 ଫେରିବାର ବାଟ କିନ୍ତୁ ଜଣାନାହିଁ.....
 କାହାକୁ କରିବ ସାକ୍ଷୀ ?
 କିଏ ବା କହିବ ଘର ତା'ର କେଉଁଠାରେ;
 ନିଜକୁ ତ ଜଣା ନାହିଁ ନିଜ ଠିକଣାରେ.....,
 ଥରେ ଗଲେ ଫେରିବାର ବାଟ ନାହିଁ ଯେଉଁଠାରେ ॥
 ନିବନ୍ଧ କର୍ତ୍ତାତା'ର ଜୀବନର କିର୍ତ୍ତୀ
 ହର୍ତ୍ତୀ, କର୍ତ୍ତୀ, ଦଇବ ବିଧାତା !
 ପୁଅ ତାର ଚାହିଁଥିବ ବାପର ଫେରନ୍ତା ପଥକୁ.....
 ମା'ଆ ବିତ ମେଞ୍ଚା ମେଞ୍ଚା ଚାଉଳକୁ
 ଶ୍ରାଦ୍ଧ ଦେଉଥିବ କୁଆର ପାଟିରେ,
 ମାଆ ପାଇଁ ନୟନ ପିତୁଳା
 ନ ଫେରିଲେ ବୁଡ଼ିଯିବ ଭେଳା ।
 ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ତାର ତାହା ପାଇଁ ସଞ୍ଚବତୀ ଜାଳି
 ଶୁଭ ମନାସୀ ସେ ଲୁହ ଦେଉଥିବ ଢାଳି ।
 କରୁଥିବ ମାନସିକ ଅସୁମାରୀ ।
 ତା ପାଇଁ ତା ପତି ଅଟେ ଦେବତା ସମାନ
 ପତିବିନୀ ବଞ୍ଚିବାତ ମରିବା ସମାନ !
 ଚାହିଁ ଚାହିଁ ଗଲା ଦିନ;

ପଥ କାହିଁ ଦିଶୁନାହିଁ
 'ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ ଆଇନ' ତ
 ଯୋଥୁ ମଧ୍ୟେ ରହିଲାଣି ।
 ସରକାରଙ୍କର ପୁଣି ମିଥ୍ୟା ଡିମ୍ ଡିମ୍ ପିଟଣା
 ଖାଇବାକୁ ନାହିଁ ଘରେ ଚାଉଳ ର କଣା
 କେତେ ସଭା କେତେ କେତେ ସମିତି ପୁଣି,
 କେତେ ନୂଆ ନୂଆ ସ୍ଲୋଗାନ.....
 କିନ୍ତୁ, ଗରୀବର ଦୁଃଖ କେବେ ହୁଏ ନାହିଁ ଅବସାନ
 ଏଇ ଦେଶ ଏଇ ମାଟି ପାଇଁ ରକ୍ତ ଦେଇ
 ଖାଇବାକୁ ପେଟ ପାଇଁ ଗଣ୍ଡେ ଭାତ ନାହିଁ
 ବଡ଼ ବଡ଼ିଆଙ୍କ "ବିରିଆନି" କଥା
 କେଉଁଠୁ ବୁଝିବ ଏଇ ଦିନ ମଜୁରିଆ ମଥା ?
 ଗରିବର ପେଟତଳେ ହଜିଗଲା
 ସ୍ନେହ ପ୍ରେମ ବାର୍ତ୍ତା !!!
 ବୋତଲର ତଳେ କିବା "ମଣିଷ ପଣିଆ"
 ଉଙ୍କିମାରେ ମୁଣ୍ଡଠାରେ,
 ଅଛି କିବା ଏଇ ଧୋବ ଧାଉଳିଆ
 ପକେଟ ଭିତରେ ?
 କିନ୍ତୁ ତୁମେ ଥରେ ଦେଖ ଥରେ ଚାହିଁ
 ତୁମ ଭାଇ ହାତ ପାତେ ସେ,
 ଦିଗ୍ ବଳୟ ସେପାଖରେ
 ତା'ର ଦୁଃଖ, ନୁହେଁ କିବା ତୁମ ଦୁଃଖ
 ଏଇ ମାଟି ମା' ବୁକୁରେ ? ? ?
 ଦିଅ ଦିଅ ତାକୁ ଖାଦ୍ୟ
 ଦିଅ ତାକୁ ବାସ
 ଘୁଞ୍ଚିଯାଉ ତାର ବ୍ୟଥା,
 ଶୁଣି ମିଠା କଥା ।
 ମଣିଷ ପଣିଆ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଟେକି
 ଗାଇଯାଉ ଜୀବନର ଗାଥା ।

*୧୩୭, ପୁରୁଣା କାଠ ଯୋଡ଼ି ନଦି ବନ୍ଧ, ନେହେରୁ ଶିଶୁ ଉଦ୍ୟାନ ସମ୍ମୁଖ,
 ଖାନନଗର, କଟକ-୧୨ । ମୋ-୯୪୩୮୮୨୫୬୮୦୦



ଦାଦନ ଯାତ୍ରା

*ଆଶୁତୋଷ ପରିଡ଼ା

ସେମାନେ ଗୋଟିଏ ଦଳ
 ଯା ଭିତରେ ଅଛନ୍ତି ଅନେକ ପରିବାର
 ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର ଗୋଟିଏ ଗୋଟିଏ ବୁକୁଳା
 ରଂଗଛଡ଼ା ଟିଣ ବାକ୍ସ,
 ସେଇ ତାଙ୍କର ସଂସାର
 ଯାହା ଉଠିଯିବାକୁ ଅଛି
 ଆଉ ଏକ ରାଜ୍ୟକୁ
 ଦାଦନର ଦୁର୍ଗ ଭିତରକୁ ।

ସେମାନଙ୍କ ମୁଁହ ଉପରେ
 ଲେସି ହୋଇଛି ବିଷାଦ,
 ଭେଣ୍ଟିଆମାନଙ୍କ କଠିନ ଦୃଷ୍ଟି
 ବୁଢ଼ା ହୋଇଯାଉଥିବା ଲୋକଙ୍କ
 ପେଟୁଆ ଦିଶୁଛି ଆଖି,
 ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ନାହିଁ
 କୌଣସି ଭାବାନ୍ତର ।
 ଛୋଟ ପିଲାମାନେ ଛାଡ଼ି ଆସିଛନ୍ତି
 ବହି ବସ୍ତାନିର ଖେଳ ।

