

**Mid-Term Review**

**Freedom Fund's Southern India Hotspot**

**Commissioned by the Freedom Fund and C&A Foundation**

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## **Mid-term review of the Freedom Fund Southern India bonded labour hotspot**

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## List of abbreviations

HH	Household
IDS	Institute for Development Studies
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MGNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OBC	Other Backward Castes
SC	Scheduled Castes
SRHR	Sexual and reproductive health and rights

## Executive summary

The Institute of Development Studies is carrying out a programme of research, learning and evaluation in relation to the Freedom Fund 'hotspot' in Southern India, a programme that seeks to reduce bonded labour in the cotton mills of Tamil Nadu.

Work towards this mid-term review has involved scoping visits comprising: interviews with NGOs; focus groups with community members and field observations; the participatory collection and analysis of 300 life stories and the generation of a baseline of participatory statistics of 2,970 households across 66 hamlets in locations covered by 11 NGOs. This will be followed by the roll-out of a systemic action research programme in which stakeholders analyse and develop solutions to their problems as well as a follow-up participatory statistical analysis.

### Organisational recommendations:

1. In general the hotspot activities are located in the right areas – those where slavery is most prevalent – although this varies somewhat by district and NGO. Exit and transition strategies for low prevalence areas need to be considered.
2. There is a need for longer-term (5-10 year) programming that engages with the deeper underlying drivers.
3. There is a need to build greater capacity for adaptive learning into the NGOs.
4. Community facilitation and capacity development skills need to be considerably strengthened.

### Programme recommendations:

1. Awareness programmes have been effective but do not mean that people have any alternative livelihoods available to them. Long-term work on alternative livelihoods should be prioritised.
2. A lack of transport traps cotton mill workers in mills with appalling conditions and work practices. Investing in transport could have the most direct impact on the pattern of bondage.
3. Health issues lead to people taking high-interest loans which in turn lead to the perpetuation of bondage. Health is central to the whole programme and needs much greater attention.
4. Programme interventions should focus on whole families, not only on the girls in the cotton mills.
5. Improving the poor conditions in the mills must remain a high priority. This is not only because of its intrinsic value but because the health problems that follow from poor conditions feed the cycle of high-interest loans that perpetuates bonded labour.
6. The programme as a whole has an appropriately holistic approach but could prioritise responses through clustering families based on the types of threats they face. It would be useful if vulnerable families are brought together from the start when the adult community support groups are formed to ensure the groups have a clear purpose and membership criteria that respond to the specific situation families are in.
7. The uptake and dissemination of the research results needs to make sure the results of the mid-term review and the prevalence are shared with the field staff who worked on the data collection- and can continue the discussions at the field level –including with the participants of the survey. IDS/Praxis have shared the results with NGO management teams. Geneva Global and the Freedom Fund should explore how the discussion of the results at the hamlet level can be used for operational programme activities including activities that can be led by the community themselves and IDS/Praxis supported action research.

## Background to the study

### Introduction

The Freedom Fund's hotspot in Tamil Nadu, Southern India, aims to reduce bonded labour in textiles, especially that which is affecting girls and young women in spinning mills. This hotspot is made possible through funding from the C&A Foundation. The textile industry in the state of Tamil Nadu provides vital jobs and incomes, especially in poorer communities. However, parts of the industry are also a hotspot for various forms of bonded labour. Tens of thousands of girls and young women have been recruited into employment schemes in the textile industry that result in forced labour, excessive hours of work and extremely low pay – often with appalling effects on their mental and physical health. Spinning mills and power looms are associated with higher levels of bonded labour than other parts of the garment supply chain, so these are therefore the focus of the programme. The programme works with local NGOs directly in the most affected communities, liaises with government to implement existing laws and regulations, and engages with local and international businesses. The hotspot programme is funded by the C&A Foundation providing an initial investment of \$2.7 million. This mid-term review is part of the overall evaluation and learning process in relation to the work in the hotspot and focuses on assessing the relevance of the main activities.

### Team

The review has been conducted by an international multi-disciplinary gender-balanced team of researchers from the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), Brighton, UK, in partnership with the Praxis institute for Participatory Practices, India.

**The Institute of Development Studies** has a global reputation for its work on international development ([www.ids.ac.uk](http://www.ids.ac.uk)). **The Praxis Institute for Participatory Practices** is a not-for-profit organisation with one of the longest track records for participatory work in India (and across Asia) and a long and productive relationship with IDS ([www.praxisindia.org](http://www.praxisindia.org)).

### Methods

This external mid-term review used a hybrid methodology combining quantitative and qualitative approaches, field visits and observations with a review of reported programme results.

The review has been conducted alongside the Freedom Fund using an accompaniment approach focused on organisational learning and capacity building.

The reviewers have worked closely with Geneva Global and Indian NGOs in the development of tools, the collection of data and the analysis of findings. The reviewers received assistance from staff at the Freedom Fund and Geneva Global, notably the programme advisors, managers and M&E specialists, to collect programme documentation.

The following methods were used in the review:

- A three-day scoping visit with visits to villages to understand the programme context
- More than 15 focus group discussions and field observations in the hotspot with direct and indirect programme beneficiaries
- Individual interviews with over 20 NGO staff, community-based volunteers and peer-educators on the usefulness of the project activities
- Participatory development of the scope and focus of the review
- A review of the M&E system and global metrics used by Geneva Global and the Freedom Fund, including:

- Desk review of internal programme documents and reports, such as contracts and bi-annual reports to assess the planned and achieved outputs and outcomes of the programme
- The collection and joint analysis of life stories
- A baseline to measure the prevalence of different forms of bonded labour in the hotspot and the most significant indicators of change as identified by people directly affected by bonded labour. The methodology of participatory statistics to measure impact is described separately.<sup>1</sup>

It should be noted that (a) because this review was brought forward by seven months and (b) the components that look at the effectiveness of NGO implementation come later in the evaluation process, only parts of the review can be considered 'evaluative'. We were able to evaluate relevance from the narrative analysis and from the prevalence work. We have also laid a numerical baseline for the evaluation of impact.

Further, it should be noted that at the outset of this programme we had discussions with Freedom Fund in relation to all of their hotspots around the trade-offs between evaluation as accountability and evaluation as learning. While elements of the former have been embedded into the programme, emphasis was placed strongly on learning. The emphasis of the latter parts of the evaluation is on facilitated self-evaluation rather than external assessment. A comprehensive external assessment of impact would have looked quite different to the programme that we agreed for the Northern India, Nepal and Tamil Nadu hotspots.

## Ethical considerations

The review team has in-depth and hands-on expertise working with vulnerable populations - including people in bonded labour. We are aware of some of the safety and security considerations of working on bonded labour eradication in hotspots where those who are actively facilitating and/or profiting from the practice are often living in the community. We have therefore used a participatory approach and designed the agenda for the field visits in close collaboration with the programme field staff. The mid-term review is one part of an overall evaluation and uses data that has been collected with rigorous research methods. As it takes place in a context of bonded labour, we have asked for and been given approval by the IDS ethical review board.

## Limitations of the review

The hotspot programme in Southern India is ambitious, large and complex. The review team has identified a number of limitations to the review:

- Cost-efficiency fell outside the mandate of the review.
- Due to time and budget constraints the review team was not able to visit all the projects and sites of all the NGOs.
- For security reasons we could not enter the factories and the hostels where many young mill workers live. Nevertheless, the field visits provided rich insights and new perspectives on the benefits of the project and the village-level contexts of bonded labour.
- Although there are plenty of documents on bonded labour in Tamil Nadu's textile industry there were no baseline studies on prevalence to compare findings with
- The reviewers met staff from all organisations but did not interview senior management in all cases. Managers were present at some of the meetings and we spoke with some of them separately. We were working for collaborative learning, rather than coming in as auditors of each NGO's performance

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<sup>1</sup> Oosterhoff P., Bharadwaj S., Burns D., Mohan Raj A., Nanda R. B., Narayanan P. (2016) *Using Participatory Statistics to Examine the Impact of Interventions to Eradicate Slavery: Lessons from the Field*. CDI Practice Paper 16 ([www.ids.ac.uk/publication/using-participatory-statistics-to-examine-the-impact-of-interventions-to-eradicate-slavery-lessons-from-the-field](http://www.ids.ac.uk/publication/using-participatory-statistics-to-examine-the-impact-of-interventions-to-eradicate-slavery-lessons-from-the-field))

- The sample sizes for Muslim and Christian households are too small to draw definitive conclusions from
- The review focused on contribution not attribution. The reasons include:
  - Geneva Global worked carefully with partners and with other anti-bonded labour organisations to make sure there is not duplication of on-going specifically anti-bonded labour work taking place. However, there are multiple players at each level of the field(s) working towards similar goals. Several NGOs might work in one community and contribute in different and indirect ways to bonded labour eradication, such as for example an NGO working on health or water supplies.
  - Each NGO has multiple funders. Freedom Fund’s objective is to keep their contribution at no more than 30% for each NGO. This is part of Freedom Fund’s sustainability strategy and reduces the risk of dependency. Freedom Fund is the only funder for the work on bonded labour eradication in the hotspot communities but the other funding contributes to overall organisational stability and infrastructure
  - The hotspot programme explicitly builds on the strength of these NGOs’ existing and sometimes longstanding partnerships with other stakeholders such as the government and other civil society organisations. These organisations were selected because of their existing capacities and networks.

## Mid-term review and overall evaluation

This is a mid-term review that is part of an overall evaluation process. Next steps in the evaluation include:

- Development of action research and setting up action research groups working on themes that have been identified by the life stories but which are not yet covered by the programme
- Advice on the relevance of the content, format and evaluation of the results of the film-based curriculum for community support groups
- Qualitative assessment of the benefits of the programme for a small sample of survivors and adolescents
- Supporting an endline prevalence study to understand changes in the level of forms of bonded labour in the participating communities and the most significant indicators of change

These will be described in the final evaluation report.

## Status of hotspot programme activities and scope of work

Although a full assessment of initiative implementation was not included in the plan for the mid-term review, the programme accompaniment allowed IDS to gain a broad understanding and field-level exposure to the status of current activities (though not including the supply chain work, work inside mills and engagement with district officials).

A main activity for Southern India hotspot partners is the *formation and strengthening of community freedom groups*. An impressive number of groups have been formed by the partners ranging from adolescent groups, community support groups, self-help groups, child parliament groups, and worker groups inside mills. Some groups have credit and saving schemes. While organisations are important in overcoming individual isolation and taking collective action, there is a risk of NGOs spreading themselves too thinly and expectations will need to be managed. In our conversations with young girls, we found, for example, that their reasons for coming to the group do not necessarily match those of the organisers. They like the opportunity to meet, join in group activities in the community and get out of the house, but they expected to get vocational training – which is offered, but only to a small number of people. Vocational training, to be relevant and effective, needs to be matched with individual capacities, aspirations and market demands. People need to learn skills that can be acquired within a few months or years for which there is a market in a profession that they want



to do and is socially acceptable. Depending on these factors, tailoring or hairdressing may or may not be a good idea – and the NGOs are taking some time to learn about the most viable options. This means that not everyone who wants a certain kind of training should be provided with that training.

Groups can be an important entry point for change. A curriculum is being developed with them, which will help provide content, but there are currently no graduation criteria for members to avoid clogging up the system when new members want to join. Staff are not yet used to youth-led and participatory ways of working and are being trained to support the groups effectively. Staff working directly with girls reported the need to find a balance between the need to reassure parents that there is supervision by an adult and the aim of promoting the girls' ownership of the group. Girls also said their parents want there to be an adult because they do not want to girls to meet boys. The girls also want to decide what the group is for but do not have very clear ideas about what that would be – suggesting that it will take some time to develop youth-led groups or that it is more feasible to have NGO staff or other trusted adults continue to play a fairly prominent role.

Caste, class, gender and age differences also continue in the groups. Some people from different castes refuse to sit together, for example, and it will take a long time and considerable focused effort to build collective work across and beyond these barriers. Staff are very aware of these barriers and are keen to develop ways to overcome them.

Programme partners focus on *formal education*, helping children to get back into school, child-to-child education and community awareness. In the community groups we met, children expressed clearly their desire to continue their education, and were aware of the difficulties that young female mill workers face. They hope that by staying in school they can avoid working in the mills, although local structural factors suggest that this is unlikely. There is also informal education taking place provided directly by partners, with seven of the NGO partners creating Child Knowledge Centres in the communities. These provide tutoring assistance, helping out-of-school children to transition back into school and in-school children to be able to succeed.

The programme also supports women and girls who have stopped working at spinning mills with *vocational training*, mostly on tailoring and sewing to get the skills needed to secure jobs at local tailor shops. Women and girls appreciated this training and we met several who had found a job.

Another priority for partners is to address *health issues*. Some NGOs have employed trained mental health counsellors to respond to depression and mental and physical exhaustion. The reviewers had the opportunity to speak with some counsellors.

Although mental health is important and has been identified as a key issue in the group analysis, the counsellors' clients also seek help for various social and physical health problems. Many of these problems, such as exhaustion from long work hours, malnutrition and depression, are linked. Some clients come in order to be referred for vocational training and other programme benefits and mention that they have mental health problems during the discussion on these benefits. The web of problems that such clients are caught in requires a comprehensive referral system. Mental health counsellors that we met are referring clients to vocational training and also refer them to NGO staff for help with entitlements. From the reported cases that we looked at it was clear they had many needs, related to issues ranging from housing to abusive domestic situations. Broad networks are required – for example with psychiatric support for women with clinical depression – but it will take time and they will need to be built with the state in order to be sustainable.

Awareness and knowledge about basic primary health, including menstruation, is part of the work with groups. In addition, seven hotspot partners hosted one-day health camps in coordination with local government hospitals and health centres, where nurses were available to screen women for anaemia. A secondary health approach can be an entry point to primary health – such as point to improving nutrition. However, health camps by definition are not working on primary health and thus often fail to respond to root

causes of ill health. We did not hear of staff being trained in primary health rapid self-diagnosis of anaemia. Self-diagnosis should not replace clinical testing but might reduce dependency on camps and provide an entry point for sharing knowledge on preventing anaemia.

Partners are establishing relationships in *meetings with government and industry partners*. NGOs have also given feedback related to the draft *Trafficking of Persons Bill 2016*, using their insights to try to improve the legislation. NGOs are also working on collective agreements with spinning mill owners to improve workers' protections and freedoms.

### **Summary findings of life story analysis**

The full report, *Patterns and dynamics of bonded labour and child labour in the spinning mills of Tamil Nadu: Findings from life story analysis*, is appended to this document (Annex 1). In this we outline in more detail the many reasons that girls and young women go to the mills and the impact of their work there. We have collected 300 life stories of people working in the mills, other people in the village who have managed to avoid mill work, and some people who were able to reflect from other positions – such as local leaders or health workers. These were then collectively analysed by NGO fieldworkers and cotton mill workers in a four-day workshop.

Women and girls typically earn 180 rupees a day, though some get as little as 12. The most experienced can earn 250 rupees, which is still less than the Indian minimum wage. Widespread abuses of apprenticeships exist. Very high proportions of the mill workforce are attributed apprentice status long after they should be to ensure the money they are paid is kept low (below 200 rupees). Many girls have gone into the mills as part of what was traditionally known as '*Sumangali*', which was essentially a way of a girl making enough money for her wedding costs by working for three years. It could also be regarded as a sort of loan. While it is not legal and is widely reported by NGOs and others to be decreasing in importance, *Sumangali* is still reported as a pathway into exploitation in the mills. While the word *Sumangali* is not frequently used by employers and recruiters, girls are still often recruited into schemes that bind them to the work for a year, two years or more, with offers of bonuses at the end, but where they do not get the basic minimum wage.

There are different patterns of mill shift work but many mill workers have to work six days a week. If they take leave or are sick they have to do overtime. If they do overtime, they are not paid properly. Sometimes they may even have to do three shifts (i.e. 24 hours) in succession. If a day worker does not come, then a hostel worker has to work day and night. Sometimes community-based day workers have to do this too. Peer researchers – all mill workers – said that doing nine shifts a week rather than six is fairly common. Typically, they do eight.

In the collective analysis process, groups identified two critical issues for each story and then clustered them to produce categories. 156 of the stories (bearing in mind some overlap) highlighted the devastating physical and mental consequences of working in the mills:

- Sickness (71)
- Mental health problems (48)
- Accident (21)
- Suicide (16)

Furthermore, a large number of the stories described the way in which sexual harassment led to mental health crises or in some cases to suicide.

The highly toxic work environment means that almost everyone gets ill. Illness and death generate new mill entry as when a worker dies family members have to get loans and do additional work in order to pay for funeral expenses and replace the income of the person who died. Although Tamil Nadu has made investments in public health, the main way to pay for medical care is to get a loan, and the main way to pay back the loan is for more of the young girls to go into the mills. Loans for health emerged as a critical factor,

although it was not always clear from the analysis whether these loans were for health treatment or to cover life expenses due to not being able to work due to illness. The importance of health was confirmed by peer researchers who ranked illness and accidents as by far the most common reasons for loans.

Another critical issue is transport. Mill owners provide free transport and it is the only transport available from the villages. This means in effect that they have a captive market. If the women want work they have to go to the mills because they cannot get work anywhere else and they do not own any land, so subsistence farming is not an option. There are few – if any – other industries that can absorb these young female workers but if they could at least choose between different factories rather than being dependent on one this could increase their negotiating power with the factory owners, as is the case for some female workers in China.<sup>2</sup> Although care should be taken with generalisations – and there are no magic bullet interventions – being more or less locked into a single economic zone is a problem for young women in other locations, such as in Mexico for women and girls who work in the *maquiladora*.<sup>3</sup>

When we went to the villages in the scoping study, most of the women highlighted the problem of alcoholism among men. This was reinforced in the stories and by the peer researchers. They said that, before, women did not have to work in the mills because the men were able to earn enough. Men were able to undertake construction work and some agricultural work. However, construction work is very seasonal and now they are not able to grow crops because of climate change and other factors. Men used to work in the mills, but in response to successful unionisation in the 1990s the textile industry started to target young women for employment, including through the *Sumangali* scheme in spinning mills. This allowed the mills to lay off their middle-aged male workers,<sup>4</sup> many of whom took to drink when they were not working, reinforcing their inability to find work. With men not working, the only way a family can survive is if the women and girls find work at the mill. They then also have to keep working to pay for the men's drinking habits. This is the sort of vicious cycle that binds women and girls to work in the mills.

