**Submission Tamil Nadu Domestic Workers' Welfare Trust (TNDWWT)**

**Key questions and types of input sought**

**1. What is your understanding of the term “informal economy”?**

An informal economy includes diversified set of people whose income source is mainly from informal sectors i.e blue collared jobs. The workers are not regulated or protected by the labour laws of the nation. Workers from informal economy are not obliged to pay taxes as their incomes are lesser than the minimum criteria stipulated by the government.

**2. What are examples of informal employment in your country?**

More than 68 types of unorganized workers prevail and some of them are Domestic Work, Construction work, Daily wage labour etc

3. **In which sectors (e.g. domestic work, agriculture, manufacturing, street vending, rubbish collection, among others) does labour exploitation take place? Please provide details on the nature and extent of such exploitation, including forced/bonded labour, domestic servitude and child labour, including its worst forms)?**

Exploitation among informal workers is the most common in the country. Workers is each sector undergo exploitation in each form. For instance, Domestic Workers in many part of the country is not treated as workers, their work is not recognized, still they are considered as slaves. Mostly their problems are invisible. They do not fall under the purview of labour laws of the land. The new labour code has completely eliminated to the fact that domestic workers are also worker. Employees do not get paid enough and the employers fire employees who are part of labour unions through which they demand their rights. The problem of sexual and physical exploitation and abuse at work place is high among domestic workers. And they are silenced due to various societal pressure and the stigma attached to them. Other informal labours fall into the prey of slavery due to debts incurred by them.

**4. What percentage of the workforce is in the informal sector/economy in your country?**

More than 90% of the workforce belongs to the informal sector.

**5. Who is employed in the informal sector in your country? Please provide details with regard to gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, age, nationality, as well as social and/or economic status. Are some categories of workers affected by contemporary forms of slavery more than others? If so, please explain.**

People below the poverty line are generally employed under informal sector in India. Both male and female workers from the age of 18-60 and above are engaged in informal sector jobs. In some cases, there exists child labour as well. Informal workers basically dwell in slum areas within the city. But the government has been following modern untouchability practices by evicting them to places in the outskirts of the town. This makes a huge impact on their livelihood. Migrant workers, Domestic Workers, agricultural labours, and other such unorganized labours get subjected to bondage labour as they do not have proper awareness upon their rights.

1 The main characteristics of employment in the informal sector include casualization of employment, a lack of employment contracts, of benefits like annual/sick leave, as well as of formal regulation and protection by States.

6. **What are the main factors in the informal economy which push workers into these practices (e.g. a lack of employment contract, access to employment benefits and protection, complaints mechanisms, and wider regulation/protection by States)?**

Lack of access to education, skill and employment are the main factors that pushes them into informal sectors. Since informal sector requires less or no skill or educational requirement they are forced to take up such jobs for a living. Apart from this the workers have no access to employment benefits and are not protected by the legislations.

7. **Are contemporary forms of slavery in the informal economy more prevalent in rural or urban areas? Please provide details.**

Contemporary forms of slavery in the informal economy more prevalent in both rural and urban areas. Various forms of slavery prevailing in informal economy are forced/bondage/ debt labour, trafficking/smuggling labours, sex trafficking etc.

8**. What legislative and other measures are in place to address the informality of employment in your country?**

Various schemes such as MNREGS, PMRPY, ABRY etc. to provide employment to the informal workers and formalise them are in place.

9. **What kind of complaint/grievance mechanisms exist for informal workers to address violations of their human rights, including contemporary forms of slavery?**

MADAD an online portal of ministry of external affairs helps to address grievance mechanisms of migrant labours. For other informal worker’s, grievances can be addressed only by writing a petition to the labour ministry or the chief minister’s cell. There are separate helplines for children, women who get trafficked.

**10. Is the labour inspectorate in your country mandated to inspect the informal sector and to take action in case abuse/labour exploitation is detected?**

Inspection is mandated only for labours in the factory setup. Other forms of labours do not have any inspections. Especially for Domestic Workers there is no such inspections because of the type of work palace. Domestic Workers mainly work in homes where inspections are highly impossible.

**11.financial, legal or other assistance exists for victims/survivors of contemporary forms of slavery**

Rehabilitation of Bonded labourer Fund scheme provided for creation of a bonded labour rehabilitation fund at district level in each state providing assistance to the bonded labours. The government has revamped the scheme for [rehabilitation of bonded labourers](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/topic/rehabilitation-of-bonded-labourers) recently. Under the revamped scheme, there will be an option for Rs 1 lakh of rehabilitation assistance per adult male to either deposit it in an annuity scheme or receive cash grant. However, in case of special category beneficiaries including children, orphans or women, at least Rs 1.25 lakh of the Rs 2 lakh rehabilitation assistance will be put into annuity and the balance transferred to the beneficiary account through direct benefit transfer.

In Tamil Nadu state, “Tamil Nadu Hostel and Homes for Children and women Act,2014” has been implemented to assist women and children who have become victims of trafficking for labour and other factors.

Apart from government assistance, the vulnerable labours get access to assistance from various CSOs financially and legally.

12. **What role, if any, do civil society organisations and trade unions play in preventing informal workers from being subjected to contemporary forms of slavery in your country? Please provide examples.**

CSOs and trade unions play a crucial role in organizing, mobilizing, strengthening the informal workers by creating awareness upon their rights, ensuring their rights securities and entitlements are received. Apart from these, CSOs and trade unions involve in lobbying and advocating with the government for comprehensive legislations to benefit the government. For example CSOs have involved in rescuing and repatriating labours who have been victims of slavery.

**How and where to submit inputs**

Input may be sent via e-mail, fax or postal mail by 15 March 2022.

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| **E-mail address:** | ohchr-srslavery@un.org |
| **E-mail subject line:** | Input for report of the SR on slavery to the 77th session of the GA |
| **Fax:** | + 41 22 917 90 08 |
| **Word limit:** | 2000 words |
| **File format:** | Word, PDF |
| **Accepted languages:** | English, French, Spanish |

**How inputs will be used**

Submissions will be published on the website of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery (OHCHR | Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences), unless confidentiality is requested for particular submissions.