ସେଇ ଲୋକମାନେ
 ବାହାରି ଆସିଛନ୍ତି ନିଜ ଗାଆଁରୁ ।
 କିଏ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଚାଣି ନେଇ ଯାଉଛି
 ଗୋଟେ ମେଣ୍ଟାପଲ ପରି ?
 ଭୋକ ଆଗରେ ନଇଁ ପଡ଼ିଛି ମଣିଷ
 ଫାଶ ଆଗରେ ଦେଖାଇ ଦେଇଛି ବେକ ।

କେତେବେଳେ ପୁଣି
 ଉଦ୍ଧାର ହେଉଛନ୍ତି ସେମାନେ
 ଓ ପାଲଟି ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି ଖବର,
 ସେମାନେ ପୁଣି ଫେରି ଆସୁଛନ୍ତି
 ନିଜ ପୁରୁଣା ଭୋକ ପାଖକୁ
 ଯାହାଠାରୁ ଉଦ୍ଧାର ପାଇବାକୁ
 ଘଟେନାହିଁ କୌଣସି ଚମତ୍କାର

କେବଳ ଏକ ଅଦୃଶ୍ୟ ଜାଲ
 ବାଂଧୁଦିଏ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ହାତ ଗୋଡ଼,
 ଦଲାଲମାନଙ୍କ ଗୁପ୍ତ ଛୁରୀ
 କାଟିଦିଏ ଅସମ୍ଭବ ପାପୁଲି ।

କେବେ ପ୍ରତିବାଦର ଟେକାଟିଏ
 ବୁଡ଼ିଯାଏ ପାଣି ଭିତରେ
 ଛୋଟ ଛୋଟ ତରଂଗସବୁ ମିଳେଇଯାଏ,
 ଶିଳ୍ପୀ ଶ୍ରମକୁ ବାଂଧୁ ନେବାକୁ
 ବଢ଼ି ଆସୁଥାନ୍ତି କେତେ ଚତୁର ହାତ,
 କ୍ରୀତଦାସ ହୋଇଯିବାକୁ
 ପାଦ ବଢ଼ାଇଥାଏ ମଣିଷ ।

ସେମାନେ ଚାଲିଯା'ନ୍ତି
 ଗୋଟିଏ ନିଷ୍ଠୁର ରାଜ୍ୟରୁ
 ଆଉ ଏକ ନିଷ୍ଠୁର ରାଜ୍ୟକୁ
 ଗୋଟିଏ ଦୁଃଖ ପାଖରୁ
 ଆଉ ଏକ ନିର୍ଯ୍ୟାତନାକୁ
 ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଅଟକାଇ ରଖିବାକୁ
 ହାତ ଚଳୁ ନଥାଏ ନିୟମର
 ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଫେରାଇ ଆଣିବାକୁ
 ବଳ ନଥାଏ ଅନୁକଂପାର
 ସେମାନଙ୍କ କଥା କହିବାକୁ
 ପାଟି ନଥାଏ ସଭ୍ୟ ସମାଜର
 ସବୁ ଯୋଜନା ଓ ବିକାଶର
 ପ୍ରଶସ୍ତି ଆଗରେ
 ସେମାନେ ସବୁବେଳେ ଏକ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନଚିହ୍ନ

ମୋ : ୯୯୩୭୫୭୩୩୫୮



ପ୍ରବାସରୁ ଚିଠି

*ପ୍ରଭାକର ମହାପାତ୍ର

ବୋଉଲୋ !

ତୁ ଆଜି ଭାରି ମନେ ପଡୁଛି
ଆଜି ପରା ରଜ ଗାଁରେ କେତେ ହସଖେଳ,
ରଜପାନ
ପୋଡ଼ ପିଠା କଟା ସରିବଣି, ଝିଅଙ୍କ ରଜଦୋଳି
ପୁଅଙ୍କ ବାଗୁଡ଼ି କିତି କିତି ଖେଳ, ବୁଢ଼ାଙ୍କ ତାସଖେଳ
ତୋ ହାତ ତିଆରି ଏଣୁରି ପିଠାକୁ
ଖାସି-ମାଂସର ଝୋଳ ।

ମାଲିକ ଛାଡ଼ିଲାମି ରଜକୁ
ତା'ର ଭର ଆମେ ଥରେ ଗଲେ
ଆଉ ଆସିବୁନି ।

ଏରାଜ୍ୟରେ ନାହିଁ ରଜ
ବନସ୍ତ ନାହିଁ କଂକ୍ରିଟ ଜଙ୍ଗଲ
କାନ୍ଥୁଛି ଗଜରାଜ
ଭାଇ ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ମୁକୁଟ ନାହିଁ
ଅଛି ମାଟି ପଥରର ବୋଝ ।

ଇଟା ଭାଟିରେ ଖଟଣି
ଏଠାକାର ଖଟା ପାଣି ଜଳବାୟୁ ଦେହରେ ଯାଉନି
କର୍ମର କଷଣ, ମାଲିକର ନିର୍ଯ୍ୟାତନା
ଦେହରୁ ଶୁଖୁନି ଝାଳ
ଆଉ ତୋତେ ଦେଖୁ ପାରିବିନି ।

ତୁ ଦିନେ ଛାଡୁ ନଥିଲୁ ଖେଳିବାକୁ ଖରାବେଲେ
ଏଠି କାମ କେବଳ ହରିଣ ତିଆଁ ଖରାବେ

ଭାଟିର ନିଆଁ ଝାସରେ
ଫ୍ୟାକ୍ଟର ଫର୍ନେସ୍ ତାତିରେ
ବାପା ଚାଲିଗଲେ ବୋଲି
ଚେକି ଦେଲୁ ଦାଦନ ଦଲାଲ ହାତରେ
ଦି'ଅକ୍ଷର ପଢ଼ି ପାରିଲିନି
ଟିପ୍ପ ନେଉଛନ୍ତି ସାଦା କାଗଜରେ,
ମରିଗଲେ ଆତ୍ମହତ୍ୟାର ରୂପଦେବେ
ଦଲାଲର ପାଉଣା ଶୁଝିବନି
ଦୁଃଖ ସରିବନି ।