After generating a map of the system dynamics which drive bonded labour, we asked NGOs to locate their interventions in relation to the factors identified and to discuss them. From the discussion we concluded that there is some work being done on sexual harassment and some work on conditions in the mills more generally. There is also some work being done on emotional counselling for survivors of bonded labour. Some of the NGOs have helped mills to introduce complaints committees and some changes in conditions have been observed at some of those sites – for example, the introduction of masks. There are some non-Freedom Fund interventions that focus on health camps. There are a few others, such as one focusing on collecting blood samples from people in the mills and another focusing on nutrition. However, the range of health issues include missed periods, miscarriage, uterine prolapse, white discharge, skin complaints, asthmatic and breathing complaints – but these are barely touched upon by the NGOs and there is no comprehensive diagnosis process. Thus there is a serious gap in addressing the health issues of both workers and ex-workers. There are various livelihood programmes that partners work on. Some partners are supporting credit and savings groups, others are facilitating low-interest bank loans for income generation, vocational training, youth employment or help for micro-enterprises, etc.

In the collective analysis process groups identified key priority areas for action. Some of these are things that communities can act on themselves. The NGOs and community groups will explore this in action research which is a key element in the next phase of the research. Action research groups generate local evidence about critical issues, develop theories of change about potential solutions, and enact solutions. Through this process they learn about what works and what does not and can therefore change or refine their actions as a result.

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<sup>2</sup> Chang, Leslie T. *Factory girls: Voices from the heart of modern China*. Pan Macmillan, 2010.

<sup>3</sup> <http://womenontheborder.org/recommended-sites/activism-at-the-border/who-is-killing-the-women-of-juarez>

<sup>4</sup> Association for Stimulating Know How (ASK) (2014) *Addressing modern slavery in Tamil Nadu Textile Industry. Feasibility Study Report*. (<http://freedomfund.org/wp-content/uploads/Addressing-modern-slavery-in-Tamil-Nadu-Textile-Industry-26Feb15.pdf>)

Priorities identified for action research groups at the workshop were: alcoholism; school drop-outs; loans and debts; illness, accidents and suicide in the mills; and alternative employment (including transport). The NGO staff that attended the life story analysis workshop are consulting other staff as well as community representatives to decide which topics should be prioritised. They will also receive additional training on action research in November, when a hierarchy of priorities for action research will be made.

The biggest gaps relate to the drivers of bondage and child labour which seem to centre around transport, major loans taken in response to life crises (especially health), alcohol addiction, and a lack of alternative employment for men and women. These should also be priorities for the programme as a whole.

Sequencing of programming is important. For example, skills development for alternative livelihoods may be ineffective until there is alternative transport; similarly, the potential of primary education cannot be realised if girls are driven to the mills because there is no alternative livelihood.

## Summary findings of the prevalence study

The survey collected data from 2,970 households across a random sample of 66 hamlets in locations covered by 11 NGOs participating in the programme. More details including the research method are in Annex 2. We used the following criteria to identify whether people are in bonded labour:

1. **Advance or agreement** – Advance, whether in cash or in kind, or partly in cash or partly in kind, made by one person
2. **No freedom of movement** – Physically constrained or has restrictions placed on his/her freedom of movement
3. **Less than minimum wages** – Remuneration which is less than the current notified minimum wage under the Minimum Wages Act
4. **No freedom of employment** – Absence of freedom to choose one's employment or other means of livelihood
5. **No freedom of the market place** – Loss of freedom to sell one's labour in the open market

We consider people to be in a position of bonded labour when they have an advance or agreement made by one person (criterion 1) *and* at least one of the other criteria. An advance made by one person is not enough as that would, for example, mean that anyone who borrowed money from a moneylender could be labelled as being in bonded labour. The person who advanced the money must also be demanding the labour of the borrower as a means of repayment. The other restrictions – such as on freedom of movement – alone are also not sufficient for a person to be classified as a bonded labourer.

To measure the prevalence of bonded labour, based on a joint analysis and testing of the tool, we narrowed the categories of bonded labour down to four: (1) bonded labour in the mill within the village; (2) bonded labour in the mill outside the village; (3) bonded labour doing other works within the village; and (4) bonded labour doing other works outside the village.

The aim of the process was to estimate a baseline of the prevalence of bonded labour in the selected intervention communities. If this is repeated later, we will be able to see if the programme has made a difference in reducing bonded labour in the period in between measurements. Prevalence data helps mainly to understand if the programme is intervening in the right places and what the profile of families in bonded labour is, and to document correlations of different variables. The analysis of life stories provided insight into the life situations of the families in bonded labour and explored the why and how questions. Due to the clear causal factors emerging from the life story analysis, the current prevalence study was able to focus on these important indicators. The team facilitated a discussion on the results at the end of the data collection in each site. These discussions focused on the reasons for the differences in prevalence results using the tallied up data, allowing exploration of how gender, age and caste dynamics shape bonded labour, with over-18 year-olds mostly working outside and those below-18 years and 18 year-olds working mostly inside or nearby their

village of residence. Tallying up all the results was not possible as we worked with pictorials on sheets to allow illiterate people to participate in a transparent process. It might be worthwhile to pilot data entry with iPads, allowing for a more extended immediate comprehensive group analysis on the spot. However, data entry on iPads can introduce more errors, and is particularly hard for illiterate people to fix or comment on.

The estimates from the current prevalence study show the correlations of bonded labour with various factors. Where possible, conclusions have been drawn about whether this quantitative analysis corroborates certain widely held assumptions about patterns and correlations with regard to forms of bonded labour in India. What can be conclusively stated about a range of factors is detailed below:

- Within the intervention communities of these partners, 45% of the households had no bonded labourers. 36% had all family members in bonded labour and 18% of households had at least one family member in bonded labour.
- Geographically, within our sample, Dindigul and Erode had over 80% of households affected by bonded labour whereas Namakkal and Virudhunagar had over 60% not affected. The interventions are clearly in the right spot.
- Among all the households, 9.94% have bonded labourers who are 18 years and below. In over two-thirds of these cases (6.57%), they are girls. Most of the girls involved in bonded labour are working in the mills inside the village. Adults in bonded labour more often work outside the village.
- Caste, gender, age, loan-taking, and access to Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) benefits are the key factors at the individual and household level that contribute to bonded labour in this hotspot. Within the hotspot as a whole, there are few economic opportunities available outside the mills and alcohol is easily available and widely consumed.
- With regard to social status, 38% of Scheduled Caste (SC) households had no family members in bonded labour and 56% of Other Backward Caste (OBC) households had no bonded labourers. The pattern of population distribution is in keeping with the assumptions that the study and the programme has made: i.e. that the population in intervention areas belongs predominantly to the Dalit (or SC) social category, followed closely by OBCs.
- Households without members in bonded labour have better access to savings groups and banks, but they also use the moneylender. Health expenses are the main reason for taking out a loan for all households. This suggests an approach which focuses on prevention of health problems (focusing on primary health care), prevention of risky loan-taking (by facilitating access to safe loans for emergencies, reducing the reliance on money lenders) and improving equitable access the MGNREGA benefits is likely to increase resilience and reduce bonded labour. Land ownership and bonded labour status shows that as the size of the land holding increases, the prevalence of bonded labour in those households' decreases.
- With regard to MGNREGA, as payments for the number of days worked increases, the incidence of bonded labour decreases slightly.
- Access to a bank account does not in itself have any significant impact on the status of bonded labour.
- Alcohol usage overall does not seem to show a strong link with the bonded labour status of the families.
- Of households with any form of bonded labour, 83% of them reported taking a loan, compared to 70% among households with no bonded labourers. The moneylender was named as the major source for borrowing money by households with members in bonded labour. Households with no bonded labourers, and one-third of the households with exclusively bonded labourers, also borrowed from the moneylender.
- People in bonded labour are caught in a web of poverty where socio-cultural, political and economic vulnerabilities are all interlinked. Low socio-cultural, political and economic status of individuals, and the weakness of collective organisations that represent and protect them, contribute to creating

pathways into bonded labour. Situations that make households vulnerable vary from family to family, but there is a common thread of three or four major reasons for this vulnerability across different families, which has to be addressed.

## **Contextual obstacles and challenges that derive from both studies:**

Many factors impact on bonded labour and the ability of NGOs and local community members to challenge it. Macro-level contextual factors have local manifestations that feed the local dynamics of bonded labour other factors are more local.

### **Macro contextual factors**

- Drought and climate change. There were agricultural districts that are now affected by drought. This creates large group of unemployed and poor people who are willing to accept work under suboptimal conditions, possibly hindering effective collective action. Floods have also delayed the programme implementation.
- The highly competitive and mobile nature of the industry and workforce makes it difficult to take collective action at a community or even at a state or country level. Purchasing labour within the industry is highly mobile and the local industry has demonstrated its readiness to seek other types of workers when needed (e.g. migrants from northern states).
- Structural gender inequality and the harassment of women and girls. Residents from all walks of life spoke openly with the reviewers about the lack of safety for young girls in their communities. It was suggested this is why girls were encouraged to work in the mills, for which they can use the mills' own transportation service (perceived to be safer for the girls).
- Caste is a critical background factor. It is hard, for example, to challenge bonded labour from a rights perspective if there is a widespread belief that some people have fewer rights than others.

### **Local contextual factors**

- Lack of safe and affordable public transport. One of the reasons why women and girls are going to the mill for work is that they provide door-to-door transportation for the women. Therefore, mills are perceived as safe by parents, compared to other employment, although evidence suggests that harassment also takes place on the buses. As there is no transport to the villages, meaning girls would have to walk from their homes to the road, which is seen as unsafe – and given that these concerns are also grounded in a patriarchal and caste reality where violence against women is common – it is hard to find to alternative employment in a different sector or to switch employers.
- Alcohol abuse was seen as one of the main reasons for girls being harassed verbally, physically and sexually. Alcoholism among men appears to play an important role in trapping families in poverty.
- There is a lack of access to free emergency care and weak primary health in spite of the existence of formal state health facilities. Preventable conditions go untreated and health needs drive people into poverty. Further investigation is needed into the extent of people's avoidance of public hospitals and their use of private services at much higher cost. Savings group finances should not be used towards health emergencies and the restrictions should be enforced by NGOs. Out-of-pocket health expenses have to be reduced as part of bonded labour eradication efforts.

### **Organisational context**

- Some NGOs have inadequate community facilitation skills. These skills are key because the NGOs are seeking to facilitate communities rather than provide services. They also have to overcome the expectations of community members about the role of NGOs.

- Some anecdotal evidence was gained from the scoping study that people in the villages were reluctant to disclose what was really happening to some of the strongly rights-based NGOs because they feared being reported for child labour in a context where they felt they had no choice but to send their children to the mills. Whatever the rights and wrongs of these positions, consideration needs to be given to creating an environment of trust.
- Some of the obstacles are structural. More extensive partnership working and much more long-term programming would enable these to be at least partially addressed within the hotspot programme.

## Conclusions and recommendations

In this section we outline a series of conclusions and recommendations which relate to both organisational capacity and programming.

### Organisational and strategic conclusions

#### 1 The hotspot programme is in the right place

Overall, we think that the programme is doing relevant work in the right location and should continue to be developed. By enabling political action and engaging with supply chains, the programme is seeking to address structural obstacles.

*Recommendation:*

*In general, the hotspot activities are located in the right areas – those where slavery is most prevalent – although this varies somewhat by district and NGO. Exit and transition strategies for low prevalence areas need to be considered.*

#### 2 There is a need for longer-term programming that engages with the deeper underlying drivers

Many of the issues outlined below denote the need for longer-term changes.

*Recommendation:*

*The C&A Foundation should consider long-term five-to-ten-year programming rather than shorter-term three-year projects.*

#### 3 There is a need to build greater capacity for adaptive learning into the NGOs

The programme is making progress and people are working hard to achieve this. However, there have been many unpredictable problems such as floods and elections that cause delays and stress for NGOs. Many groups have been formed but they will need time to conduct activities, reflect on the results and develop new activities based on the results and the learning. We are concerned that reflection is not prioritised and that there is a rush to complete action. This action is often driven by the NGOs, not the communities. In the end it will be counter-productive to give groups lots of activities if they have no time to reflect or learn from them for their future planning and it may (re)create dependency.

*Recommendation:*

*As stated in the introduction to this report, the IDS intervention is essentially a large-scale embedded learning programme. It is our view that much greater time needs to be allocated to the learning process. Organisational learning needs to be grounded in a reflection on the results that have been achieved and how it relates to the original plan as well as a critical analysis of the material and immaterial benefits with respect to the investment of resources. NGOs need to be trained to understand the difference between evaluation for accountability and evaluation for learning as well as to develop critical analytical skills.*



## **4 Community facilitation skills need to be considerably strengthened**

When facilitation skills are weak and if group meetings are not seen as fun or useful it is hard to mobilise communities and engage them in discussion groups that are not linked to support or benefits. In the end, providing services to a relatively small group of people, even in villages of high prevalence, will not end bonded labour. What is required is that local people take action and this means ensuring the communities are facilitated to take power and not always to defer to NGOs. NGOs have considerable responsibility here.

*Recommendation:*

*A community facilitation skills programme must be rolled out to all NGOs working on bonded labour eradication. Basic principles of facilitation, how it differs from education, and encouraging young people to take leading roles can be shown and explained in a day or so. This can be combined with rolling out planned training to NGOs and community facilitators associated with the new film-based curriculum where possible. Facilitation needs to be focused as much on methods as on content. It is also key that people are able to practise their new skills outside a classroom and receive hands-on coaching after the training to refresh and retain skills. Training is being planned which includes some of these elements, but it is critical that sufficient time is given to these skills and sensibilities.*

*More generally, the NGOs need much stronger training on how to be participatory and why it is important.*

### **Programming**

#### **1 Awareness programmes have been effective but this does not mean that people have alternatives**

In some localities the most critical issue is to ensure awareness: once aware, people are in a position to organise and claim their rights. This is not the case in Tamil Nadu. There is strong evidence that the young women are now aware of the dangers of the employment at the mills and most of the women we spoke to were alert to the dangers of the *Sumangali* scheme. But they were also crystal clear that they had no option but to work there. There was no other accessible employment in the area. Focusing programming on awareness-raising and group formation is likely to have limited impact unless work is done to enable alternative employment or to radically change conditions in the mills.

*Recommendation:*

*Ensure that awareness-raising work continues to be done, but prioritise programmes that make alternative livelihoods possible. Continue support to the development of adolescent girls' groups. These are important because they raise awareness and give the girls a social focus. From our scoping visit we observed that the girls all appeared to enjoy and be proud of their learning, and it lays a foundation for future collective action. Partnerships with organisations that work on drought resilience might also be an option. This would open up more possibilities for agricultural options that have a long-term impact on eradicating bonded labour by providing viable alternative livelihoods.*

#### **2 Lack of transport traps cotton mill workers in mills with appalling conditions and work practices**

Lack of transport options is a major factor in driving bonded labour because it restricts meaningful access to alternative employment. This may not seem like a 'bonded labour issue' but it is one of the critical factors trapping women in this local market. Work on safe and affordable transport might have the biggest short-term impact on bonded labour. If people are in a captive market they have no bargaining power. If they have alternatives, then they have some leverage to negotiate work conditions and pay. Some local groups are beginning to explore solutions: e.g. shared payment for an auto-rickshaw to get girls to training; campaigning

for public buses to run when they are supposed to in order to get girls to secondary schools; negotiation with private services to show there's a market, and so on.

*Recommendation:*

*The C&A Foundation and the Freedom Fund should support emerging transport proposals and the action research on transport that will be part of this programme.*

*The C&A Foundation should explore whether they might be able to make or stimulate strategic investments in transport or develop partnerships with organisations that can do so.*

### **3 Health issues are critical drivers of 'bondage' and must be prioritised**

Loans taken from middle men at high interest in response to health crises are a major driver and perpetuator of bonded labour. The poor conditions within the mills perpetuate the crisis, creating a self-reinforcing system.

*Recommendation:*

*Interventions focused on health will be critical to breaking the cycle of bondage. Research (both participatory and more traditional) needs to be carried out urgently and particular attention given to the following questions: What are the health issues facing this community (including those derived from working in the mills)? What treatment is accessible? Are people paying for medical treatment which works (or not)? If it does work, what alternative sources of finance can be developed? Localised action research will take place on this issue within the IDS programme but this needs to be complemented by a more comprehensive analysis of health issues in the hotspot*

*Comprehensive linkages with the state health system need to be developed.*

- *The programme could focus on one or two health issues and on multiple benefit interventions in primary health care, such as nutrition and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).*
- *Secondary health interventions, such as screenings for anaemia, are only useful if they are linked with care and prevention. Nutrition is key in reducing anaemia.*
- *SRHR interventions should not be limited to family planning, but also include information about male and female bodies and effective communication in intimate relationships.*
- *The age of the onset of menstruation is around the same as the age where girls can start to work and a lack of menstrual hygiene is known globally and in India to be linked with girls dropping out of school. NGOs should check if schools have facilities for menstrual hygiene, and discuss with the girls in the adolescent groups what could improve school attendance. Menstrual hygiene is also an issue that NGOs should work on with the mills.*

### **4 Programme interventions should focus on whole families**

The programme focuses on women and girls, but they live in families with boys and men who are also affected by bonded labour. The economic circumstances faced by women cannot be divorced from those facing men. A family-centred and multi-level approach would be more in line with the evidence on development, gender and extreme poverty. It is important to focus on families but avoid situations in which families are blamed for the structural causes of bonded labour – for example, blaming men who drink alcohol in a situation where the state makes profits from selling alcohol. School attendance and school drop-out is also related to family dynamics around age and gender.

*Recommendation:*

- *Invite family members to join an adolescent group every three months or so*
- *House visits could be made every three months or so although these are more expensive.*

## **5 Improving the poor conditions in the mills must remain a high priority**

Working conditions in the mills continue to be appalling, although conditions in a few mills have improved as a result of collective organisation. As indicated above, there is a systemic connection between the conditions in the mills and the perpetuation of bondage. If mill work continues to cause ill-health, then people will continue to take high-interest loans. In order to pay back these loans, they will have to send their next daughter to the mill and so on. So improving mill conditions will help to undermine the system dynamics that are driving bondage. There is also an urgent need to engage with the conditions in the hostels. We know that hostel conditions are bad from the stories of girls who have come out, but it is more or less impossible to get access to them.

*Recommendation:*

*Continue to build the capacity of committees that can negotiate with mill owners. Develop mechanisms for systematic reporting on suicides and accidents within the mills. Continue support to the development of complaints committees which have made some gains within the mills, such as use of masks, proper breaks and so on. Emerging interactions between community self-help groups, panchayats and mill management to push for better conditions are also important and should be supported. It is not yet clear how the issue of hostel workers can be tackled.*

## ANNEX 1:

### Patterns and dynamics of bonded labour and child labour in the spinning mills of Tamil Nadu: Findings from life story analysis

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September 2016

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*“If one’s dignity, self-respect and self-worth must be forgotten and one should be like a walking corpse, then only those like me, without anything and from lower community, can live. In this society without justice those who adjust with the supervisor can work happily and put up for the work and go peacefully. My mother, who brought me up with dignity, cannot adjust and feels that I should have died; I said this when I started to narrate my life history. Those who are like me in this society should live either by being shameless [or] if not then should become dust. Your wish to go to college to study like upper caste, it becomes unfulfilled desire” (- SSS\_1THA\_03\_BL)*

*“Sometimes I [a 17-year-old] wish that I could help my mother by going for the mill job; I enquired about the mill with the girls who had joined the mill there after their tenth completion. They also enquired and told me that I can join them for the work. When I told my mother that I could go to work in the three-year scheme, after which I will get 50,000 rupees; she refused strongly saying that I am struggling so much getting beating from your father so that you can study. So I am studying now and my mother also told me that she will not speak with me if I say to her that I will go for the mill work. So I want to finish my twelfth standard; after that I know that my mother cannot make me study in college. So after completing school I want to go to the mill work; also if I study well I can get to study free of cost so I am trying hard” (- TES – 11NAL – 29 – NBL)*

*“My one-day salary was Rs 180. But the job was very difficult. If the supervisor sees a pubescent girl, he doesn’t hesitate to touch them everywhere. He would want to look inside our blouses and asks us to bend 4 or 5 times. After some time, I couldn’t keep quiet. He came and touched my breasts one day. All the suppressed anger came out and I spat in his face and pushed him away. He verbally abused me. After that he changed me to a very difficult shift. I wanted to take revenge on him. One day when I had gone to the restroom, he was waiting outside the door; that bastard. He came and started to hurl bad words at me. He said if he touches any other girl with big breasts they get attracted at his touch. You do not know anything. So if I touch you, you will get big breasts he said without any shame. I could not work one more day there. I tried to commit suicide in the mill itself. But I wanted to take revenge on him. I wanted him to be punished for his deeds. My mother came to see me in the mill hostel one day. I could not share with her neither my feelings nor my problems, only tears came. Because the supervisor was standing and watching me closely what I was saying to my mother. I said that my mother wanted to pass urine and took her to the mill’s toilet. But he sent the lady warden to the toilet. And so I could not tell my mother properly anything. I told my mother to take me to home with her. But my mother refused saying she had spent the entire advance Rs 10,000. You work for some more months here, my mother told me as she hugged and kissed my forehead and she too left crying” (- SSS\_1THA\_03\_BL)*

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## Introduction

This is a report of the analysis of multiple life stories collected across the Freedom Fund bonded labour hotspot in Tamil Nadu. They were analysed by NGO fieldwork staff and community representatives at the Collective Story Analysis workshop, 18-22 April 2016. Where appropriate, we add reinforcing material from the scoping study conducted 2-11 December 2015. We outline the major findings and key system dynamics that emerged.

The life story collection and analysis process is the first of three research components in the IDS research on the Freedom Fund bonded labour hotspots. Alongside the life story work, a parallel participatory statistics process has been carried out. These two components will generate action research groups which will collect further data, generate solutions and test these in community, NGO and policy domains.

The life-story collection and analysis method used for this research is a systematic approach to understanding the context in which Freedom Fund partners are working, but it does not allow us to generalise beyond these participating communities, which have been selected because local civil society organisations believe that workers and their families in these areas are in greatest need. It does not allow us to make inferences about the overall conditions in the industry, though it does show the severity of problems occurring in these selected areas.

All real names in this document have been replaced by codes that will be pseudonyms in the final report.

## The life-story methodology

Life stories provide evidence which allows the peer researchers to build a comprehensive picture of how people perceive their lives, and the options they have in the context of bonded labour and child labour in Tamil Nadu. The stories are not final historic records of a person, but a here-and-now picture of how people in this context describe their lives to NGO staff and community representatives. They do not depict every aspect of a person's life, but rather important episodes and transitions in their lives that they want to talk about. They give insight into the ways people talk about and categorise the different types and forms of bonded labour. The life-story method is used because it enables us to see the different causes and consequences of factors that lead to bonded labour or perpetuate bonded labour during the life of an individual. It also allows the participant to initiate topics and talk about the things that are important to them rather than be guided by issues that are either explicit or implicit in researchers' pre-constructed questions. The aim of collecting life stories and analysing them collectively is to:

- Enable community and NGO researchers to arrive at a collective understanding of contemporary bonded labour and bonded labour issues in this hotspot in South India.
- Understand the forms of bonded labour and agree on the categories and definitions that should be used in a prevalence study in this hotspot using participatory statistics.
- Inform areas and issues that will be explored in the action research.
- Reflect on how the individual NGO programmes can most effectively respond to the issues and dynamics identified and how the whole programme can meet the needs identified.
- Identify possible gaps and reflect on if and how these might be addressed.
- Stimulate and inspire NGOs about how to make their programmes and the hotspot approach more effective and relevant.

The stories were *not* collected for advocacy purposes, to generate money from donors or for legal action.

## Life-story collection

A minimum of five stories were to be collected in each village to give enough data to indicate patterns in that village. We estimated one story to take between 30 to 60 minutes to collect. Following methodological training, field-level NGO staff collected life stories in their project areas. Each NGO was asked to collect 11

stories in 4 villages; 44 stories for each of the 7 NGOs. These were recorded as notes and written up in Tamil as full stories. We proposed that most but not all stories should come from the people directly affected by bonded labour in a household. Of 11 stories per village:

- Seven should come from people directly affected (people in bonded labour or their families)
- Two from people who had not been in bonded labour but shared the same socio-economic and caste profile as the seven who went into bonded labour
- Two from people who can provide a broad profile and are significant in the community (e.g. teacher, PRI member).

A protocol for the safe storage and coding of stories was developed to ensure that the individuals remained anonymous. Quotes in this document are anonymised. By the end of the process, 308 stories were collected and the overall demographic profiles and characteristics of the stories collected by all NGOs were close to the planned sample. We found that 196 were people directly affected (themselves or family members in bonded labour); 56 were not currently in bonded labour, and 56 were people who could provide a broad profile of the situation. The demographic profiles of the respondents of the individual NGOs reflected their intervention area of expertise as well as their perceptions on who was directly affected by bonded labour. The sample was almost exclusively derived from women and girls because the programmes are directed to them in a context where the only boys are from outside of Tamil Nadu and living in the hostels. As with the girls in hostels, these groups are almost impossible to access because they are held without contact with the outside world. Local boys *are* working under conditions of bonded labour in other industries. Many of the bonded girls have male siblings who are living in the same house as them. All the men interviewed were opinion leaders or teachers.

## Employment profile of respondents

Life stories on bonded labour and child labour: Tamil Nadu	LEAF	PEACE	READ	SPEECH	TESTS	WORD	SSSSS	Total
People directly affected (people in bonded labour or their families)								
Bonded labourer within the community	17			21	29	16	19	102
Non-bonded labourer	8		8		11	9	8	44
Ex-bonded/trafficked labourer	5		28				7	40
Community representative or Local opinion leader (community head, ex-PRI, Dalit leader)	7	6	7	8		7	4	39
Child labourer within the community		28		6		3	2	39
Parent of child that avoided bonded labour				9	3			12
Ex-child labourer in the community						9		9
Ex-child bonded/trafficked labourer outside community		8						8
Service provider (teacher)	1	2	1				4	8
Bonded/trafficked labourer outside the community	6							6
Parents of child labourer in community					1			1
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>308</b>

Other data gathered on the storytellers is as follows:

263 out of 308 of the people whose stories were gathered were known to the local NGO field worker. 118 were 18 years or under. 148 stories came from people of scheduled caste and 158 were OBC. 121 came from villages where the intervention was new and 187 from where there was an established intervention. In addition to these sample biases we should note the following limitations of the method:

- The NGO field coordinators have been working with girls who work in the mill. This could have changed people's perspectives on their lives.
- The sample has no boys and very few men. The aim was to get stories of the main constituent population targeted by the programme, but it still highlights the need to pay explicit attention to gender, age and kinship dynamics in these bonded labour hotspots.
- Local NGO field staff collected all the stories even though there was an even split between NGO field staff and spinning mill workers for the analysis.
- The method provides a perspective on the root causes of bonded labour primarily from the people directly affected, which is a just one perspective on this topic. Others with a stake in the system of bonded labour, including self-identified traffickers, moneylenders or those who control bonded labourers, would provide alternative interpretations.
- A qualitative in-depth analysis of each of these stories by social scientists could show additional themes or relationships.

## Life-story collective analysis process

For the analysis of the stories, we invited NGO and community representatives to come to a workshop. Each NGO came with at least one staff member and one community representative. In total there were 14 community members and 19 NGO workers, most of whom were field staff. Eight of the participants were 18 years and below. Participants were divided into pairs. Pairs comprised one local NGO field worker and one community member – each from different NGOs. Each pair was asked to read the story. If necessary, the literate member of the pair read the story to the non-literate person. They then discussed what was important in the story and explored why that was important. After doing this they were asked to write on coloured sticky notes the two things that they thought were most important about the story (two key messages or learnings that could be discerned from it). They were also asked to put on a different coloured sticky note whatever they considered as the major causal factor in the story which drove women in to the mills. This resulted in 546 sticky notes.<sup>5</sup> These were then clustered and the most important issues were identified alongside relative frequencies within the stories. Each story had a code, which participants wrote on a sticky note that was on the wall around the themes they identified. This allowed us to trace all of the stories for each cluster. This clustering of stories revealed patterns and clusters of themes that emerged from the analysis. The table that follows shows frequencies of issues that were considered to be either the most or the second most important issue raised by the story. Some of these emphasised why people ended up in the mills and others what happened once they got there.

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<sup>5</sup> The discrepancy between the 546 answers and the 616 sticky notes with issues in the 308 stories is because some only identified one issue and a few sticky notes were illegible.

ISSUE	FREQUENCY
SICK DUE TO HEAVY WORK	71
LOW FAMILY INCOME	61
SCHOOL DROP OUT	57
LOAN AND DEBT	52
MENTAL HEALTH	48
NO AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION	44
IRRESPONSIBLE FAMILY	28
ALCOHOL	26
DEATH DUE TO ILL HEALTH	25
ACCIDENT	21
SEXUAL HARASSMENT	18
BIG FAMILY	15
SUICIDE	16
REGULAR INCOME IN MILL	10
CHILD MARRIAGE	8
SEPARATED FAMILY, DESERTION	8
FORCED LABOUR	8
VIOLENCE IN FAMILY	7
DEATH OF FAMILY MEMBER	5
GENDER BIAS	4
NO TRANSPORT	3
NO HOSPITAL	3
ELOPE	2
DISABILITY	2
NO OTHER JOB OPPORTUNITY	2
LACK OF FAMILY AWARENESS	1
NO WATER	1

This frequency table is important because although it tells us little about the inter-relationships between factors that drive bonded labour, it helped us to understand the significance of those factors when we looked at them later on the system maps. As we can see, the highest number of stories relates to illness as a result of the heavy work in the mills.

On the causal side, the most significant factor is the simple fact of low family income. A lot of the stories were about low family income (61) and loans and debts (52) which result from illness, death and marriage as well as big families which require a higher income.



Alcohol also shows up as a significant factor. Put together with the evidence from our scoping study (where almost every focus group of women said that the men in their village were mostly alcoholics) and the views of the peer researchers (that alcoholism was one of the strongest reasons why women were forced to work in the mills) this is clearly an important issue in the hotspot.

A lot of the stories highlighted a lack of education for young people as the cost of going to the mills. In other words, because economic factors force girls into the mills, they almost inevitably miss out on an education. While some regarded the lack of education as a function of parents' neglect or ignorance, for most it seemed to be a simple harsh reality that the way for the family to make a living is for the girls to work in the mills.

Other factors which were not seen as dominant messages in the stories were present in many of the stories and in the discussions, turned out to be critical contextual factors. These included the way in which transport limits people's options for work.

In addition to the sticky note clustering, peer researchers were asked to draw a small causal chain (with feedback loops where appropriate) which described the main causes and consequences which were narrated in the story.



**Figure 1: Pairs of community and NGO peer researchers analysing stories together<sup>6</sup>**

These causal chains were drawn to aid the construction of a large system map which drew together all of the key factors. Participants examined and discussed the relationships between these factors.

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<sup>6</sup> Photo credit: Praxis Institute for Participatory Practice India



**Figure 2: A large system map which shows the interrelationship between factors<sup>7</sup>**

The large map allowed us: to see how factors identified from the experience and views of the respondents in the hotspot were interlinked; to see the chains of causalities; and to see the whole in one view. This is different from mapping at a village or an NGO level as it allows us to look at patterns and causes across the hotspot. The patterns of the clustering tell us a lot about what is going on. The causal chains tell us about the dynamics of what is going on – i.e. how one factor leads to another, and the reasons why.

The pairs worked with their stories and causal chains to identify factors and links and draw them onto the map. They drew all of the lines and factors themselves. They were only allowed to put onto the map links that were evidenced in the stories that they had analysed. The facilitation team regularly checked this evidence. Once the map was completed, participants were asked to thicken some of the lines to denote strong linkages that appeared in multiple stories. This helped us to see the dominant system dynamics. We then asked them to put a green sticky on the map to show where they had major interventions and a yellow sticky to show where they had smaller interventions. Each NGO was given 6 sticky notes so that they could locate 6 interventions. They were then given an additional sticky to add important interventions that they realised they had after conversation. This helped us to see where interventions mapped onto major causal pathways and where there were big gaps.

Both the cluster maps and the causal maps were used to trigger conversations about the issues which each lasted approximately 1.5 hours.

For the write up of this report, we checked and analysed the individual stories that participants identified as illustrating the key dynamics and themes clustered on the map during the joint analysis of the workshop.

### **Contextual observations from the scoping visits and the stories**

In many of the villages we visited, most of the girls who worked were employed in the mills. We heard that there are some mills where half of the workers are boys, but many of these are from other parts of India such as Bihar, and are living in the hostels to which we had no access. Local girls also go into the hostels, but it is not clear what proportion. It is generally recognised that conditions for these girls are much harsher. They have gone in under a ‘scheme’ – traditionally called the *Sumungali* scheme – through which they are promised money to pay for their wedding, jewellery and so on after three years of work. These schemes have

<sup>7</sup> Photo credit: Praxis Institute for Participatory Practice India

been widely criticised, not least in the Tamil Nadu press. Villagers mentioned that girls who live in the hostels are forced to stay and are not allowed contact with their families, most of whom do not know the conditions that their children live in. Even when they visit, they are usually not allowed to spend time alone with the girls, so they cannot speak freely. NGO staff and villagers reported that it is very difficult to get into the mills (certainly those with the worst conditions) and more or less impossible to get access to the girls in the hostels. We do have stories from girls who used to live in the hostels which provide insights into the poor conditions:

*“So I told my aunt that I wanted to go for some mill work and also help me to join a hostel. She first refused, then later on through a broker for 2000/- rupees I got a job at the mill at Vedachanthur. When I joined there, initially they told me to be at the hostel and join the scheme because I needed the money for my wedding. If you join the scheme your life will be good. Since I was an orphan I decided to join the scheme. I joined in the winding department. The work at the mill was hard. If I see the difficulty how can I survive? Even though I had difficulties I was happy that I had people around me so I joined the hostel. In the hostel I experienced lot of problems. There was limited food; if you asked for extra food it was denied. To take a bath there were five bathrooms, and some days, water would not come. It was quite difficult. In one room six of us had to sleep. One of us will be in day shift or night shift or afternoon shift. After coming back from night shift we cannot sleep. Others would be chatting. We do not even fold our mattresses and continue to sleep with the same ones. The biggest problem was that for each shift they used to come and wake us. Alarm would be kept and they will come and ring it and wake us up. We cannot sleep properly. If the regular working girls were on leave, they will come and ask us to work even when we had just finished night shift. They will pressure us to do overtime. You are only in the hostel; why can you not do it? What are you going to do with the scheme money? We used to receive such scolding”*

(- SSS\_2PUG\_05 \_BL)

It was evident from the scoping visit that most of the girls start at around age 14-15, 14 years being the legal age for work but not in factories. We also met quite a few who said they had started as early as 12 years old. While some underage girls were reluctant to say their ages, those who were older told us what age they had started at. The group discussions confirmed these typical starting ages. Mills employ girls from 12 years of age and only about 20% of workers are over age 25. As parents are usually over 25 years old, they do not usually get jobs in the mills, so the children have to go. Children are employed because they are believed to be fast workers and can be paid lower wages.

From our scoping study – discussions with NGOs and women and girls – we compiled some example payments for the women that work in the mills. Many women are employed as apprentices, which can be a way to avoid paying higher salaries and benefits. The basic minimum wage for an apprentice in the textile mills is 110.00, the Variable Dearness Allowance is 195.8, and so the total is 305.8. In practice, few women earn the total minimum wage for an apprentice. Payments for inexperienced workers in the spinning mills could be as low as 120-150 rupees. Typically, women reported earnings between 180 and 220 rupees with the most experienced getting 250.

People should only remain apprentices for up to 480 days (two years) after which they should become permanent. So around 10% of the mill workers should be apprentices, but actually most of the workers are. Mill owners often either send apprentices away after two years or just keep calling them apprentices. Maternity benefits are not available for women. Even where mill owners are paying apprentices 200-220 rupees a day, women in the *Sumangali* scheme are often getting paid 160 rupees (\$2.39) a day. Many of the scheme employees never received what they were promised. Brokers were paid 1,500 to 2,000 rupees to encourage women going into the mill.

The men are mostly working in the construction field but there are some men working in the spinning mills. Drivers, plumbing and gardeners typically get paid around 225-250 rupees.

What follows are some of the key dynamics that can be distilled from the system maps. Short quotations are used to illustrate the issues. Fuller stories are referenced with, for example, “LS 2, 4, 6” meaning “Life Stories

2, 4 and 6". We have divided the findings into two sections. The first relates to the reasons why the girls go to the mills, and the second to the consequences of working in the mills. As we will see, some of the conditions they experience create feedback loops which reinforce the needs for families to send girls to the mills.