କାଲିଠାରୁ ଜର, ଦେହରେ ଖଇଫୁଟା ତାତି
ତାନ୍ତର ନାହିଁ, ପଥ ନାହିଁ
ରୋଗ ଭୋଗିଲେ ଔଷଧ ମିଳୁନି ।

ମାଲିକର ପାଟି ଅସୁସ୍ଥତା ଗୋଟେ ଛଳନା
କାମ ନକରିବାର ବାହାନା
ଖଟିଲେ ଖାଇବ, ନହେଲେ ଉପାସେ ରହିବ
ଛାଟ ମାରି କରୁଛି ଆକଟ
କାମ ନକଲେ କହୁଛି କାଟିଦେବ ହାତ
ଏଠାରୁ ନାହିଁ ନିଷ୍ଠାର
ଯମରାଜ ହେ ! ଦୟାକର ।

୩୭୧, ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ନଗର, ୟୁନିଟ୍ - ୪, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର

ଫୋ- ୯୯୩୭୨୪୮୦୭୭



ପ୍ରବାସୀରେ ଶ୍ରମିକ

*ଡକ୍ଟର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀକାନ୍ତ ଖୁଣ୍ଟିଆ

ପ୍ରବାସରେ ବାସ ମୋର
 ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ
 ଶ୍ରମକରି ଯେତ ଯୋଷେ
 ସୁଖ ମୋ କ୍ଷଣିକ ।
 ସକାଳରୁ ସଞ୍ଜ ଯାଏଁ
 ଖରୁଥାଏ ନିତି,
 ଖଟିବା ପାଇଁ କପାଳେ
 ଲେଖୁଛୁ ନିୟତୀ ।
 ପଡ଼ିଗଲେ ଦେହଦୁଃଖେ
 କେହି ନାହିଁ ସାହା
 ପାଶେ ବସି ପଦେ ଅବା
 କରିବ କେ ଆହା ।
 କାହିଁ ଦୂରେ ପରିବାର
 କାହିଁ ଦୂରେ ଗାଁ
 ଖରୁଛି ମୁଁ କେତେଦୂରେ
 ପରଦେଶୀ ବାଆ
 ମୋ ଭାଗ୍ୟରେ ଲେଖାଅଛି
 ଏତେ କଷ୍ଟ ଭାର
 ନହେଲେ କୁଟେନା ମତେ
 ଦିମୁଠା ଆହାର
 ଜଗତଜନଙ୍କ ହିତ
 ମୋ ଜୀବନ ନୀତି
 ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ ମୋର
 ମନେ ନାହିଁ ଭୀତି ।

ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ

*କିଶଳୟ ଶତପଥ୍ୟ

ଅଭାବୀ ଗରିବ ଶ୍ରମିକ ସେ
 ଅଭାବେ ତା ଭାବର ସଂସାର
 କାମ ମିଳିଗଲେ ଯେତ ପାଇଁ
 ଯୋଗାଡ଼ି ନିଏ ଦି ମୁଠା ଆହାର
 ନହେଲେ ତ ତା ପାଇଁ ସବୁ ରାତି ମହାଶିବ ରାତ୍ରି
 ଉପବାସ ସାରା ପରିବାର ।

ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଉପର ରଣ ସର
 ଭୋକରେ ଜଳୁଛି ଉଦର
 ଆସିଛି କିଏ ଠିକାଦାର
 ଦେଇଛି ବିରାଟ ଅଫର
 ଏତେ ମଜୁରୀ ପୁଣି ବାଟ ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ
 ଯେତ ପୁରା ଦି ଓଲି ଆହାର

ଏବେ ଗାଁ ଛାଡ଼ି, ଛାଡ଼ି ଘର ଦ୍ଵାରା,
 ଆତ୍ମିୟ ସ୍ଵଜନ ଓ ନିଜ ପରିବାର
 ବାହାରିଛି ଦୂର ବିଦେଶ ସେ
 ପିଠିରେ ତା ପ୍ରବାସୀ ମୋହର
 ଏଠି କିନ୍ତୁ ସବୁ ଭିନ୍ନ, ଓଲଟା
 ସବୁ ପ୍ରତିଶ୍ରୁତି ପାଣିର ଗାର
 ହାତ ଭଙ୍ଗା ପରିଶ୍ରମ ଆଉ
 ଦିନ ରାତି ସବୁ ତ ଏକାକାର
 ସାମିତ ଓ ଅରୁଚି ଖାଦ୍ୟରେ
 ଯେତ ପୁରେ ନାହିଁ ତାର
 ଶୋଷି ହୋଇଯାଇଛି ରକ୍ତ ଜମା
 ନୋଡରି ଯାଉଛି ସୁଠାମ ଶରୀର ।

କହିଯାଇଛି ନିଷ୍ଠୁର ଠିକାଦାର
 ମୁଁ ଅଗ୍ରୀମ ଦେଇ ତମକୁ କିଣିଛି
 ତମ ରକ୍ତ ମାଂସ ସବୁ ମୋର
 ଫେରିଯିବ ହାତ ଓ ତମତା ନେଇ
 ଯେଉଁଟା ଖାଲି ତମ ବାପା ମା'ର ।
 ଧନ୍ୟରେ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ
 ଧନ୍ୟ ସେଇ ନିଷ୍ଠୁର ଠିକାଦାର
 ଏଠି ନିର୍ବିଘ୍ନରେ ମଣିଷକୁ ପଶ୍ୟ ଦ୍ରବ୍ୟ କରି
 ମଣିଷ କରୁଛି ମଣିଷ ବେପାର ।



ଅତିହୀ ମାଟି

*ଯୋଗେନ୍ଦ୍ର କୁମାର ନାୟକ

ମାଟି ଚିହ୍ନା ନ ଥାଇ ବି
ବାର୍ତ୍ତ ହୁଏ ଭିକାମାଟିର ବାସ୍ନା
ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଛିଣ୍ଡେ ଆକାଶରୁ
ଝରଝର ଶ୍ରାବଣ ହେଇ ।

କାହିଁ ସେଇ ଆକାଶ
କାହିଁ ବା ସେଇ ମାଟି
ଯେଉଁଠି ପବନରେ ଭାସୁଥାଏ
ଧାନଫୁଲର ମହକ
ପତ୍ରମାନଙ୍କ ଗହଳରେ ଝଲସେ
ଉଡ଼ିଆଣି ଜହ୍ନର ଦୁନିଆ
କୁହୁକୀ ବସନ୍ତର ଚିଠି ।