## **Reasons why girls and young women go to the mills**

We were able to obtain a consensus on the critical factors and issues which underpin bonded labour from the wall maps of sticky notes and from the large-scale system map. This did not pick up all of the underlying causes such as the caste status of people, but it picked up the factors that people have to engage with in their everyday lives. In these discussions people reached a different conclusion about the main factors and causes than from the list of sticky notes. We start with the most significant of these factors (in no particular order) and then highlight some of the other reasons why girls and young women go to the mills. These findings were derived from the stories collected in communities with high prevalence bonded labour. It is not necessarily the case that the findings can be generalised across the whole industry.

### **No money and no viable alternative income**

The failure of the monsoon means that people can no longer rely on subsistence farming so they are forced to take jobs in the mills. In any case bonded agricultural labourers have very little money so feel forced to send their girls to the mills. In addition to daily living costs they also have to raise money for marriage. Large family size adds to the requirements for some form of additional income. In some cases, children are blamed by parents for the debts – so they then feel obliged to go to the mills to pay them off. There are more or less no other jobs locally. We learned in the scoping study that many people go for the 100 days of work scheme but some are paid only 90 rupees per day, i.e. one-third of national minimum wage. The only other jobs are outside of the village and require transport, but it is only the spinning mills that provide the transport. For girls and women, who are generally not permitted to move around independently nor find it safe to do so, the lack of transport to any other work or vocational opportunity is a key factor that makes mill work inevitable. Due to transport difficulties and prevailing gender restrictions, girls and women become a captive labour market. Regularity of income from mill work is also attractive. Even when girls leave the mills, they end up going back because there's no other option. The head of the family cannot get a regular job and even though the girls do not earn the statutory minimum wage they can often earn four times the total income of men in the same family because of the lack of regular work for men. People in the community also lack skills, so even if there were jobs they would not be able to take them. Most said that if there was another source of livelihood they would take it. For illiterate adolescents, there are jobs at the mills despite their lack of skill, and working in the mill does not require any financial investment from the family.

*\*"My name is Ramya [Name Changed], age 24. My father's name is Muthu [Name Changed] and mother's name is Muniyamma [Name Changed]. I have four siblings; all are girls. I do not have brothers. My father brought us up like boys. My father's job was at the ironsmith. My mother was at home because of her age. We used to help our father like boys. The job at the ironsmith was only for 15 days; household expenses had to be taken care of with the money earned and we had to pay for festivities too. So we had a financial burden. Since we were five children we were facing food scarcity. We used to get only 25 kilos of rice from the ration per month. It was not sufficient. For a human, food is the first need, which we were lacking; secondly clothes. We do not have clothes to change. I feel very embarrassed to say this. All of us had experienced all the troubles faced by the elders at a very young age itself. We used to have two meals per day. I was the second born in the family. My parents were elderly people. So they cannot go and work in other places. One of my neighbours, who was my age, used to go for the mill job. I used to watch their family keenly; I was thinking of how their family was happy. So I took a decision; my education will not buy me food. So I thought let me go for the mill work. If I go for the work, my family can come to a good level.*

(- SSS\_4EMA\_06\_BL)

Of course the pathways to mill work vary from village to village. Some families, for example, were brewing illegal liquor. When the government stopped them, they had no alternative but to go to the mill.

## Gender discrimination

Gender discrimination is a key factor within the context of employment in the mills for many reasons. Inside the family there is discrimination between sons and daughters in access to education. Girls are often forced to drop out of school and pressured to go to the mills. There is also gender discrimination in selection of jobs that are considered suitable for girls: they must go to the mills rather than anywhere else. Critically, even when girls go to the mills to work, they often only keep a tiny amount of the money that they earn, while boys may not give any or all of their earnings to parents. Parents have a high expectation of children to contribute to family income. Girls are expected to be compliant and obedient to parents and this includes contributing more of their earnings. Boys are seen as the inheritors of family resources while girls will marry outside of the family and go to other houses. Companies prefer submissive girls rather than boys – and they pay them less, which increases their profits. Boys work as electricians, plumbers, in technical jobs, etc., which are not as harmful as work with the spindles.

## Free transport to the mills

As we saw above, transport is a very big issue in many stories. Mill vans and buses are the way people can access a livelihood. If there were government bus services people could go for other work and those over 8th grade could get to the schools.

*“Also there are no transport facilities and so many children and young people go for the mill work only. If there is a solution for this, we would be happy. It would be a total change for the village. Because there are no transport facilities the children cannot continue school, also they are attracted by the money and go for the mill work. But I am very much determined I will not send my children for mill work and to make them study!” (- PEA\_2\_NAT\_1\_NBL)*

*“Around fifty people from my village go for the mill job. They feel that it is everyday work and they are also provided with transportation. Moreover they have some schemes” (- SSS\_3MAN\_11\_CM)*

*“People prefer this job because they work in the field only 8 hours and to meet the marriage expenses they have to have permanent job. Half of the rural development schemes are not coming to our village, like no community hall, no primary health centre and no bus facility available in the village” (- SPE\_1MDU\_1\_CR)*

*“My mother and brothers wish to make me to study even by facing any kind of difficulties. Our village doesn’t have any basic facilities what most of the villages have no shops, no bus services etc. I am going to school daily and coming back and going to forest for work. There is no opportunity to develop my knowledge” (-SPE\_4SAM\_11\_NBL)*

## Corruption and bribery

Bribery is often required to get access to protective schemes. For example, to get different welfare schemes – e.g. widow pensions – the Village Admin Officer must be bribed. The Government’s rural employment scheme MGNREGA is important but in some places there is malpractice. The *panchayat* president may extract part of the pay from the MGNREGA workers e.g. when they go to pick up pay from their bank accounts. They feel compelled to go to the mill if MGNREGA is not working well. Often, to get a good job, people have to pay bribes which they cannot afford, so they see no point in going to school or getting further training.

## Debt

Debt is a major issue. When people have to take loans, often the only way that they can pay them back is to send their girls into the mills. The irony is that the price of one child getting into higher education is sometimes that another has to work in the mill to pay for the loan. Similarly, when one sister gets married and the family loses her income, then the next sister will have to go to the mill. If they have to take a loan,

they must pay interest; if repayments are delayed (because someone gets sick), they have to pay extra. Some mills offer an attractive advance to cover such costs. Participants in the workshop reported that in their experience 9 out of 10 people have these loans from the mills (10,000-20,000 rupees) which get paid from their wages. Often a broker (middle man) will give some thousand rupees to the father to get him to send the girl. If three girls from one family go to one mill, they can get a loan up to 100,000 rupees. Debt also sometimes leads to suicide. This loss of a parent only pushes more children into the mill.

In the analysis workshop participants ranked what people were most likely to get loans for.

Ranking of things that people need to get loans for			
	Community representatives' ranking	NGO representatives' ranking	Total
Illness	9	15	24
Marriage	3	12	15
Higher education	6	8	14
Alcohol	5	8	13
Accident	5	7	12
Death	3	3	6
House-building/repair	4	2	6
Daily expenses	2	2	4
Gambling	3	0	3
"Unnecessary things"	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>97</b>

The largest number of loans relate to illness and accidents, followed by marriage, education and alcohol. It was agreed by the group that, as in Northern India, the need for loans arises because people cannot get enough money to support themselves through crises from the sources that are available. Self-help groups only produce relatively small amounts of money which can help in livelihood initiatives and so on but cannot cover the larger loans that are often needed. Also, banks will not lend for marriage, death, illness or accidents. There is some provision – not least by Freedom Fund – for children's education, and girls who complete 10th and 12th grade education are usually entitled to state help for marriage. There are also small grants available through some NGOs for entrepreneurial activities. However, many will not get these and there is nothing available to deal with the high costs related to illness, funeral expenses and accidents.

*"My mother started to go for the daily wage labour. They said that my dad had a problem in heart we borrowed money and treated him. Even my brothers started to go for work. My father was scared that he will die; so he wanted to see my sister's wedding. So we borrowed money and my sister got married. After this our debt increased and my mother found it very difficult to repay; the loan people will come home and fight with us. So after eight standard I stopped my studies and went for the mill work"* (-

TES – 18SIV – 25 – BL)

*"My father is an alcoholic and what he earns is enough for his drinking. We borrowed money from different people and got her married. My mother goes for daily wages work and supports the family. Since we borrowed money for sister's wedding we had to repay the debt"* (- TES – 18SIV – 10 – BL)

## School drop-out

A lot of the children drop out of school because they face bad treatment and have to do menial jobs in the school – like clear out the toilets. Caste discrimination is a factor in school drop-out in some places. It is worth noting that there was a big difference of opinion here between NGO members who did not immediately see it as an issue and the community members who saw discrimination as an important issue. The views of the NGO participants were that school drop-out was often a direct result of parent neglect and lack of information.

Children also drop out because of parent's death and parent's separation resulting in a sudden loss of income or children who have to take care of themselves and their families. Sometimes children do not finish their education because parents see that even people who are educated need to pay bribes in order to get a job. If they have not got the funds to do this, then it shows the community that higher education is unproductive. If they do pay the bribes, then it means that younger siblings are pressed into mill work to pay for the cost of the bribe and that there is not enough money for the other children. Participants gave examples of the sorts of jobs that demand bribes: ICDS assistant, teacher, police, sanitation worker, *panchayat* clerk, village admin officer.

## Alcohol

Men typically have seasonal work or work just a few days a week in work that requires no education and little professional skills such as building outdoor canopies. Women in the scoping study said that almost all of the men were alcoholics and that when they are not working they are drinking.

Dyeing and construction sites pay better than mills, but the work is very hard, mostly in the sun and heat. Due to this heavy work, boys started to drink and it becomes a habit when they grow up as adults (Notes from Scoping Study focus group).

One story tells of 'manual scavengers'<sup>8</sup> who drink to make their work bearable and to make the stench less noticeable. More generally men get sick from pains from heavy work and then start drinking to control the pain. For some younger men, heavy drinking now seems to be a social norm. Alcohol consumption results in men not working or else spending what they earn to pay for alcohol. In either case, there is no money in the house so the wife and or female child have to go out to work. In the analysis discussion this came out as the biggest category when we looked at causal factors for women entering the mills.

## Love, sex and attraction

Love and relationships are on the minds of young girls and boys. Parental fears of daughters' pre-marital contact with boys is a major determinant of what is possible for girls. For example, the government runs hostels for education for which scheduled castes get priority – but parents do not want to send the girls away from home because they are afraid they will meet boys. Despite parents seeing the mills as a "safe" environment where adolescent girls will not get into trouble with boys, the reality is that mill owners do not take care about boys and girls mixing together and so inevitably relationships are formed. Even "well-disciplined" girls get into love affairs at the mill – sometimes leading to marriage. Families are reluctant to send girls to higher education when it involves travelling to other locations, yet they think it is safe for girls to travel in mill buses. For some of the girls who have no other contact with males and no other recreation, the bus driver can become an object of affection – and vice versa – when he puts on suggestive songs for them on the journeys.

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<sup>8</sup> The [Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013](#) gives a detailed definition of 'manual scavenger' as: "a person engaged or employed, at the commencement of this Act or at any time thereafter, by an individual or local authority or an agency or a contractor, for manually cleaning, carrying, disposing of, or otherwise handling in any manner, human excreta in an insanitary latrine or in an open drain or pit into which the human excreta from the insanitary latrines is disposed of, or on a railway track or in such other spaces or premises, as the Central Government or a State Government may notify, before the excreta fully decomposes in such manner as may be prescribed..."

## **Death in the family and family separation**

Death and separation lead to loss of income, which leads to girls going to the mills. This in turn can be caused by alcoholism, although other reasons were given. For example, parents separate when the men have illicit affairs or after child marriages where young couples have difficulty understanding each other. Parental death is also a major reason why children drop out of schools and have to go to the mills.

## **Self-sacrifice**

Many children sacrifice themselves so that their sisters or brothers can get an education. Some went to save their mothers from having to work.

## **Other reasons**

Other reasons given for working in the mills included: boredom, enticement and peer pressure; homelessness; lack of awareness about conditions within the mill; access to the Provident Fund (PF) and Employees State Insurance (ESI). One of the more positive reasons given for going to the mill was the perceived opportunity to study at the same time as working in the mill. It was also perceived by some that there was an equality of castes in the mill and that people could mix across castes.

## **Consequences of working in the mills**

The research analysis derived from the cluster maps, the system maps and the analytical dialogue that was stimulated by them highlighted a range of key consequences for mill workers. At the core of the discussion was health and illness. Illnesses in the mills that were named were:

- Menstrual problems and irregular or missed periods
- Miscarriage
- Breathing problems
- Fever and boils on the head
- Infertility
- Irritation in the eyes
- White discharge
- Mental health issues
- Fainting from heat
- Malnutrition
- Respiratory problems

Many of the girls cited the heat and cotton dust as the main cause of illness. However, 5 out of 11 problems are reproductive health related and there has been little actual medical diagnosis. Illness resulting from mill work leads to the need to take out more loans – once again putting another girl in the family at risk of having to go the mills.

## **Heavy workload**

Girls are regularly forced to do extra shifts – most are doing 8-9 hour shifts per day but often the shifts will actually be 10 hours once they have finished cleaning up. Forced overtime is a big problem. Sometimes they do one shift after another (17 or 18 hours) – when they change the timing of their shift pattern or if they have to cover for someone. Because they get so exhausted from double shifts, they cannot eat when they get home and become under-nourished. 14-15 year olds look much older due to tiredness and malnourishment. Many girls use substances and get addicted. Sometimes this is to enable them to cope with harassment from supervisors and boys, and sometimes because they simply need to stay awake. Women are often provided with substances to keep them awake. We heard, for example, that tablets are put into the 7UP. One peer researcher reported that in her mill, nearly everyone uses substances although we were not able to discern exactly what substances were used. Community members also told of women (including themselves) who deliberately burned themselves on the hot machines in order to keep themselves awake.



The mill workers are typically forced to work six days a week and if they take leave (or are sick) in between they have to do overtime. If they do overtime, they are not paid properly and suffer the problems outlined above. Sometimes they may even have to do three shifts (i.e. 24 hours) in succession. In the hostel, if a day worker does not come then the hostel resident has to work day and night. Even community-based day workers may have to do this. Peer researchers said that doing nine shifts a week rather than six is fairly common – typically they would do eight.

### **Fines lead to pressure to do more shifts**

The girls must produce a number of completed cones and if a cone is dropped and gets dirty, then they must pay a fine out of their wages. The supervisor may get money deducted from his wages, and he in turn will take this deduction back from the girl so she may take home only 10 rupees for that shift. At one mill this happens regularly.

The machines are often worn out and break. The girl is fined 1,000 rupees if it breaks while she's working on it. She will also be taken to the General Manager and scolded for spoiling the machines.

### **Health issues in the mills**

With regard to health, there are feedback loops which come from working in the mill, meaning that harm caused by working in the mill leads to further vulnerability in the family to harmful work. For example, after 10 years, the worker cannot usually work anymore. There are also many accidents. Older women might get cleaning jobs or other work, but not the work on the spindles. As they are less likely to be able to get work themselves, older women must rely on their adolescent children entering the mills. This is a cycle that is perpetuated over time. Other conditions that affect health include poor sanitation, not being allowed to go to the toilet, very short breaks, and insufficient and or bad food.

### **Pregnancy and miscarriage**

Even when the girls are pregnant they have to do the same work, up to about the fifth month, then they usually leave the mill. Many girls miscarry while working. Mill workers often have fertility problems. Some asserted that if a boy knows that a girl works in the mill he might not marry her due to likely infertility (although of course there are many married women in the mills). The girls have to leave the mill during the latter part of her pregnancy. This may mean that another girl from the family needs to join the mill to make up for lost income, not to mention another mouth to feed. Girls have to go back to work after having a child, leaving the baby with extended family.

### **Accidents**

Accidents are rife. They happen because equipment is old and people are tired and lose concentration. Workers get nervous because they are scolded and afraid to get it wrong. Being made to work on machines without previous knowledge and training leads to accidents. Accidents leads to the loss of fingers or other serious injuries which in turn lead to a loss of work. Future research should try to obtain more information about how many accidents there are. These accidents are mostly covered up by the management. Workers fear reporting them because then they will get no money from the mill owners.

*“They started to give me frequently overtime. Since they used to be at the back of us when we did not work I got addicted to certain habits. I became addicted to snuff, Ramu (Name Changed) to nicotine use and Malini (Name Changed) to betelnut use. one day under the influence of the addiction I accidentally put my hand in the machine and it got cut. From the mill they took me to the hospital. They did not give any salary for that day. I took 15 days of leave; they did not help me also” (- SSS\_2PUG\_02 \_BL)*

*“I am sharing an incident that happened in my company; that a lady while working, her sari accidently got caught in a machine wheel and she died. She worked well and helped me a lot in the company and was affectionate with me. I cannot forget her”  
(- SPE\_4SAM\_3 \_BL)*

## **Mental health problems and suicide**

Mental health problems appear from the scoping study discussions, the stories, and the analysis of cotton mill researchers to be endemic. Suicides are often linked to sexual harassment, verbal abuse and scolding that causes mental stress. This is seen as very important. In one mill community research participants reported that there were 10 suicides. In others there were two or three. The 14 peer researcher mill workers spoke of 9 mills with a total of 34 suicides in last year.

## **Unable to leave because of the financial consequences**

If workers want to leave the job before the agreed period, they are denied their Provident Fund.

They are also frequently not paid if they try to leave.

*"Initially we used to go daily for work from home; since it was difficult we went and stayed at the hostel. Our salary one day was 220 rupees. My mother used to visit us once in a month. We thought we could take rest in the hostel but it was not so. We were forced to do overtime and also clean the machines after work since we were in the hostel. Also the supervisor troubled us much. He used to always be looking at us with a silly smile. If we are not careful he might do anything to us. One day I decided to be at the hostel because of stomach pain during menstruation. As I was lying down someone came and gave me slap on my cheek; it was my hostel warden. She started to scold me by saying you are always saying some lame excuse to not go for work. Weekly once four of us had to join and clean the toilets; it was very difficult and I used to cry. When my mother came to visit us we cried to her and told all our troubles and asked her to take us home. So my mother came and took us with her and got the salary the very next week. After that we worked in the mills for six months. There also they would ask us to do lot of overtime. We did not continue and when we went and asked the provident fund money they refused to give us saying if you work only for six months it does not belong to you but to the government" (- SSS\_4EMA\_08\_NBL)*

## **Collusion and corruption**

We learned from the scoping studies that labour inspection is characterised by corruption. Often mills are tipped off about any inspection visits. They all have signals. In some mills the girls just disappear out the back and run home. In others they are put into a pit and covered in cotton. These stories were corroborated by the peer researchers. In any case government or business-led regulation below the level of the garment factories is more or less non-existent.