ସେମାନେ ସମସ୍ତେ ଭିଡ଼ ଜମାନ୍ତି
ମନଭରି ଗୁଣ୍ଡୁ ଗୁଣାନ୍ତି
ନିଜ ଗୀତ ନିଜେ ଗାଇ ଗାଇ
ଅତିହୀ ମାଟିରେ ଥାଇ ।

ଅଇଲା ବେଳେ
ସମୟ ହାତକୁ ଟେକି ଦେଇ ଆସିଲି
କୁଡ଼ କୁଡ଼ ବିଶ୍ୱାସର ମଞ୍ଜି
ମାଟି ଅଗଣା
ଶାଗ ପଟାଳିର ଛନ୍ଦ
ସଜନା ଗଛର କୋରଡ଼ରେ
ଦରପୋଡ଼ା କଲିଜା
ସେଇଠି ମୋର ସବୁଥାଇ
କିଛି ବି ନ ଥାଏ ।

ଶୁଣିଥିଲି ପ୍ରବାସରେ ଫୁଲଫୁଟେ
ସୁନାର ବଗିଚାରେ
ହାଡ଼ ସନ୍ଧିରୁ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଉର୍ଦ୍ଧ୍ୱ
ମୁକ୍ତାଝରେ ରାତି ଅଗଣାରେ
ସିମ୍ ସିମ୍ ଖୋଲିଯାଏ
ସ୍ୱପ୍ନର କୁହୁକ ପେଡ଼ି ।

ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଭାଗିଲା ଉତ୍ତାରୁ
ଛିଣ୍ଡପଡ଼େ ଆକାଶ
ମାଟିହୁଏ ମୁଣ୍ଡଝାଳ
ବାକିଯାହା ରହିଯାଏ
ଅରାଏ ଦୀର୍ଘଶ୍ୱାସ ।

ଏଇଠି କେବେ ଫିଟେଇବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିନି
ମମତାର ଗଣ୍ଠି
ପଥର ସାଥେ ପଥର ହେଲାବେଳେ
ଯଦ୍ ସାଥେ ଭାବ ରଖି
କାଟିବାକୁ ପଡ଼େ ସଂପର୍କର କଟଟି ।

ଦି' ଭୋକ ଜୀବନର ଲାଗି
ଶୁଖିଯାଏ ଘଡ଼ି ଘଡ଼ି ସମ୍ଭବନାର ତଣ୍ଡି
ମନେପଡ଼େ ଗାଁ ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ଛାଡ଼ିଆସିଥିବା
କାଦ ଗୁଲୁଗୁଲୁ ଦିହର ମାଟି ।
ଏଇଠି କାଳେ ରାତିପାହିବ
ଏକ ଅନନ୍ୟ ସକାଳର
ସିନ୍ଦୂରା ଫିଟିବ
ବାର ମାସି ଚଢ଼େଇର ଗୀତରେ
ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଉଇଁଲେ ଭାଙ୍ଗିଦେବ ବିଷାଦର ମେଘ
ହାତରେ ନେଇ ପିଠିରେ ଚାବୁକ୍
ଫରକ ଥିବ ଏତିକି
ସେଠି ସ୍ୱେଦ ବାଷ୍ପୁଥିବା ବିପିଏଲ୍ ସର୍କାର
ଏଠି ଖଟିଖୁଆର ରକତ ପିଉଥିବା
ମାତାଲ ସର୍ଦ୍ଦାର ।

କିଏ ବା ବୁଝିବ କହ
ଏଠି କେତେ ହତସତ୍ତ ଶ୍ରମିକର ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଝାଳ
ଭିକାମାଟିରେ ଆପଣାର ପରିଚୟ
ଖୋଜି ପାଇ ନ ଥିବା
ସବୁ ଦଇବ କାଂଗାଳ/ପରାଣ ବିକଳେ
ପ୍ରବାସ ରେ କାଟୁଥାଇ କାଳ ।

ଗ୍ରାମ୍ୟ ଉନ୍ନୟନ ବିଭାଗ, ରାଜ୍ୟ ସଚିବାଳୟ, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର-୧, ମୋ-୯୪୩୭୩୦ ୧୫୨୭



ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକର ଦୁଃଖ

*ଦିଲ୍ଲୀପ କୁମାର ବେହେରା

ଯେଉଁଠି ରହିଲେ ମୋ ଦେଶ ମୋ ଜାତି
 ମୋର ପାଇଁ ଅଟେ ବଡ଼
 ପିତା ମାତାଙ୍କର ଥିଲେ ଆଶିର୍ବାଦ
 ଆସୁ ଯେତେ ଝଞ୍ଜାଝଡ଼,
 ସବୁକୁ ନିଜର ପାରୁଥିଲେ କରି
 ଯିଏ ଯେଉଁଠାରେ ରହୁ
 ଆପଣା ପଣରେ ନିଜର କରେସେ
 ଯେତେ ଦୁଃଖ ନିଜେ ସହୁ ।
 ନିଜ ପରିବାର ଜାତି ପରିଚ୍ଛନ୍ନ
 ସଭିଙ୍କୁ ଛାଡ଼ି ସେ ଯାଏ
 ରାଜ୍ୟରୁ ଦେଶ ଦେଶରୁ ବିଦେଶ
 ସବୁକୁ ଆଦରି ନିଏ ।
 କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ରେ ରହି ନିଷ୍ଠାର ସହିତ
 ଦିବସ ତା' ଯାଏ ବିତି
 ରାତି ଘନେଇଲେ ଦୁଃଖ ମାତି ଆସେ
 ମୁହଁମାନ ଯାଏ ଦିଶି
 ଦୂର ପରବତ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଦିଶଇ
 ବନାନୀ ବି ଦିଶେ ଭଲ
 ପାଖ ମାଡ଼ିଗଲେ କେତେ ଯେ ବିପଦ
 ସାର ହେବା କଲବଲ ।
 ଜୀବନ ଜୀବିକା ଯେଉଁଠାରେ ରୁହେ
 ଆସୁ ଯେତେ ଦୁଃଖ ମାନ