## **Where are the NGO interventions and what are the gaps?**

We looked together at the large system map and asked people to place their major interventions against the factors and relationships that they had mapped.

There is some work on sexual harassment and more generally some work on conditions in the mills. Some of the NGOs have helped mills to introduce complaints committees, and conditions do seem to have improved at those sites. Some have managed, for example, to introduce masks.

There are some non-Freedom Fund interventions that focus on health camps. There are a few others – one focusing on collecting blood samples of people in the mills and another focusing on nutrition. However, the range of health issues include missed periods, miscarriages, uterine prolapse, white discharge, skin complaints, asthmatic and breathing complaints. Abortion is mentioned frequently, but it is not clear when they are referring to abortion if they are talking about miscarriage or abortion.

There are various livelihood programmes that partners work on. Some partners are supporting credit and savings groups, others are facilitating low-interest bank loans for income generation, vocational training, youth employment or help for micro-enterprises.

A number of major needs were identified for interventions – which obviously cannot and should not all be done by the Freedom Fund. Some of the priorities that have been identified could, however, be areas that people can take action on themselves. Community members and other stakeholders will explore this in action research. In the next phase we will have eight action research groups that will work together on learning about and hopefully addressing some of these issues.

Priorities identified for action research groups were: alcoholism; school drop outs; loans and debts; illness, accidents and suicide in the mills; alternative employment (including transport). As we can see above, the 12 NGOs are already undertaking a range of education initiatives and various activities that attempt to improve conditions in the mills.

The biggest gaps relate to the drivers of bondage and child labour, which seem to centre around transport, major loans in response to life crises especially health, primary health –especially Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), anaemia, alcohol addiction, and a lack of alternative employment for men and women. These should also be considered as priorities for the programme as a whole. Action research (community-led research) is a strategy to find out how these can be addressed, and whether this should be done by the communities themselves or others.

Having done the exercise above, the groups prioritised the issues that they felt were important to engage with in more depth in the action research groups.

Issues	Frequency
Alcohol	17
School drop out	11
Loan and debts	8
Illness, accident, suicide etc. in the mill	8
No other local work, jobs, alternative livelihoods	8
Caste	6
Sexual harassment and scolding in the mill	5
Family separation	3
Gender and discrimination	1
Child marriage	1

Alcohol comes out as the most important, followed by issues related to education and schooling. We can probably combine work on illness and accident with loans and work on harassment (mainly sexual) and scolding with mental health and suicide. There is also a need for more work on alternative livelihoods.

## Conclusion

Key priorities for the programme to focus on based on the life stories are as follows:

1. Work needs to continue on **alternative livelihoods**, but it is difficult to see how alternative livelihood development can gain traction without **effective transport** so urgent attention needs to be given to this.
2. As was found in the North India life stories process, **high levels of loans** are driven by the demands of **health crises** (including accidents) and a solution needs to be found to this, otherwise the only way people can get access to money is to get advances for sending their child to the mill. A good starting point would be effective preventive work through primary care – especially on anaemia and SRHR and collect more hard evidence about what is actually happening. What health issues are being paid

out of pocket, are these preventable, and should they be covered elsewhere by public facilities? Do people want to use these public facilities? This can support NGO programme interventions and activity generated through the action research process. Work also needs to be done on **how people can get insured for these crises**.

3. **School drop-out** is a major issue. The danger is that without alternative sources of income a child can get an education but still end up in the mills afterwards (see story on cover page). In the meantime, her sister will have had to go to the mill to pay for her education. So attention needs to be paid to the dynamics within the family that prevent or facilitate school drop-out.
4. Work needs to continue on **conditions in the mills** including masks, toilet breaks, working hours and wages, accident risk etc. However particular attention needs to be given to the issue of sexual harassment and the link to mental health problems and suicide.
5. **Alcoholism** is a significant factor driving the dynamics that perpetuate bonded labour for women in the mills. If attention is not given to this, then many women are likely to continue to enter risky situations in the mills. Some of the causes – men’s options for work, alcohol abuse – should be integrated into the programme as socio-economic stability within the family is critical.
6. A major difficulty in the process and in the NGO programmes is how to engage with the girls and boys from other states who are **living in the mill hostels**. These people often face a much harsher environment than those who are come from the village and it is very hard to get access to them. This needs some priority attention and should perhaps be a focus of one of the action research groups in its own right.

## Life stories

We have reproduced some more extended sections of stories below to show how the multiple issues discussed above intersect and interrelate.

### Story 1:

*I have studied till fourth standard. When I was eleven years I went to the mill for work. I have five sisters. I got married when I was eighteen. Because of the dowry problem I was chased back to my parent's home. I was only a month at my in-laws' place. Even my husband told me that he did not like me. I went for a tailoring job for one month. I fell in love with one person called Rakesh and we got married. My family accepted us; but his family started to relate to us only after a child was born. They refused to give him property also. Now I have been married for five years; in the beginning he was very good to me but later on he used to doubt me and became an alcoholic. He used to fight with me and go to his mother's home; his mother says to him she belongs to a different caste so you leave her and come you can get married once more. All the money he earns he spends on drinking. If I ask money for house expenses he will say that he will not live with me anymore; he has gone and complained to the police station twice saying that he does not want to live with me. My child needs milk to drink, I need food to eat; my parents are very old. How will they take care of me and my child? I am going for the mill work leaving my child with my parents [crying]. He has borrowed huge money even my gold chain given by my parents was pawned. I do not know what me and my child will do. Since I married on my own my sisters' husbands are not helping me. I have been going to work continuously for the past ten years. I have developed a cold and fall sick often. My husband has been drinking from quite young age so now his hands are trembling and even for one day he cannot be without drinking. I do not know when my family situation will change! (- PEA\_3KUR7\_BL)*

### Story 2:

*I am Bhagya and my father's name is Mohan. My mother's name is Shailaja. I have one brother and a sister. My brother's name is Raman and he is studying at Polytechnic. My sister's name is Girija and she is studying 5th Standard at Virudunagar. I discontinued my studies at the class of 7th Standard. My brother and sister study well. My parents are working as woodcutters. I am working in a mill.*

*My father has alcohol regularly and quarrels with my mother and us. It is very difficult to manage such situations in the family. That's why my grandparents asked me to go for work. So I tried a job and got into a mill at Coimbatore for 5 years. We have lands but due to the rainless years we can't do any farming there. Due to the difficulties (finance) I am forced to choose a job in a mill. If I had studied I would go for good jobs and earn a good salary.*

*My husband also worked in the same mill and he is a distant relative. His name is Maran and has studied up to 5th Standard. Now he is going to Granite Quarry for work. He is getting 15 days' job in a month. It is hardly enough to fulfil our needs. I don't like to go to millwork. I asked an increment in my salary from the mill I work, they assured to increase the salary. They suggested learning some other skill while working at the mill like a beautician course and making baskets etc. Sometimes I have stomach ache while I was working at the millwork but we have to do the work by taking medicine and we work without rest. Some days I do my work with tears.*

*Our marriage is a love marriage and marriage happened last year. I met him when I was working at the mill. We don't have kids. Due to the difficulties in the family I have to go for the work at the mill. I don't have any other option. Cottons will go into the nose and mouth. It leads to lot of health issues like foot pain, allergy etc. Later on we will have all health problems.*

*When I went to mill job I was afraid. The lady who works with me gave me hope and confidence. My father is an alcoholic so the gold in the house is hypothecated at the bank. They have given me very few jewels for my marriage. My father in law knows everything but didn't asked anything about that. I don't have any issues in the mill, but if I took leave then they will scold and use bad words. My father always drinks alcohol and fight with us. Such habits of my father made my grandparents demand I discontinue my studies and go for some job.*

*I don't want my brother and sister to have the same experience as me and discontinue their studies. I just want to make them to study and I am taking care of their studies. The income, which I am getting, is to run the family and is not enough to make a saving. The family situation is alright now. I want to learn some skills through training and want to make money. I don't know how to go out and study, due to that I am working in the mill. If anyone comes to our place to teach skills, I am ready to learn that! (- SPE\_4SAM\_12\_BL)*

### **Story 3:**

*My name is Bhagyalakshmi, age 27. I was born and brought up in this Manjanayakkanpatti.*

*We did not have any land. So my father went to work as daily wage labourer. Even my mother was a daily wage worker. Sometimes they did not have work and stayed at home. I have four siblings; two younger brothers and two elder sisters. Even though we were born in the village my parents gave us education. I wanted to study well and get a good job and raise my children; this was my dream. With such big dreams I went to school. I could not continue my education after 10th standard. My mother fell ill and had to undergo an operation; my father had to borrow huge money for the expense. My family was pushed to a very difficult situation. So my father discontinued my studies and joined me at the Vedesandur's 'Every ready' mill; I used to go with other girls in the village. I joined in the three-year scheme; after completing three years of work they said I will get 40,000 rupees. I and my father had to sign some papers. Some of the papers were in English and some were blank papers. I started to go for the mill work. After I finished my three years of work my father thought with that amount he can settle my marriage. I saw that my classmates were going to school when I was going for mill work. I felt very sad seeing that. I used to feel sorry for my situation. The work at the mill was very difficult. I told my father that I could not stand and work continuously for 10 hours at a stretch. He said what to do our family situation is bad you have to go for work. I did not have any other way so I went for the mill work. After coming back from the mill work my mother used to keep hot water for bathing; I used to take a bath and go to sleep. I did not like the job but was forced to go because of the family situation; thinking of the job I used to cry.*

*As time went by I became used to the routine. I used to comfort myself by saying, "If I am born poor this is the prize I will get". Was I treated as a human? It was questionable. I was crushed by the work is all I can say. After completing two years of work I got married. I was happy that I could escape the 'mill prison'; little did I know that there was another one waiting. I asked my scheme money at the mill. You have not completed the three years so you cannot get the scheme money they said. My father fought with them strongly and told them to give my two years of the scheme amount. So they gave us 20,000 rupees only. With that amount and some money borrowed my father married me off. Somehow my parents fulfilled their duty by marrying me. After that only I have to live my life. I lived quietly for some time at my husband's place. I realised that my husband family also was very poor; I come from a poor family so I will get someone from same situation only, how can I get a king? So I went back to the mill work after six months of marriage; the only job that I knew. It became very hard as I had to go the mill work and also come back home and finish the household work also. I became pregnant. I worked hard even in that situation. I delivered a beautiful girl baby. I was worried looking at my baby, whether she will also suffer like me? I decided strongly then that I will raise my child even if I had to work hard. My husband was slowly becoming an alcoholic. My husband started his day by drinking; he was not worth paisa. "If married to a donkey you have to bear the burden".*

*All my dreams I thought I will make a reality through my child; with this thought my life went on.*

*Till my child was four years of age I was going for the mill work. When I got the monthly salary I used to give some money so my husband could drink; otherwise he would come and fight with me. As time went by I had to completely take care of the house. My mother-in-law fell sick. I had to see to her medical expenses also. My father-in-law abandoned us. After some time, my mother-in-law passed away. I did not go to work for two months; I thought my husband would come to his senses. But my useless husband started to drink much more. I tolerated my husband just for my child's sake. So I did not bother about his drinking and also about the fact he was not worth a paisa. When my child was in the second standard my husband's torture started to increase; rather than doing cooking most of the time I was fighting with him. I could not do both the mill work and come home and be at peace. I started to hate living; I did not want to stay alive. To suffer daily I thought let me die; so I decided to hang myself. I went and bought a rope. When I went to hang myself I heard the sound of my daughter. Immediately I stopped myself saying, after I die who will take care of my child? My husband drank heavily. Because of that his intestines became weak and he had to be admitted to hospital. All the expenses were taken care by me. After fifteen days of hospitalisation he became better and we came home. I could not go for any work during that time. To care for my husband, I had to borrow a huge amount of money from most of the village people and became a debtor. I thought after this he will not drink. After one month he started to drink again; how a single person can manage alone. Seeing my difficult situation my parents used to give me now and then some 100 or 200 rupees. Even my parents were in a very difficult situation. My mother used to frequently come and see me. Whenever she prepares something nice she brings it for me. She was very much worried about my situation. She was my only security and help in the whole world.*

*My father became ill. I used to go sometimes and visit him and my younger brother. I could not do much as I was also going for the mill work. The mill job was not like early one; if within eight hours we do not get the manufactured product they will scold us. If we had to go to toilet we can go only for five minutes. We didn't even have enough time to eat. As time went by the mill job became more difficult. I joined another scheme to pay off my debts. Since I could not go regularly for work they said that they cannot give me the scheme money. "Misfortunes never come singly" – such was my state. All my dreams to pay off my debt became impossible; I cried because I had worked for three years in difficult situation yet could not get money. My health was spoilt because of the hard work. I felt helpless. From my stomach they removed three cotton balls. I had to go for treatment. Only one day in the mill was I happy: the day when I met all the other workers and they shared their problems and I could also share mine. In tears I shared my problems with them; I felt like half of my burden had come down. When I realised that the other women workers' problems were much more severe than mine I felt little better. It was workers' day. All of us had food and was feeling relaxed. That day I will never forget for all of my life.*

*When I was working the supervisors used to ill-treat me; they used to scold very badly. I had a co-worker called Shanthi. The supervisor used to follow her everywhere. He used to touch her and speak; once I saw him touch her breast. I felt very sad after that incident. She could not speak against him; if anything was said against them they would take revenge on us.*

*All who work at the mill are bonded labourers. We do not have opportunities to even speak about our problems. Because of our family situation we go for work; there they treat us like tools. We go to work to improve our situation; but there the situation is much worse. My only aim is to make my children study well and send them to a good job. How can I run my family with a day wage of 230 rupees? That is the situation I am in. I hope for a better dawn. (-SSS\_3MAN\_06\_BL)*

## NGO participant feedback

At the end of the process we held a feedback session to identify what the NGOs had learned. This is important because it tells us something about what learning the NGOs were taking back into their organisations. The following are the key points from each of the NGO representatives in turn:

*"We only deal with issues in our own place – but we've come to understand issues in other areas of the hotspot. Specific issues are related to other issues. We've got more idea of the cycle of causes and consequences. We've already done issue mapping in six villages to get a better understanding of the issues."*

*"I had thought manual scavenging was abolished, but now I know it's still there."*

*"In our districts – Dindigul – many castes are going to the mill. Also boys are going to the mill – about 50-50. Other industries are affected by issues of bonded labour/exploitation as well as the mills."*

*"When we analysed stories we found many things in them. It's a complex situation. What we were missing in our programmes, we've come to understand."*

*"I'm able to understand issues outside our district through other participants. If we reduce the causes, we can automatically reduce the consequences."*

*"In our area, it's primarily Dalits that we need to work with, but now we realise that other castes suffer in other areas. We also saw the complexity of the situation."*

*"Through the story collection, we got a deeper understanding of what the issues are. It took us deeper than our regular work."*

*"When we collected the stories, we thought there was exaggeration, but now we understand the extent of the problem. We used to think it was because of the parents only that girls were going to the mills, but now we can see all the problems. We can see it's not just the parents' fault."*

*"In families and villages people don't know how many people are struggling. They can't see how many are going for the work. The analysis should happen within their own villages so the problem because shared knowledge. Then they can focus on the real issues and how to address the problems."*

*"Through story collection, we got new information – like the example of workers having to keep themselves awake during night shifts by using hot rods on their skin."*

*"Initially, we didn't know why we were collecting the stories. Now by coming here, we realise we can see the whole process."*

*"Problems vary across the districts. We realised that other districts have other problems."*

*"At the beginning it seemed like an additional task. But the stories then allowed me to see the depth of the issues – so I became involved in all the stories being collected by my NGO. It motivated me to be part of the whole process of collection. I learned about issues in other districts. My suggestion: The person collecting the story should also do the analysis of the story they collected (not giving it initially to someone else). Also, they should look at what is the most important issue at the level of the family, the mills, the community from each story (not just two sticky notes on what's important)."*

*"I understand other people's issues from other districts."*



## ANNEX 2:



**Participatory statistics to measure prevalence in  
bonded labour hotspots in Tamil Nadu:  
Report of preliminary findings of the Baseline study  
April–September 2016**

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The team would also like to record its gratitude to the Freedom Fund, especially Ginny Baumann for supporting the team from the initial design phase of this process, and to the finance and administration teams at Praxis and IDS for providing their support throughout the field process.

Photo credits: Praxis Institute for Participatory Practice India

## List of abbreviations

HH	Household
IDS	Institute for Development Studies
MGNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
NGO	Non-governmental organisation

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

The state of Tamil Nadu in Southern India plays an important role for both the Indian textile industry and for global brands and retailers. Much of the country's spinning, power loom and handloom units are located in Tamil Nadu. The cotton-spinning sector is the backbone of Tamil Nadu's textile industry. One of the region's oldest and most prestigious manufacturing sectors, it employs thousands of workers and has been the leading source of the state's revenues, exports, and industrial entrepreneurship. Tamil Nadu accounts for over 65% of other cloth preparation prior to manufacture.<sup>9</sup> The textile industry in Tamil Nadu, as in several other Asian countries, builds on existing gender inequalities taking advantage of gender wage gaps by relying on the production of labour-intensive goods that are produced by women.<sup>10</sup> The textile industry in Tamil Nadu has been reported to be exploiting young women workers in the spinning and textile units and using manipulative schemes that reinforce gender inequalities. The media has widely reported on some of these schemes and the abuses that women and girls suffered over the last few years.<sup>11</sup>

The Freedom Fund, along with 11 partner organisations in Tamil Nadu, is focusing geographically on hotspots/locations where forms of bonded labour are more prevalent. It is working towards reducing trafficking, bonded labour and harmful child labour. Between 2015 and 2018, under the overall objective of reducing the prevalence of bonded labour in four districts of Tamil Nadu, sub-objectives are:

1. Residents in 240 targeted highly affected communities prevent vulnerable individuals entering forced labour schemes. They ensure sustainable freedom and wellbeing of bonded labour survivors.
2. At least 3,000 workers in sites of high exploitation strengthen their resistance against violation of rights and freedoms
3. Spinning-mill owners make improvements in worker protection and freedoms.

Intervention districts are highlighted in grey in the maps<sup>12</sup> below:



## 1.2 Study context and methods

As part of this process - an independent evaluation of the hotspot - being carried out by the Institute of Development Studies UK and Praxis India – there is a strong focus on the relevance and effectiveness of partners' work. The study aims to seek answers to an estimation of prevalence of bonded labour across Freedom Fund areas: on how prevalence differs among populations with different socio-economic

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<sup>9</sup> Solidaridad (2012) Understanding the Characteristics of the Sumangali Scheme in Tamil Nadu Textile & Garment Industry and Supply Chain Linkages. Research Report.

<sup>10</sup> UN Women (2016) Towards gender equality in Viet Nam: Making inclusive growth work for women. E. Braunstein (2015) Economic Growth and Social Reproduction: Gender Inequality as a Cause and Consequence. UN Women Discussion Paper No. 5.

<sup>11</sup> Solidaridad (2012).

<sup>12</sup> Maps provided by the Freedom Fund

characteristics; on the indicators that unpack whether a family is more resilient or prone to bonded labour (such as loans or alcohol consumption); and on whether the method being used for measuring bonded labour is likely to detect the expected change between baseline and endline.

While individual NGO partners have monitoring and evaluation systems to measure the progress of their intervention, the aim of our work is to assess the impact of interventions across the Freedom Fund hotspot as a whole.

The Freedom Fund supports local NGO intervention programmes currently in existence in six hotspots where there are known to be high concentrations of modern-day bonded labour (in this case, Tamil Nadu). The aim of each hotspot programme is to reduce prevalence in the hotspot as a whole - with partners working in specific communities on: direct prevention, protection and prosecution interventions; improving the wider enabling environment for freedom; increasing civil society's capacity for sustained and effective anti-bonded labour action and supporting rigorous research and evaluation on bonded labour. Similar processes are currently taking place in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh in Northern India and in other parts of the world.

Partners have been chosen based on the following criteria (though not all partners need to be strong in each area): (1) Addressing bonded labour and bonded labour; (2) Involvement in rescue/interception; (3) Equipping survivors through effective support for recovery and reintegration; (4) Positioning to contribute to systemic change, including through community-based reflection and collective action against bonded labour; (5) Engagement in local, district, state and/or national level advocacy; (6) Involvement in legal services for victim protection and/or prosecution of those who hold or traffic bonded labourers; (7) Capacity and organisational reliability, trustworthiness, and transparency.

An empirical measurement of interventions and change processes requires documentation of at least two points in time to offer comparison from start to finish, which is why a baseline and end-line is being facilitated for the overall hotspot programme itself. As there was no prevalence data available, the selection of locations of work was based on anecdotal evidence that is rooted in experience of the partners – some of whom have worked in these communities for many years, as well as research studies carried out by some NGOs. This led to the creation of criteria for the selection of the four locations of Erode, Namakkal, Virudhunagar and Dindigul, including that they needed to have a significant number of mills existing in the district with workers going into those mills each day and a large number of workers moving from source villages to go to live inside mill hostels. This evidence often included communities having the typical characteristics associated with high prevalence of forms of bonded labour in India, such as being primarily Dalit or Adivasi, having high levels of landlessness and poverty, and government safety nets having a poor reach. The partners are intervening in 338 hamlets in total.

The current baseline study was seen as the first step in providing context for the partners' work and offering inputs to their ongoing programmes to meet the goal of decreasing the prevalence of bonded labourers during the intervention period. The aim of the prevalence work is not to show overall prevalence for the districts but to show prevalence in the intervention areas and how it changes over time.

The choice of participatory statistics as a method for this baseline was influenced by a range of different factors including: multiple working definitions and understandings of bonded labour; the difficulties associated with identifying hidden populations; the extractive nature of traditional surveys; and the need to give feedback to the communities affected so that they can validate the results and take action themselves.<sup>13</sup> Participatory census and generation of numbers was seen as a methodology with potential for overcoming some of the issues of traditional survey methods. With use of participatory tools such as a social map or other similar tools, details of disaggregated socio demographic data of families and village institutions can be collected, analysed and discussed at the local level. When statistical principles are used, data can be analysed at a higher aggregated level, in this case the hotspot level. Having been successfully used for monitoring and evaluation in other contexts, participatory statistics was selected as the method for measuring prevalence

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<sup>13</sup> More details are available in CDI Practice Paper, Number 16, February 2016: <http://cdiimpact.org/publications/using-participatory-statistics-examine-impact-interventions-eradicate-slavery-lessons>

and other indicators of change as part of an integrated mixed methods approach including life story analysis, system mapping and action research.

The experiment in the use of participatory statistics for collecting prevalence data on bonded labour has wider importance within the global movement, as anti-bonded-labour agencies around the world struggle to generate accurate prevalence data in a way that is cost-effective and therefore scalable. It is consequently particularly important to explore the validity and reliability of the results from this research so that we can inform the wider movement about the extent to which this method can be re-used.

### **1.3 Tool development and sample**

The hotspot area in Tamil Nadu is a complex and dynamic setting where bonded labour co-exists with other forms of labour exploitation and many other types of socio-economic and political inequalities. Each partner NGO has its own expertise and history.

Seven NGOs were involved in a life story collection and analysis workshop. The purpose was to understand the systemic causes of bonded labour, identify how programmes should intervene in order to be most relevant, and what the indicators of a significant change would be, according to individuals living in contexts of bonded labour. The key themes that emerged from the joint analysis of 308 life stories included poverty, alcoholism, illiteracy, illness, accident at work, death in family and debt. Participants then took these life stories to explore causal relations between these themes, creating a system wall-map using arrows and lines. This map showed causal relationships and systemic feedback loops. The qualitative analysis of the pathways and indicators of change from the map and the clustered analysis generated three indicators of change over time and one diagnostic indicator. Following the life stories exercise, we identified three main indicators to use within the statistics at baseline and follow up: (1) prevalence and incidence of bonded labour,<sup>14</sup> (2) development of collective action by those affected by bonded labour based on group discussions, and (3) access to health services. These are the indicators that we use to measure change.

In addition, we looked at the following diagnostic indicators; religion, caste, type and size of land ownership, access to MGNREGA, having a bank account, family size, family composition, access to school, school drop-out rate, presence of traffickers and type of trafficking, loans, borrower, purpose of loans, reason for loans, early marriage, alcohol addiction in the family.

Based on a joint analysis and testing of the tool, we narrowed the categories of bonded labour down to four: (1) bonded labour in the mill within the village; (2) bonded labour in the mill outside the village; (3) bonded labour doing other work within the village; and (4) bonded labour doing other work outside the village.

In addition to partners defining their own goals and indicators, the programme has an upwards accountability and reporting function. The danger of this, as with all such systems, is that monitoring and evaluation can be perceived as a dull report-writing exercise, rather than an opportunity for learning, analysis and sharing to generate new knowledge and inform change strategies. Therefore, the IDS and Praxis team were keen to evolve a tool that would utilise the expertise of field staff, be interesting and also encourage the sharing of experiences of community members in a simple, non-threatening manner. A two-part prevalence measurement process was evolved, through which each NGO collected data in a set number of predetermined hamlets. Part 1 was a mapping exercise to generate background details on the hamlet and to help with a line listing of houses to randomly select respondents. Part 2 was facilitated a week or 10 days after the mapping exercise and used a pictorial self-assessment tool to generate some detailed information about certain households in the hamlets, serving as the baseline data. Ten to fifteen individuals from randomly selected households provided the information for the survey in a safe space facilitated by NGO

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<sup>14</sup> Operational definition of bonded labour used in the study. There needs to be an advance or agreement – advance, whether in cash or in kind or partly in cash or partly in kind, made by one person who is also demanding the labour of the borrower as a means of repayment for a loan.; PLUS any one of these remaining four: no freedom of movement – physically constrained or has restrictions placed on his/her freedom of movement; less than the minimum wages – a remuneration which is less than the current notified minimum wage under the minimum wages act; no freedom of employment – absence of freedom to choose one's employment or other means of livelihood; no freedom of market place – loss of freedom to sell one's labour in open market. These have been detailed in the guidebook.

staff. Respondents indicated the appropriate answers to the questions for themselves and their two adjacent neighbours on the sheets – one set of sheets per household, giving a total of three households per respondent. The advantage for non-literate community members was that all questions were depicted pictorially and they had to encircle the appropriate response. They could also clarify with other respondents, in case they were unsure. In each village after data collection was completed and compiled there was a village-level discussion on the results of the survey and the pathways into and out of slavery. A summary of the results is given in Annex 5.

One of the criticisms of participatory quantitative methods is that they have lacked statistical power, resulting in conclusions that they lack statistical robustness. So, for this study, we adopted rigorous statistical methods to overcome this difficulty. As no survey data was available we had to use an estimate of current prevalence to calculate our sample size. Overestimating baseline prevalence could result in a sample too small to detect changes. But given that the NGOs had to collect the data and that this would take them away from other activities, we also wanted to keep the sample small enough for them to manage. We thought it was important that NGOs themselves were involved in estimating expected reductions in bonded labour prevalence because they work in these areas and it would help them to reflect on their own assumptions. Their estimates are in the table below:

	NGO estimated % of households now	NGO estimated % of households in 2 years	Sample required baseline	Sample required repeat
<b>SSSSS</b>	14%	5%	165	165
<b>TEST</b>	18%	10%	294	294
<b>WORD</b>	19%	10%	239	239
<b>Child Voice</b>	30%	10%	62	62
<b>Peace Trust</b>	45%	30%	162	162
<b>Odam</b>	19%	9%	188	188
<b>Speech</b>	35%	25%	328	328
<b>Leaf</b>	16%	7%	196	196
<b>READ</b>	48%	27%	82	82
<b>Van Muhil</b>	25%	15%	250	250
<b>Vizhuthugal</b>	48%	20%	48	48
<b>Don Bosco</b>	12%	7%	539	539
	<b>Average estimated baseline 27.41</b>		<b>Average 212.75</b>	

The estimated expected reduction in bonded labour varied between the NGOs. Their estimations gave an average baseline of 27% and an average expected reduction of 10% during the project period. For this a sample size of 2,681 was sufficient for 9 out of 12 NGOs – if their estimates were accurate.

This ensured that the sample size was big enough to measure the changes in at least nine of the individual NGOs in addition to detecting a change of less than 5% across the hotspot as a whole. For the hotspot as a whole we took a more conservative estimated reduction from 27.5% to 24%, which required 2,449 households for the baseline and the same number for the end line. This meant that even if NGOs delivered a smaller sample we still had enough households to assess changes in the hotspot as whole.

A distribution of these households across partner NGOs as well as hamlets in both states, is below:

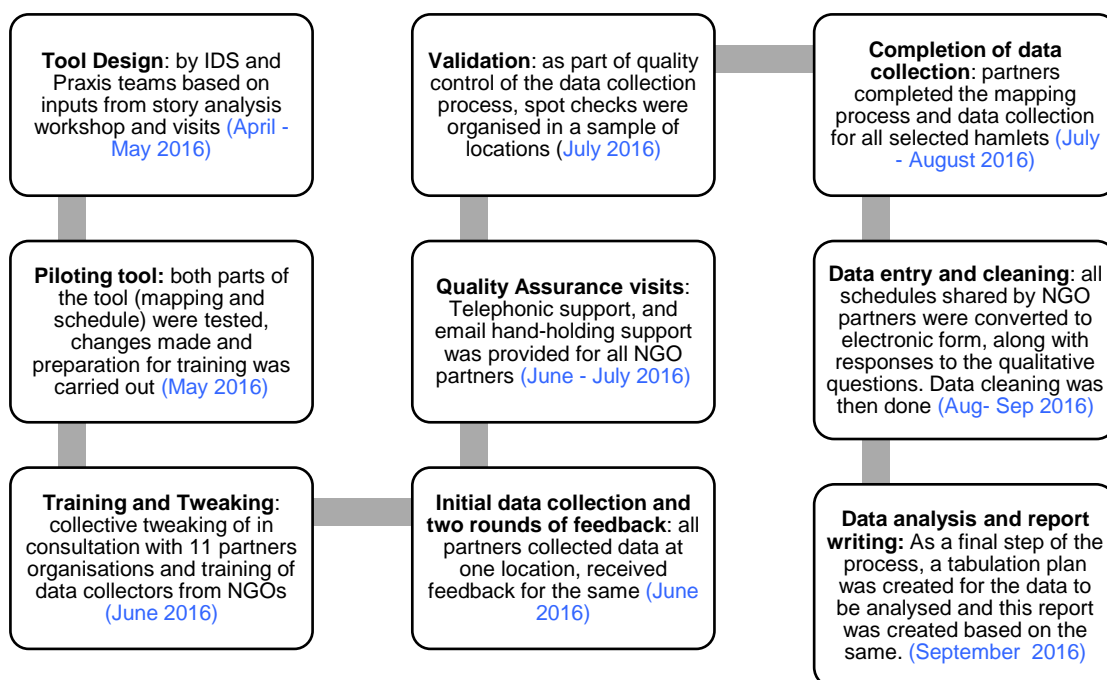
District	NAMAKKAL			VIRUDHUNAGAR				ERODE	DINDIGUL			
NGO	WORD	LEAF	Don Bosco	ODAM	Vaan Muhil	TEST	SPEECH	READ	PEACE	Child Voice	SSSSS	Total
HH per NGO	270	270	270	270	270	270	270	270	270	270	270	2970
Hamlets per NGO	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	66

There are 358<sup>15</sup> villages/hamlets covered by the 11 NGOs. Each NGO partner had an equal workload and visited six hamlets. In order to select these hamlets, each NGO shared a list of hamlets that it is currently operational in. They also indicated which of these hamlets had prior interventions on the issue of bonded labour, which were taken off the eligibility list of the current baseline. The average household size across the hamlets is 179.8, ranging from 72 in Avathipalayam in Namakkal to 284 in S.Thiruvengatapuram in Virudhunagar.

An average number of households per hamlet were then shared and random numbers were applied to select the final list of hamlets. To arrive at the desired sample size across all partners, an average of 90 respondents (who would share data about 270 households) per NGO had to be met. Going by an average number of 100 households per hamlet, each NGO had to select 15 respondent households.

#### 1.4 Study process

The process followed by the study team for the baseline study, is detailed in the image below, along with a timeline of the same:



#### Validation

As a quality control mechanism of this prevalence study, validation of the data was undertaken by Praxis to explore the extent of deviation from the data collected by the partners and to understand the reasons for it (see Annex 3). The validation visits were to be done in five per cent of the total of 2,970 households (i.e. 155

<sup>15</sup> Child Voice =30; Don Bosco=25; LEAF=40; ODAM=25; PEACE=30; READ=30; SPEECH=30; SSSSS=25; Vaan Muhil =20; WORD=83 and TEST =20

households) using a random sample. Visits were made to all 11 NGOs covered under the study. In each of the organisations, data for between nine and twelve households was to be collected from one location per organisation. The locations were those where the partner NGO had already collected data previously. The locations and households were selected randomly. In certain locations data was collected for more than 12 households. The survey tool with 21 questions were redone with respondents from 155 households with the same respondent who shared details during the study (this was verified by the individual (because their name was on the original form, the other respondents in the group and the NGO colleague). If another family member chose to represent the respondent, they were part of the process, but the data from their sheets was not included in the analysis. Most questions – including the questions on the prevalence of bonded labour had less than 10% variation. The two questions that had most variation were about the causes of the loans and about alcoholism. These problems were discussed with the NGO and addressed. We conclude that the results are valid but that caution must be made with statements about alcoholism and the reasons for taking out loans.

## **1.5 Ethical considerations**

This baseline is part of a larger research project, which has been reviewed and approved by the IDS Ethical Review Board.

## **1.6 Study limitations and challenges**

The focus of the study was to go beyond token participation and move to research grounded in the community with community members being able to share information and insights through discussions. The challenges associated with the community process included: crowd management due to people's (mistaken) anticipation of a Government scheme or NGO programme making beneficiary lists; mingling between participants hailing from various social categories (especially across caste hierarchies); communication gaps or delays between senior staff at the organisation and the front line staff carrying out the research; difficulties in interacting with female respondents due to gender roles restricting women's ability to publicly speak on some issues; and timeline slippages due to festivals and elections.

In addition to these challenges, some limitations of the study include:<sup>16</sup>

- Inability of a baseline of a cross-sectional design without a control group to detect causal relations
- A baseline designed to measure changes within intervention areas of selected NGOs in a certain geographic location cannot be used to draw conclusions about prevalence outside these areas
- The tool was prepared for use by largely non-literate groups and not all data could be tallied up for a group analysis while the group members who had given the information were waiting. Therefore, we focussed on the "why" aspect of the prevalence. Other findings will be analysed and discussed with the NGO together with other issues that came up during the group discussion based on the notes
- In the early stages of intervention, people tend to perceive coercive work relationships as normal (especially in a context of inter-generational bonded labour) and that therefore as awareness about rights continues, then over the short term, people may increasingly be able to perceive the exploitation and force within the relationship and so reported prevalence may increase. Trust dynamics raise important issues in a context where actual reductions in prevalence might be expected to be relatively small. It is not unlikely that a programme's impact in terms of a decrease in prevalence might only be measurable after many years and might actually lead to a reported increase during the first years.