ସବୁ କଷ୍ଟ ସହି ଯାଏ ସେଠି ରହି
 କରେ ଧନ ଉପାର୍ଜନ ।
 ପିଲାଙ୍କ ମୁହଁରେ ଆହାର ଦେବାରେ
 ଥାଏ ଯେଉଁ ଆତ୍ମ ତୃପ୍ତି
 କହିଛୁଏ ନାହିଁ ଅନ୍ତରର କଥା
 ମାସ ବର୍ଷ ଯାଏ ବିତି
 ଦେଶକୁ ଫେରିବା ରାଜ୍ୟ ଫେରିବା
 ଘରକୁ ଫେରିବା ସୁଖ
 ଖୁସିରେ ନୟନୁ ବହିଯାଏ ନୀର
 ତୁଟିଯାଏ ସବୁ ଦୁଃଖ ।
 ପ୍ରବାସେ ରହିଲେ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଶ୍ରମିକ
 ପରିଚୟ ଦେଶ ଜାତି
 ବିଶ୍ୱ ଦରବୀରେ ଯେଉଁଠି ରହିଲେ
 ମାନିବାର ଅଛି ନୀତି
 ତାହାହିଁ ହୋଇବ ଆମ ପାଇଁ ବଡ଼
 ଆମେରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଜାତି
 ଜାଭା ସୁମାତ୍ରାକୁ ଯାଉଥିଲେ ଦିନେ
 ଧରି ବାଣିଜ୍ୟର ନୀତି
 କାମ କରୁଥିଲେ ନାମ କମାଇଲେ
 ରହିବ ରାଜ୍ୟ ଖ୍ୟାତି
 ସାନ ବଡ଼ ଅଟେ ନୁହେଁ ବଡ଼କଥା ଏଠି
 ବଡ଼ ଆମ ଜାତି ।

ଘର ନଂ - ୯/୧, ଏସ ଟାଇପ, ୟୁନିଟ୍-୯, ପ୍ଲଟ୍, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର-୭୭, ମୋ - ୮୮୯୫୩୦୧୫୫୫



ଦନେଇର ଦୁଃଖ

*ଅଧ୍ୟାପିକା ସୌଦାମିନୀ ବେହେରା

ଲୋଟି ପଡୁଛି ତେଜହୀନ ଶରୀର
 ଛିଣ୍ଡା କଦ୍ଦାର ପରସ୍ତ ପରସ୍ତ ଧୂଳିରେ
 ସ୍ମୃତିରେ କୋହ
 ଭାସି ଯାଉଛି
 ଦନେଇ ଓ ଦୁଲିର
 ହସ କାନ୍ଦର ସଂସାର ।
 ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରମୁଖୀ ଭାର୍ଯ୍ୟାର କପାଳେ
 ଝଲସୁଛି ସିନ୍ଦୂର ବିନ୍ଦୁ
 ଯେମିତି ଉଜ୍ଜି ମାରୁଛି
 ନିରିହ ସକାଳର ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ।
 ସେ ଝାଉଁଳି ଯାଏ
 ତା ଆଲିଙ୍ଗନରେ
 ଦୋଳିଖେଳେ ପ୍ରଜାପତି ମନ
 ଗଲାଦିନର ପ୍ରୀତିରେ
 ହସି ଉଠୁଛି ସାତରଂଗର ଇନ୍ଦ୍ରଧନୁ ।
 ଆକାଶରେ ଯେମିତି
 ଦୁଇଟି ତାରାଫୁଲ
 ଆଖିର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଭିତରେ
 ସିଂହର ବଳ
 ପୁରିଲା ପୁରିଲା ଲାଗେଛାଡି ।
 ଆଉକି ଅଛି ସେ ଦିନ
 ଭୋକିଲା ପେଟରେ
 ସରେ ନାହିଁ ବେଳକାଳ
 ଯିବାକୁ ହେବ ବହୁଦୂର

କେଉଁ ଅଜଣା ରାଇଜରୁ
 ଆସିଛି ଖବର
 ଆଣିଦେବ ଖୁସିର ଫୁଆର ।
 ଜ୍ଞାତି କୁରୁମ୍ଭ ପ୍ରିୟ ପରିଜନ
 ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ପଛରେ ପକାଇ
 ସାଜିବ ଶ୍ରମିକ
 ପର ଦେଶରେ ପେଟ ଚାଖଣ୍ଡକ ପାଇଁ ।
 ଲୁହଲହୁ ହେବ ଏକାକାର
 ଜୀବନ ଯାତନା ର ଗଣିତ କଷାରେ
 ଆଗେଇଯିବ ଦି'ପାଦ
 ଆଉ ଚାହିଁବନି ପଛକୁ
 ହସି ଉଠିବେ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ
 ମିଟି ମିଟି ଆକାଶର ତାରା ।
 ଦନେଇ ଏବେ ପ୍ରବାସରେ
 ଦେଖୁଥିବା ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଭିତରେ
 ଯାତନାର ଇନ୍ଦ୍ର ଜାଳ
 କେଉଁ ଅଜଣା ରୋଗନେଇ
 ତା'ର ଲେଉଟାଣି ବେଳ ।
 ଯେଉଁଦିନ ଛୁଇଁଲା
 ଆପଣାର ମାଟି
 କେଉଁ କଲା କର୍ମରେ
 ଏବେ ଜୀଉଛି ଜୀବନ
 ନିଜ ଭାଗ୍ୟକୁ ନିଜ ହାତରେ ଥୋଇ
 କତରା ଉପରେ ଗଢୁଛି ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ।

ଶ୍ରୀ ସୋମନାଥ ବାଲୁଙ୍କେଶ୍ୱର ଦେବ
 ମହିଳା ମହାବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ
 କନ୍ଧିଆ, ଜଟଣୀ, ଖୋର୍ଦ୍ଧା, ମୋ : ୯୪୩୮୭୩୪୪୩୦



ପ୍ରବାସ ଭାବନା

*ଖଗେଶ୍ୱର ମହତାବ

କେତେ ଆଶା କେତେ ସପନନେଇ ମୁଁ
 ଆସିଥିଲି ଦୂର ବିଦେଶ
 ବିଦେଶରେ ଯାଇ ସୁଖରେ ରହିବି
 ଭୋଗିବିନି ଭୋକ ଉପାସ ॥
 ବିଦେଶରେ ଭଲ ଖାଇବା ଖିଲିବା
 ଅଧିକ ମଜୁରୀ ମିଳିବ
 ନିଜ ଗୁଜୁରାଣ ମେଣ୍ଟିଲା ପରେବି
 ଭଲ ଦି' ପଇସା ବଳିବ ॥
 କେଜଗା ବରଷ ଖଟି ଦେଲେ ସେଠି
 ଚାହୁଁ ଚାହୁଁ ଦିନ ସରିବ
 ପେଟ ପାଇଁ ଭାତ ଚିନ୍ତା ରହିବନି
 ରହିବନି ଦୁଃଖ ଅଭାବ ॥
 ପିଲାଛୁଆ ଆଉ ଅଭେକା ହେବନି
 ଘର ଦିବଖରା ତୋଳିବି
 କିଏ ଜାଣିଥିଲା ମହରଗୁ ଆସି
 କାନ୍ଧାରରେ ଏଠି ସଜିବି ॥
 ଯାହା ଭରସାରେ ଆସିଲି ଏଠିକୁ
 ଦେଖା ଚାହାଁ ନାହିଁ ତାହାର
 ଠିକାଦାର ବାବୁ ମଜୁରୀ ଦେଉନି
 ପେଟକୁ ଦେଉନି ଆହାର ॥
 ଆହାର ମାଗିଲେ ପାହାର ମିଳୁଛି
 ମଜୁରୀ ମାଗିଲେ ଶୁଣୁନି
 ଭଲ ମନ୍ଦ କେହି ବୁଝିବାକୁ ନାହିଁ
 ଖଟି ଖଟି ଦିନ ସରୁନି ॥
 ଏବେ ମୁଁ ବୁଝୁଛି ବିଦେଶଠୁ ଭଲ
 ଗାଆଁ ଭିଟାମାଟି ନିଜର
 ତୁଟି ଗଲାଣି ମୋ ସୁଖର ସପନ
 ମନେପଡ଼େ ଘର ସଂସାର ॥
 ଯାହା ହେଉ ପଛେ ରହିବିନି ଏଠି
 ମୋ ଗାଆଁକୁ ଯିବି ମୁଁ ଫେରି
 କାହାରି କଥାରେ ପଡ଼ିବିନି ଆଉ
 ମୁଁ ବୁଝିଗଲି ଭଲ କରି ॥
 ଦାଦନ ଖଟିବା ପାଇଁ ଯଦି ଆସେ
 କେବେ ଦୂର ବିଦେଶକୁ
 ବିଧି ମୁତାବକ ଆସିବି ଯେମିତି
 ଠକି ଯିବିନାହିଁ ପଛକୁ ॥

ଦୂରେ ଯେବେ ଯାଏ ଗୁଲି

*ମନୋରମା ମିଶ୍ର

ବୁଢ଼ାବାପା, ବୁଢ଼ୀ ମା'
 ନୂଆ ବାହା ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ତା'ର
 ତରୁଣୀ ସେବତୀ
 ବଡ଼ଭାଇ, ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ପିଲା ନେଇ ତା'ର
 ନିଜସୁଖେ ଅଲଗା ରହିଛି
 ଚଷିବାକୁ ଜମି ନାହିଁ
 ଝକିରିକୁ ପାଠ ନାହିଁ ବେଶି
 ଶୁକିଆ ଓରଫ ଶୁକଦେବ
 ବାହାରିଲା ଦଲାଲ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ
 ଦୁବାଇରେ ,ଶ୍ରମିକ ହେବାକୁ
 ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ତା' କହିଲା ଦୁଃଖେ
 ପେଟରେ ବଦୁଛି ଭୃଣ ଜମା ଦୁଇମାସ ।
 ଶୁକିଆର ବଡ଼ତା ପାହୁଣ୍ଡ
 ଫେରିବ କି ନ ଫେରିବ ହୋଇ
 ଆଗେଇ ଚାଲିଲା ଶେଷ
 ସାଥୁ ମେଲେ ଦୁବାଇକୁ
 ଦଲାଲ ସହିତ, ମନଟିକୁ
 ଛାଡ଼ିଦେଇ ନିପଟ ମଫସଲରେ
 ନିଜରାଇଜରେ ॥
 ଦଲାଲ ଦେଖାଇଥିଲା
 ଲକ୍ଷେ ଆଶା, ଅୟୁତେ ସପନ
 ଭିତ କାମରେ ଟିକେ ମିଳୁନାହିଁ ଫୁରସତ୍
 ଭାବିବାକୁ ସେବତୀର ନିଃଶ୍ୱେଳ ଦେହର କଥା,
 ଗାଁ, ଘର, ବାପା, ମା
 ପତ୍ର ପୋଡ଼ା, ଶାଗରାଇ,
 ଶୁଖୁଆ, ପଖାଳ ଖିଆ ମାଟି ବାରଣ୍ଡାରେ ।
 ଝାଳକୁ ରକତ କରି ଖଟି ଖଟି
 ପେଟ ପିଠି କାଟି ଖାଲି ସଞ୍ଚି ସଞ୍ଚି
 ନିୟମିତ ପଠାଇଲା ଟଙ୍କା
 ଦେହବର୍ଷ ପରେ ଶୁକିଆ ଘରକୁ ଆସିଲା
 ଆଠମାସ ରହିବା ଭିତରେ
 ବାପା ଶୁଭଘର ସାରିଗଲା ବେଳେ
 ପୁଣି ଏକ ଭୃଣ ତାଜରାୟୁରେ
 ରୋପି ଦେଇଗଲା ॥

ଗୋଦାବରୀଶ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ସଂସଦ, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର

ନୀଳାଦ୍ରୀ ବିହାର, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର-୨, ମୋ - ୯୮୭୧୫୭୮୫୩୨