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<sup>16</sup> The validation process also highlighted some issues which were ironed out with individual NGOs. These are detailed in Annex 3



## 2. Findings

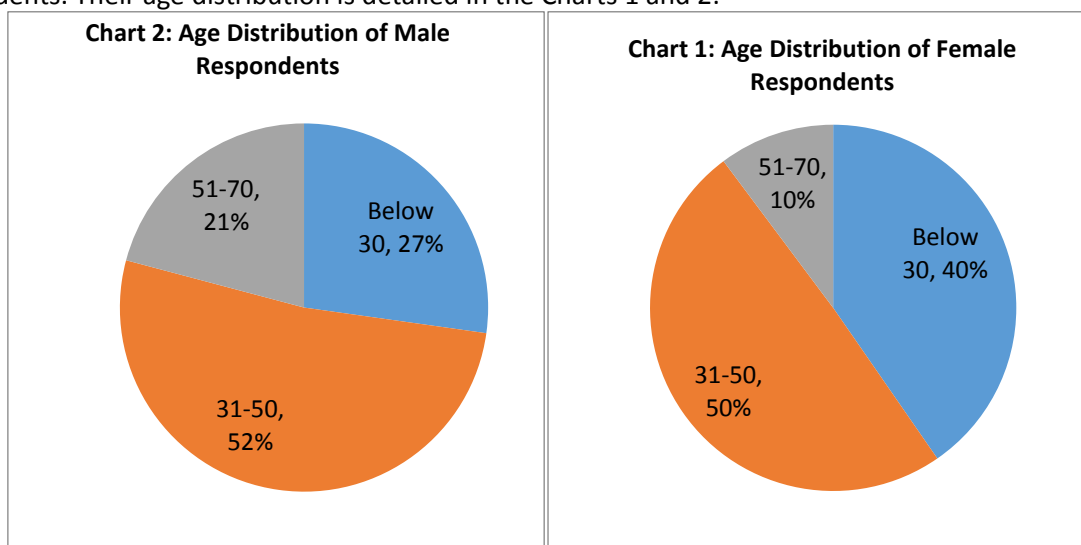
This chapter details the profile of the respondents and the bonded labour status of the households, with further comparisons made based on socio-economic and demographic profile of the households about which data is shared. In the charts below terms such as ‘exclusively bonded labourers’ refer to working members of the household.

### 2.1 Background information

#### 2.1.1 Respondent profile

A total of 970 respondents were met across 66 hamlets in locations covered by 11 NGOs. The total number of households about whom data was generated is 2,970, given that each respondent shared data for three households each: their own and their immediate neighbours on either side of the house. (For most of the sections below, 30 records were excluded and only 2,940 have been considered. This was because 15 of these had four or more non-working family members and eight reported having only one member in the family, who was not working).

60% (597) respondents were female and 40% (393) were male. The aim of all the NGOs was to try and interact with a group of female respondents in 50% of the hamlets they visited. They were free to choose this based on experience of where more women were likely to come and sit together as a group – as it turns out, most men were away at the time that NGOs went to collect data and as a result, there is a higher number of female respondents. Their age distribution is detailed in the Charts 1 and 2:



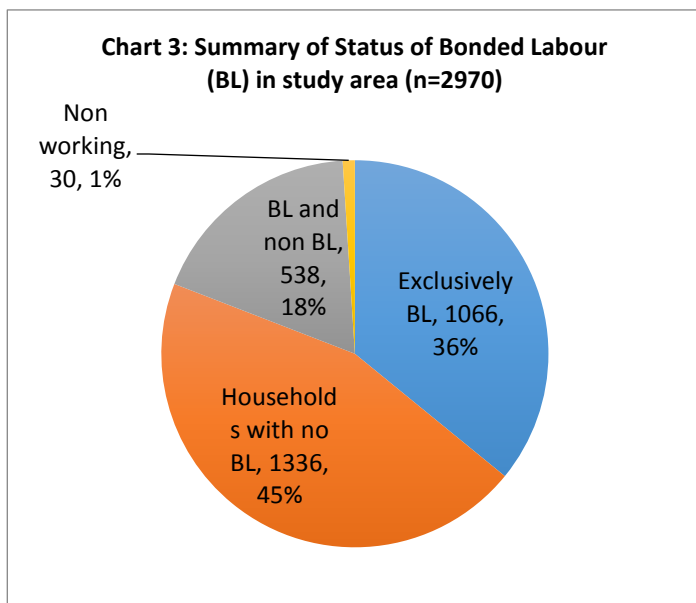
Among both male and female respondents, between 50 and 52% were from the 31-50-year age group.

### 2.2 Bonded labour status and types

#### 2.2.1 Bonded labour status

As noted in the first chapter, respondents were asked to indicate how many adults and children, disaggregated by gender, in each household, were working. For each such individual, the respondents then indicated numbers 1 to 5, to specify the nature of bonded labour or the absence of it. In this section of the report, if a household was found to have one working member who was in any form of bonded labour, those set of households have been clubbed into a category referred to as “At least one person in bonded labour” and if it was found that all the working members of a household, including children (those below 14) were in bonded labour, those set of households have been referred to as “All working members in bonded labour”.

A summary of the overall status of the working population and status of bonded labour among them is presented in Chart 3:

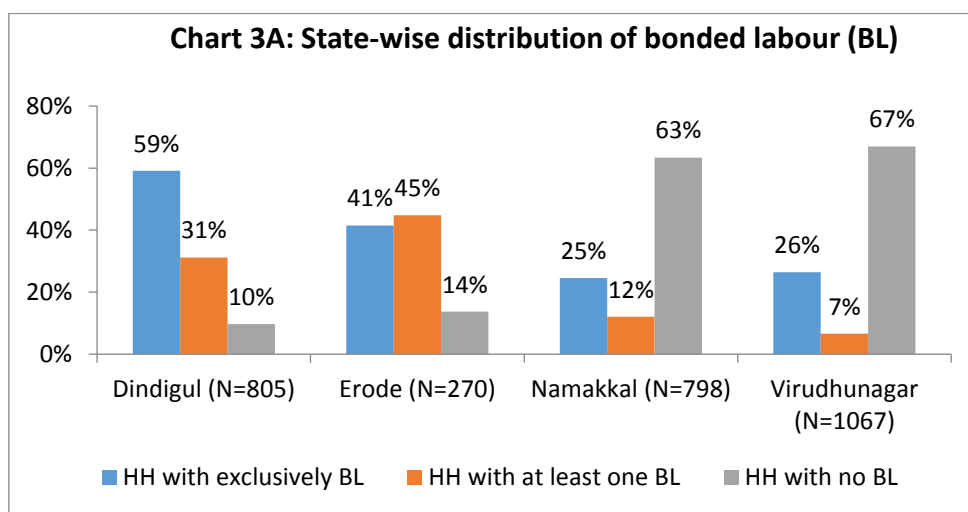


Out of all the households, only 30 households (1% of overall households) had no working members. These tended to be households with either just one or two people, often old or being supported by either children or extended families.

45% of the households had no bonded labourers. 36% had all family members in bonded labour and 18% households had at least one family member in bonded labour.

Chart 3A below provides a district-wise division of the bonded labour. Dindigul recorded 59% of households in their 18 hamlets as having exclusively members in bonded labour and the corresponding percentages for Erode and

Namakkal are 41 and 25%. Virudhunagar (67%) and Namakkal (63%) reported the households as having non-bonded labour members.



Of households that report any form of bonded labour, 93% of the working girls (female 18 years and below) work in the village, mostly in mills inside the village compared to 88% of the working boys who are in some form of bonded labour (mills, agriculture and others). During the discussions, it was disclosed that given a choice, parents choose not to send their children to work outside the village because they were less likely to be able to manage by themselves, living far away from home. The prevalence of bonded labour among the persons below 18 years old is detailed in the table below:

Status of Bonded labour (N=2940)	% of HHs with bonded labourers	No. of bonded labourers	Status of Bonded labour (N=2940)	% of HHs with bonded labourers	No. of bonded labourers
<b>Bonded labour in mills inside the villa</b>			<b>Other work inside village</b>		
Boys below 18 and 18	2.31%	74	Boys below 18 and 18	1.60%	48
Girls below 18 and 18	4.56%	144	Girls below 18 and 18	0.82%	26
Boys or Girls below 18 and 18	6.16%	218	Boys or Girls below 18 and 18	2.31%	74
<b>Bonded labour in mills outside the village</b>			<b>Other work outside the village</b>		
Boys below 18 and 18	0.82%	26	Boys below 18 and 18	0.44%	14
Girls below 18 and 18	1.19%	36	Girls below 18 and 18	0.00%	0
Boys or Girls below 18 and 18	1.87%	62	Boys or Girls below 18 and 18	0.44%	14
			Any bonded labourer below 18 and 18	9.94%	368

#### Prevalence of different forms of bonded labour per NGO

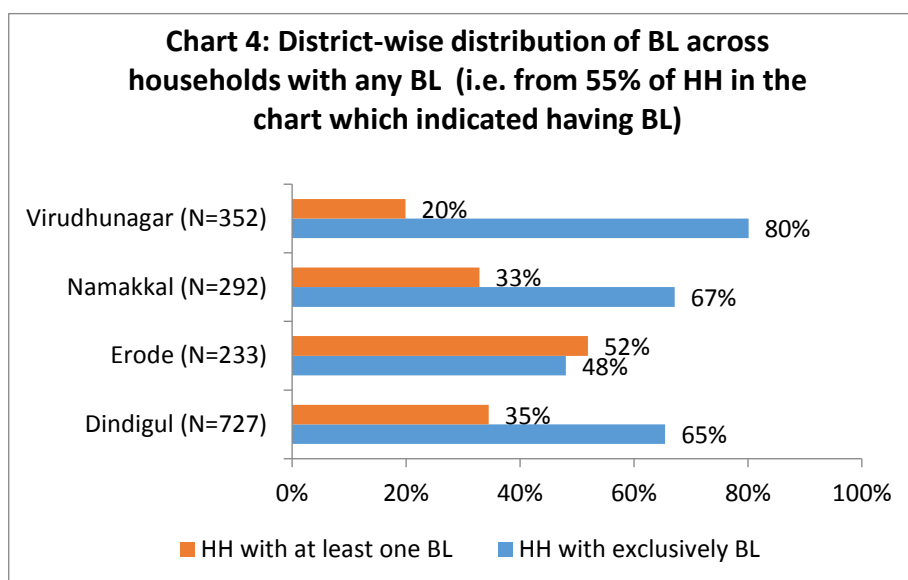
Dindugul	All family members in bonded labour	At least one bonded labourer	No bonded labour
SSSSS (270)	99%	1%	0%
PEACE (270)	12%	66%	22%
Child Voice (265)	66%	26%	7%
Erode	All family members in bonded labour	At least one bonded labourer	No bonded labour
READ (270)	41%	45%	14%
Namakkal	All family members in bonded labour	At least one bonded labourer	No bonded labour
WORD (263)	69%	10%	21%
LEAF (270)	6%	26%	69%
Don Bosco (265)	0%	0%	100%
Virudunagar	All family members in bonded labour	At least one bonded labourer	No bonded labour
ODAM (265)	6%	6%	87%
TEST (270)	89%	6%	6%
SPEECH (268)	6%	9%	85%
Vaan Muhil (264)	4%	5%	91%

## Hotspot-level prevalence rate

Location and NGO	Prevalence rate amongst surveyed households	Hotspot-level average using simple average across sampled hamlets	Averages using inflation weights within NGO hamlets	Hotspot-level average using inflation weights within NGO Hamlets
Dindugul				
SSSS (270)	100%		100.00%	
PEACE (270)	78%		78.56%	
Child Voice (265)	93%		93.28%	
Erode				
READ (270)	86%		86.22%	
Namakkal				
WORD (263)	79%		74.58%	
LEAF (270)	31%		32.50%	
Don Bosco (265)	0%		0	
Virudunagar				
ODAM (265)	13%		13.61%	
TEST (270)	95%		95.24%	
SPEECH (268)	15%		17.14%	
Vaan Muhil (264)	9%		8.38%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>54.4%</b>		<b>53.49%</b>	

The distribution of bonded labour status by partner organisations within the district shows a varied picture, as some partners seem to have significantly high number of households with all working family members in bonded labour while other partners from the same district recorded the highest number of households with non-bonded labourers. In Dindugul, SSSS has 99% households with all family members in bonded labour, WORD in Namakkal has 87% of such households and TEST in Virudunagar recorded 94% members in bonded labour. These are big variations.

<sup>17</sup> With a mean of 0.5385416 (53.85% of households with at least one member in bonded labour), a standard deviation of 0.4985971, and a desired confidence level of 90%, the corresponding confidence interval would be  $\pm 0.015$ ; meaning that we can be 90% confident that the true population mean falls within the range of 52.34 to 55.37%.



Note that Chart 4 only shows the breakdown between those households that are affected by bonded labour. We specifically followed up in the places that reported 100% bonded labourer or “no bonded labourer” and spent time with them discussing the situation. In the 100% bonded labourer category everyone goes to work after getting an advance.

Getting an advance is the most important condition for employment in some parts of Dindigul district.

In some parts of Namakkal district, all employed persons work in the mills or do other work without getting an advance. If they need loans, they go for other sources rather than taking advances. We have validated this with the NGOs too.

In some parts of Virudhunagar district, in some villages there are many bonded labourers while in others there are none. To validate these differences, we asked the villagers and the NGOs regarding the situation. They have validated the situation in each village and confirmed it with the responses from the people. In the villages where there were no bonded labourers they go to work without getting an advance. They are free to get away with the work whenever they are not interested.

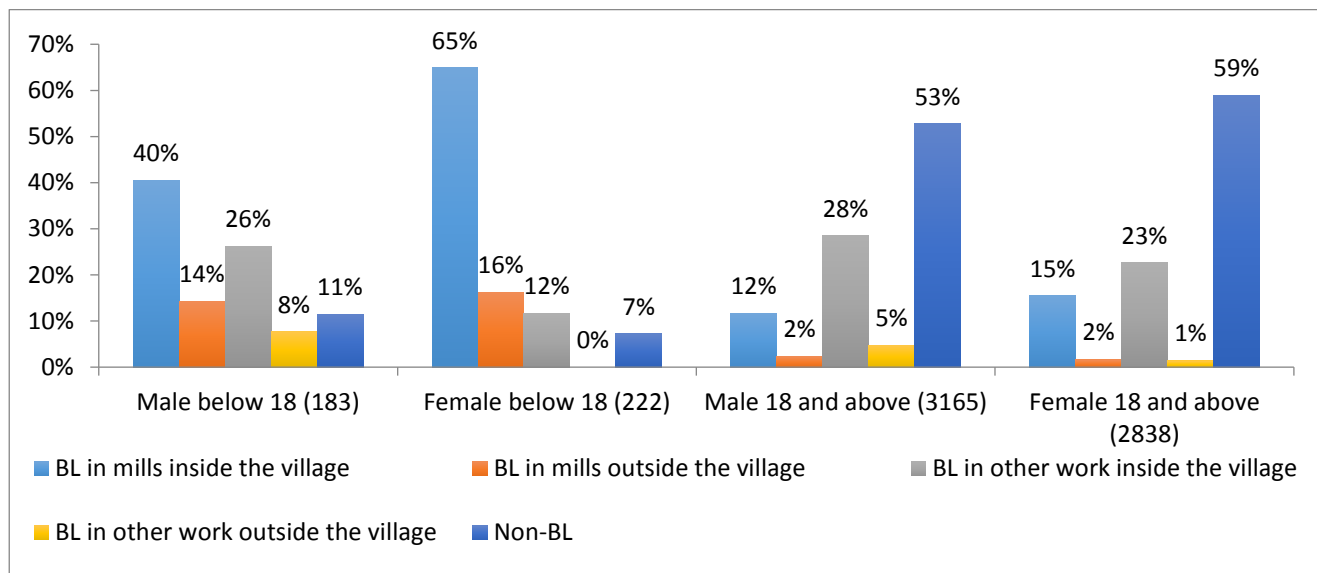
Clarifications per NGO are given in a table below:

Dindigul	All family members in bonded labour	At least one bonded labourer	No bonded labour	
SSSSS (270)	99%	1%	0%	The coordinator confirmed clearly that in these places many are bonded as family members in the mills or in other work. The director also confirmed this. They have facilitated the trade union for women mill workers and lot of advocacy has been done by this NGO. Recently they have raised their voice against the Minister’s statement on NO Bonded Labour in Tamil Nadu.
PEACE (270)	12%	66%	22%	As per the data as well as discussion with partners, bonded labour is relatively high in Dindigul district. In these villages some family members are bonded labourers and others work in various other work categories.

Child Voice (265)	66%	26%	7%	Mostly, flower fields surround these villages and people work as bonded labourers in the flower fields as well as millwork. Even children work in the flower fields after school. Both mill work and flower fieldwork is prevalent and many people are working in bonded labour.
<b>Erode</b>	<b>All family members in slavery</b>	<b>At least one slave</b>	<b>Non slave</b>	
READ (270)	41%	45%	14%	Most of the villages are Dalit villages and people go for work mainly to get a good advance. Mostly they go for millwork as well as work in agriculture fields.
<b>Namakkal</b>	<b>All family members in slavery</b>	<b>At least one slave</b>	<b>Non slave</b>	
WORD (263)	69%	10%	21%	These areas are surrounded by mills and power looms. In these places many are bonded as family members in the mills.
LEAF (270)	6%	26%	69%	-
Don Bosco (265)	0%	0%	100%	The coordinator and Director confirmed that there is no one going to millwork or other work based on advances in these villages. During the spot check visit, we were asking many cross-questions to understand why there is no slavery. The village where we went for a spot check visit was a very poor village but still people could live with the money earned as a coolie, although they have debts. These villages are free from bonded labour but living conditions are extremely poor.
<b>Virudunagar</b>	<b>All family members in slavery</b>	<b>At least one slave</b>	<b>Non slave</b>	
ODAM (265)	6%	6%	87%	-
TEST (270)	89%	6%	6%	The coordinator and the Director confirmed that the families get an advance as a condition of entering into the mills.
SPEECH (268)	6%	9%	85%	-
Vaan Muhil (264)	4%	5%	91%	-

## 2.2.2 Bonded labour types

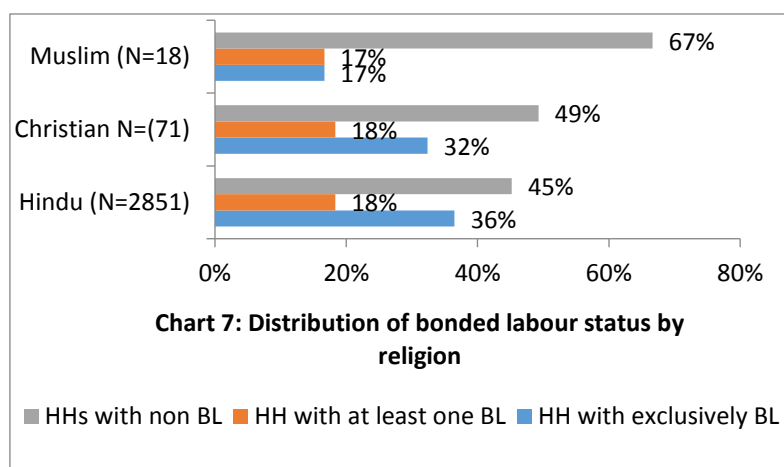
Of the households that reported any form of bonded labour, the following section details the location (i.e. whether inside or outside the village), gender and age of bonded labour. The chart below details these categories of bonded labourers amongst each.