ଜଣେ ଦାଦନ ଶ୍ରମିକକୁ ପଢ଼ାର ଚିଠି

*ଦିନବନ୍ଧୁ ଅଧିକାରୀ

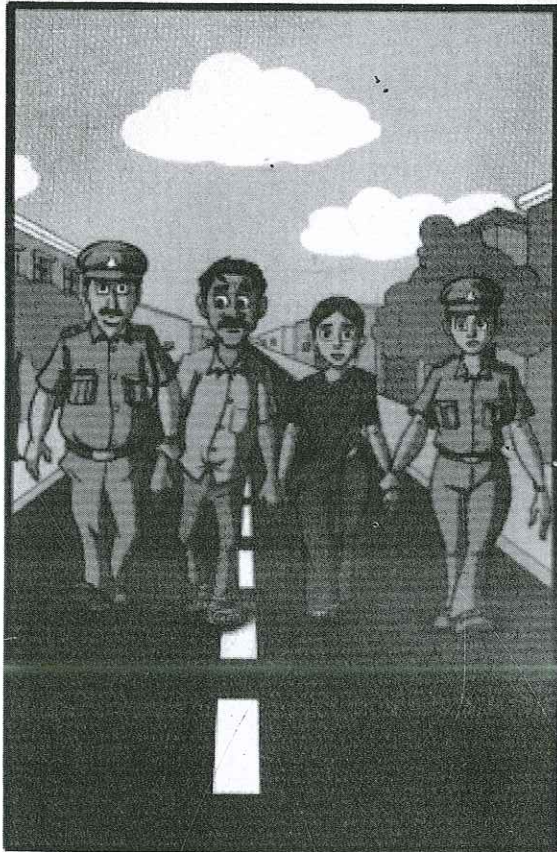
ପ୍ରାଣନାଥ ମୋର ପ୍ରାଣମ
 ହାନର ଦୁଃଖର ଜଣାଣ
 କି ଲେଖିବି ଆଉ, ବୁଦ୍ଧି-ଦିଶୁନାହିଁ,
 କେତେ ପାଇଲିଣି କଷଣ (୧) ପ୍ରାଣନାଥ... ।
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 କିପରି ମୋ ଦିନ ସାରିବି ସଂସାରେ,
 କିପାଇଁ ଗୁହାରି ନଶୁଣି । (୨)
 ତୁମେ ଗଲାବେଳେ ଯେତେବେଳେ,
 ପିଲା ହୋଇଥିଲା ଛ' ମାସ
 ଏକ ବରଷର, ପୁଅକୁ ମୋହର
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 ବାଆ ବୋଲି କେତେ କାନ୍ଦୁଛି
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 ପଇସା କେଉଁଠୁ ପାଉଛି ? (୪)
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 କଲାଣି ମୋତେ କଲବଲି

ପଇସା ମାଗିଲେ ମହତ ଯିବଟି
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 ଶ୍ରମିକ ଦପ୍ତର ଦଇତି
 ଗଲା ସିନା ମୋ ଧଡ଼ି ଛିଡ଼ି
 ଅଧିକାରୀ ଦେଲେ କମ୍ପାନୀକୁ ଚିଠି
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 ଫେରିଆସ ପ୍ରିୟ ଗଗନ
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 ଅଧିକ ପଇସା ଦରକାର ନାହିଁ
 ତମ ବାଟ ଚାହିଁ ରହିଛି (୧୦)
 ଶହେ ଦିନ କାମ କରିବା
 ବେକାରି ଭଉ ତ ପାଇବା
 ପିଲାକୁ ଇସ୍କୁଲେ, ନାମ ଲେଖାଇବା
 ଦିଅକ୍ଷର ପାଠ ପଢ଼ାଇବା । (୧୧)
 ଶୁଣିଲି ଆମ ଗାଁ ସନିଆ
 ଜାଜନ ଯାଇଣ ରୋଗିଆ
 ଗୋଟିଏ ବର୍ଷରେ ମଲା ଏଡ଼ସ୍ରେ
 ତା' ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ହେଲା ଘର ମୂଲିଆ । (୧୨)
 ସେ ରୋଗ ଯାହାକୁ ଧରିବ
 ଅଳପ ଦିନରେ ମରିବ
 ପରିବାର ତାର ହେବ ଛାରଖାର
 ଆଉ କି ସଂସାର କରିବ ? (୧୩)
 ତୁମକୁ ମୋ ରାଣ ଗଗନ
 ମାଡ଼ିବନି ଦାରୀ ସଦନ
 ହୋଇଲେ ଏଡ଼ସ୍, ଜୀବନ ସରିବ
 ନ ଦେଖିବି ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ବଦନ । (୧୪)
 ଟାକିଲି ବାଟକୁ ତୁମରି
 ଗାଁଆକୁ ବେଗେ ଆସ ଫେରି
 ସୁନାର ସଂସାର ହୋଇବ ଆମର
 ଇତି ତୁମର ହାନଗୋରୀ । (୧୫)

ଉପଶ୍ରମ ଆୟୁକ୍ତ



ଶ୍ରମ ଓ କର୍ମଚାରୀ ରାଜ୍ୟ ବୀମା ବିଭାଗ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର



- ଶିଶୁମାନଙ୍କୁ ଶ୍ରମରେ ନିୟୋଜିତ କଲେ, ଏହା ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଅଧିକାରକୁ ଖୁଣ୍ଟି କରେ ।
- ୧୪ ବର୍ଷରୁ କମ ବୟସର ଶିଶୁମାନଙ୍କୁ ଶ୍ରମିକ ଭାବରେ ନିୟୋଜନ ଆଇନତଃ ଏକ ଦଣ୍ଡନୀୟ ଅପରାଧ ।
- ଶିଶୁ ଶ୍ରମିକ (ନିଷେଧ ଓ ନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରଣ) ଅଧିନିୟମ-୧୯୮୬ର ଧାରା ୩ ଅନୁସାରେ ଶିଶୁମାନଙ୍କୁ ୧୮ଟି ବୁରି ଏବଂ ୬୫ଟି ପ୍ରକ୍ରିୟାରେ ନିୟୋଜନ କରିବା ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଭାବେ ବାରଣ କରାଯାଇଛି ।
- ଏହି ନିୟମର ଧାରା ୧୪ ଅନୁସାରେ ଯେଉଁମାନେ ଶିଶୁମାନଙ୍କୁ ଶ୍ରମିକ ଭାବରେ ନିୟୋଜନ କରିବେ, ସେମାନେ ୩ ମାସରୁ ୧ ବର୍ଷ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଜେଲ୍ କିମ୍ବା ସର୍ବନିମ୍ନ ୧୦ ହଜାର ଟଙ୍କାରୁ ସର୍ବାଧିକ ୨୦ ହଜାର ଟଙ୍କା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଜୋରିମାନା ଅଥବା ଉଭୟ ଦଣ୍ଡରେ ଦଣ୍ଡିତ ହେବେ ।
- ଏହି ଅପରାଧକୁ ପୁନର୍ବାର ଘଟାଇଲେ ସର୍ବନିମ୍ନ ୬ ମାସରୁ ସର୍ବାଧିକ ୨ ବର୍ଷ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଜେଲ୍ ଦଣ୍ଡରେ ଦଣ୍ଡିତହେବାର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ଅଛି ।
- ଶିଶୁ ଅଧିକାରର ସୁରକ୍ଷା ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ନାଗରିକଙ୍କ କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ । ଶିଶୁମାନଙ୍କୁ ଶ୍ରମରୁ ଦୂରରେ ରଖି ଏକ ସୁସ୍ଥ ଏବଂ ସୁରକ୍ଷିତ ସମାଜ ଗଠନ କରିବାରେ ସହଯୋଗ କରନ୍ତୁ ।



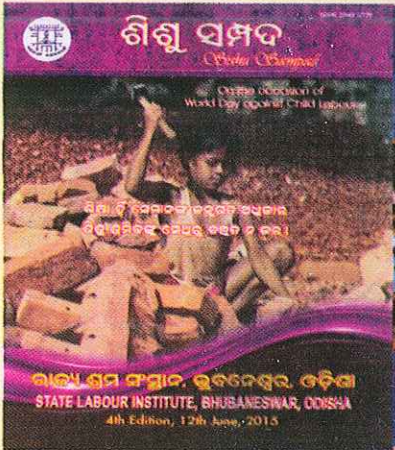
ମୋ ପାଇଁ ଆପଣ

ଘରୋଇ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ, ହୋଟେଲ, ଚା ବୋକାଳ, ତାବା, ଗ୍ୟାରେଜ, ପରିବହନ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା, ଖଣି ଖାଦାନ, ଇଟାଗାଡ଼ି, ନିର୍ମାଣ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ, କଳକାରଖାନା ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ସ୍ଥାନରେ ଶିଶୁମାନେ ଶ୍ରମିକ ଭାବେ ନିୟୋଜିତ ହୋଇଥିବା ନଜରକୁ ଆସିଲେ ଦୂରତ ନିକଟସ୍ଥ ଜିଲ୍ଲା ଶ୍ରମ ଅଧିକାରୀ, ପୋଲିସ୍ ଥାନା, ଜିଲ୍ଲା ଶିଶୁ ସୁରକ୍ଷା ଅଧିକାରୀ, ଜିଲ୍ଲାପାଳ କିମ୍ବା ଜିଲ୍ଲା ଶିଶୁ ମଙ୍ଗଳ କମିଟିଙ୍କ ଦୃଷ୍ଟି ଆକର୍ଷଣ କରନ୍ତୁ । ଶିଶୁଟିଏ ବିପଦରେ ଥିଲେ କିମ୍ବା ଅସୁବିଧାରେ ଥିଲେ ଶ୍ରମିକ ସହାୟତା ହେଲ୍ପ ଲାଇନ ଟେଲିଫୋନ୍ ନମ୍ବର ୧୫୫୩୬୮ (ଦେଶମୁକ୍ତ)କୁ, ଚାଇଲ୍ଡ୍ ଲାଇନ୍ ନମ୍ବର ୧୦୯୮ (ଦେଶମୁକ୍ତ)କୁ କିମ୍ବା ପୋଲିସ୍ ହେଲ୍ପ ଲାଇନ୍ ନମ୍ବର ୧୦୦ (ଦେଶମୁକ୍ତ)କୁ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ କରନ୍ତୁ ।



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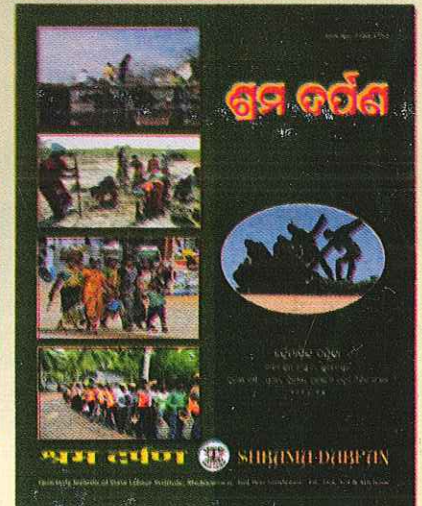
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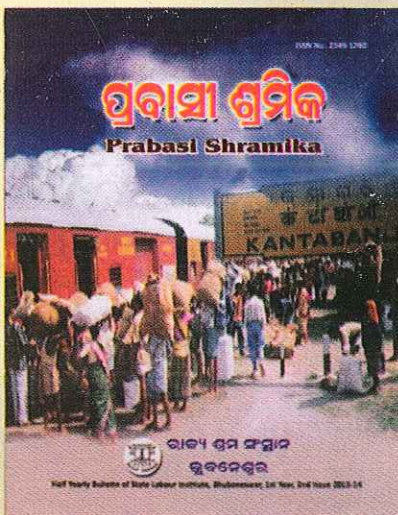
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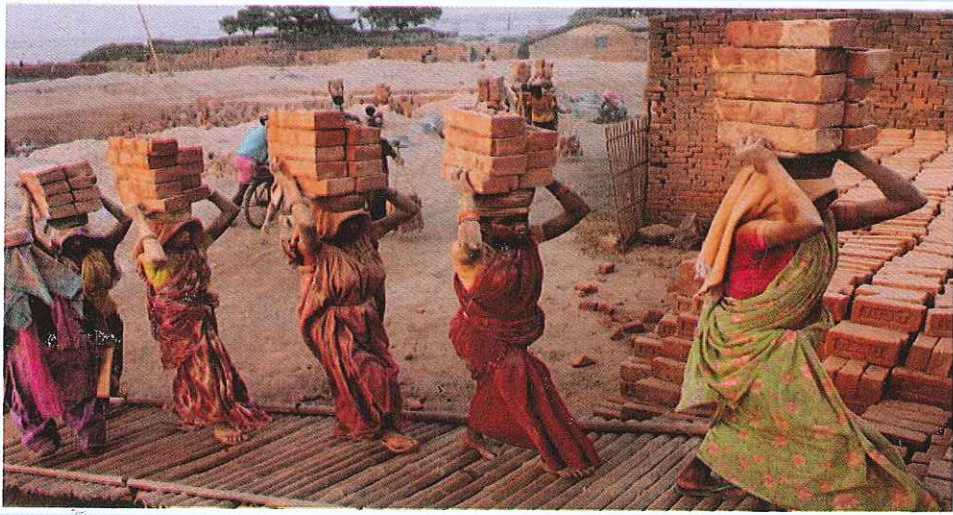
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