- Among the men and women who are in bonded labour, most are in bonded labour or trafficked outside the village.
- Among the boys and girls who are in bonded labour, larger numbers are in some form of bonded labour inside the village itself. Overall, one-tenth of the households have at least a boy or girl bonded labourers below the age of 18 years. Of all the bonded labourers below 18, a majority (56%) are girls and most of them work in mills inside the village. It is observed that none of the girls below 18 are bonded in other work outside the village.

## 2.3 Demographic and socio-economic linkages with bonded labour

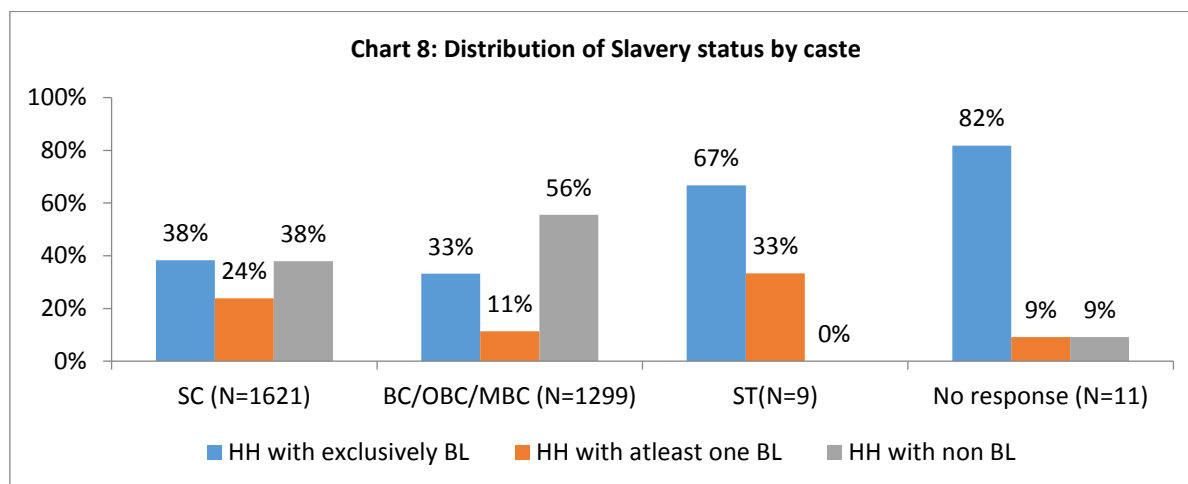
### 2.3.1 Religion and social group distribution of households



All respondents were from one of three religions – Hindu (97%), Christian (2.4%) and Muslim (0.6%). The Dindigul district sample did not have a single Muslim household. A household distribution by religion and district is presented in the chart below:

While 46% of Hindu households, 50% of Muslim households and 67% of Christian households reported no bonded labourers, the chart alongside shows the distribution of those in bonded labour by religion. The Muslims category is based on data for 18 households and therefore seems extremely low at 33% households having all family members in bonded labour.

The social groups' distribution showed that 55% households were scheduled caste, 44% were from the Other Backward Classes (OBC) category, only 9 households (0.31%) from the scheduled tribes category and 11 households (0.31%) provided no response to this question. A household distribution by caste status by districts and a distribution of bonded labourers by social category is in the chart below.



The pattern of population distribution is in keeping with the assumptions that the study made – i.e., that the population in intervention areas of the NGOs comprises predominantly persons belonging to the Dalit (or scheduled caste) social category followed closely by other backward classes. Respondents from tribal areas are low in number, as expected, given that the intervention areas do not have a very dominant tribal population.

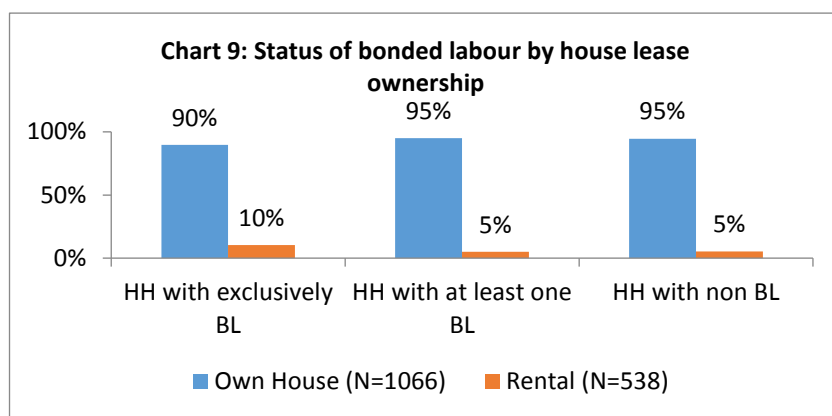


### 2.3.2 Economic status of households

In order to understand the economic status of households, five parameters were used: i) ownership of land on which they live; ii) ownership of any cultivable land; iii) access to livelihood through MGNREGA;<sup>18</sup> iv) bank account holder living in the household and v) membership of a self-help group. The underlying assumption is that a viable economic status would mean a lower number of working individuals per household would be in bonded labour.

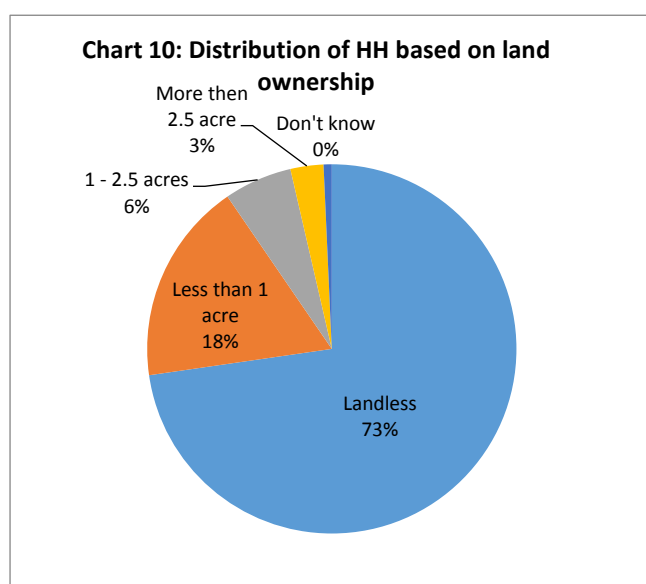
Ownership of homesteads and cultivable land indicates that the family is economically better off, though drought conditions make this connection more tenuous. Access to livelihoods and linked payments from the MGNREGA scheme indicates that the family has at least one household member guaranteed a hundred days of minimum wage and therefore is closer to economic sufficiency and access to a bank account or self-help group membership indicates easier access to loans and finance.

The following charts show the linkage of bonded labour in each of these sets of categories:



There was only one household for which there was no response to the question whether they owned or possessed a secure lease for the land on which they lived. Of the 2,939 households for which a response was recorded, 93% owned the land on which they lived and 7% did not. The prevalence of bonded labour based on lease ownership is in Chart 9. The ownership status of the lease on the land on which the

house is built does seem to have a bearing on the nature of bonded labour: i.e., at least one slave or all family members in bonded labour. This seems to support assumptions of homestead land ownership and bonded labour. It is interesting to note that in the case of ownership of homestead land, in Namakkal, slightly more households (11.3%) did not own a secure lease for the land on which they lived and the corresponding figures for Dindugul (6.8%), Erode (5.2%) and Virudunagar (4.5%).



The respondents were asked to share land ownership<sup>19</sup> status of the households. The two charts below detail the distribution of households across the various categories as well as the status of bonded labour amongst them.

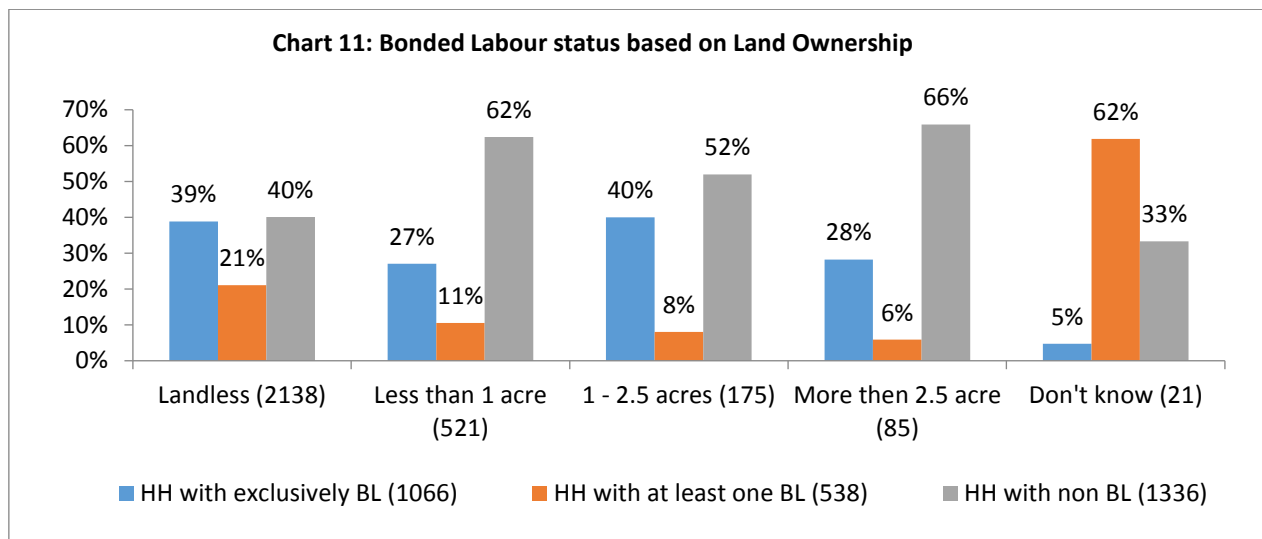
There is an association between status of land ownership and bonded labour. Most people are landless and among them 40% are not in slavery, 21% of landless households have at least one bonded labourer and as many as 39% of landless households have all family members in bonded labour. When households own land - even if it is a small piece of land - they are less likely to be in bonded labour. Only 85 households reported land ownership of above more than two and half acres, and of these, 56 households had no form of bonded

labour and five had at least one person in some form of bonded labour.

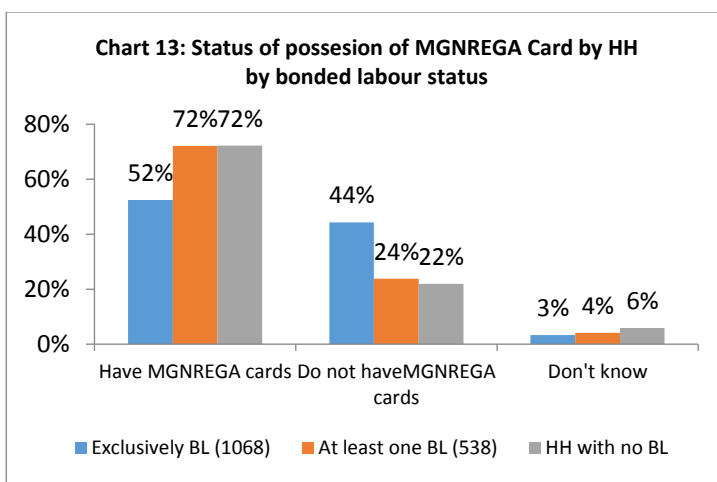
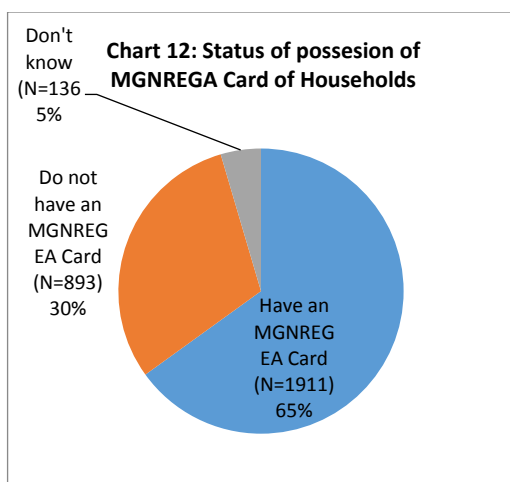
<sup>18</sup> Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, an act passed by the Government of India in 2005, offering to guarantee hundred days of wage-employment in a year to a rural household. This can be accessed through a card issued by Government authorities

<sup>19</sup> Land ownership has been measured in acre and one acre is roughly equal to 4047 square meters

The status of bonded labour linked with possession and use of the MGNREGA by households was also explored. The MGNREGA aims at enhancing the livelihood security of people in rural areas by guaranteeing hundred days of wage-employment in a financial year to a rural household, whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. Households need to give their applications in writing to the Gram Panchayat with the date from which employment is required, the number of days of employment required, the names of the adult members of the household who are willing to do unskilled manual work, and some other details particulars such as age, sex and Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe status. This scheme is an important policy instrument to reduce rural poverty.



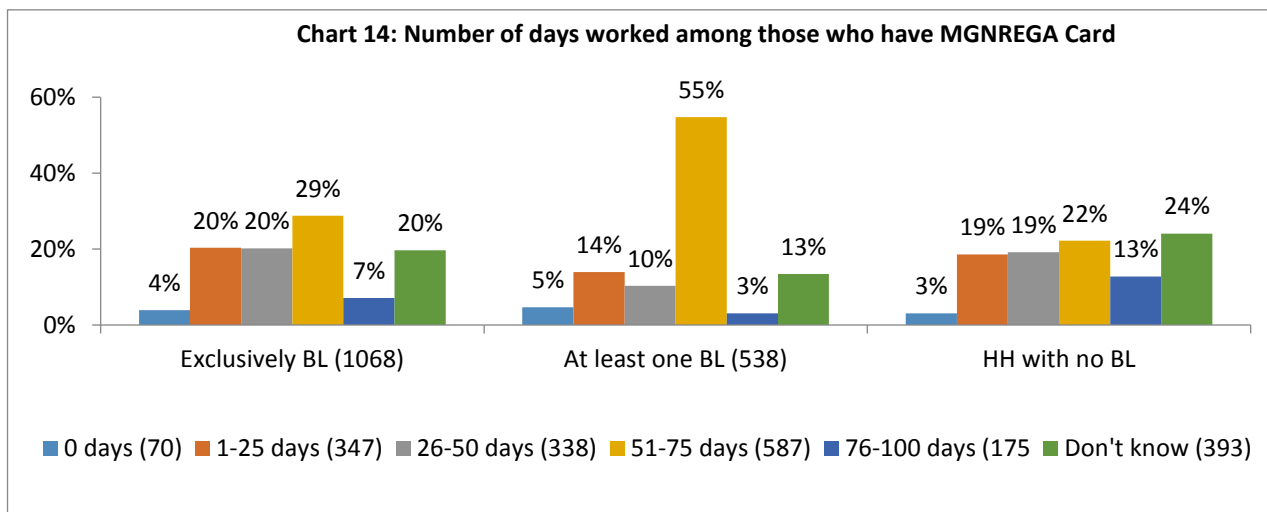
Charts 12 and 13 below detail the population distribution of possession of a card in the household as well as the incidence of bonded labour linked with payments for a certain number of days of work through the scheme.



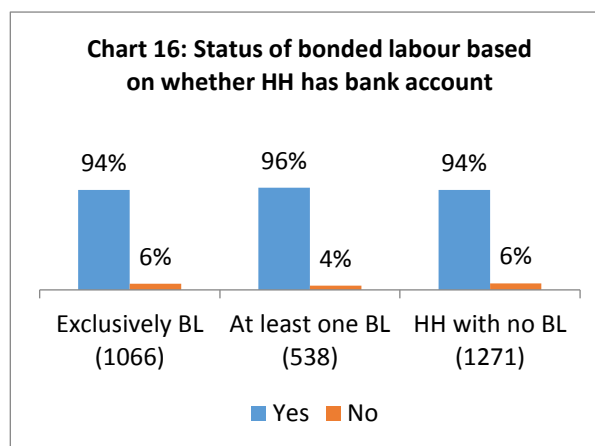
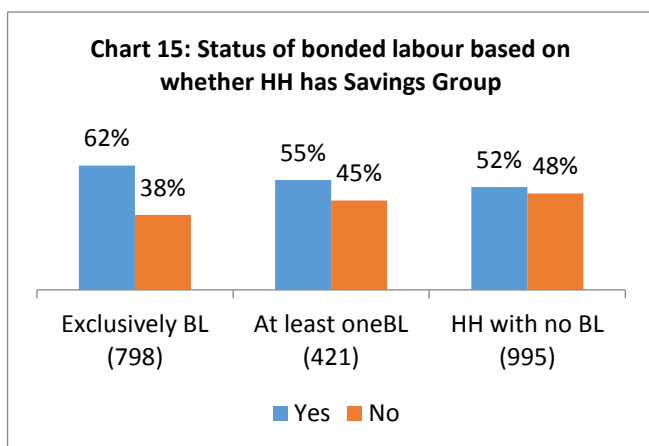
While a household may have an MGNREGA card and receive 100 days of employment, the question focused on actual receipt of payment for a number of days worked. This was emphasised because the scheme has been wrought with corruption in many places and with criticism about the payments not reaching those who have worked. To stop corruption the government developed a new policy of paying directly into people's bank account,<sup>20</sup> which is one of the reasons why having a bank account is important for rural poor.

<sup>20</sup><http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/Corruption-in-MGNREGA-stopped-by-direct-payments-Minister/articleshow/53598422.cms>

Chart 14 compares the bonded labour status within each group based on number of days that a household received payments for. This shows that while a high number of households with at least one bonded labourer received payment for more than 50 days, those households that received the highest proportion of payments for more than 75 days were from houses where there were no bonded labourers.



42% of the households reported that someone in the household was a member of a self-help group and 90% said that someone in the household had a bank account. Charts 15 and 16 below show the difference between those households that have exclusively bonded labourers and those that have at least one bonded labourer: it is linked with an individual in the household having access to a bank account and membership of a self-help group respectively.



Membership of an SHG group found to be positively correlated with bonded labourer within a household – households with bonded labourers are slightly more likely to be in a SHG.

This may be due to the targeting criteria for membership of SHGs set up as part of the programme through the Freedom Funds partners. NGOs are consciously targeting this to more vulnerable households, and setting up SHGs is one of the first interventions that they do in an intervention area. Household access to a bank account is not correlated with bonded labour within a household.

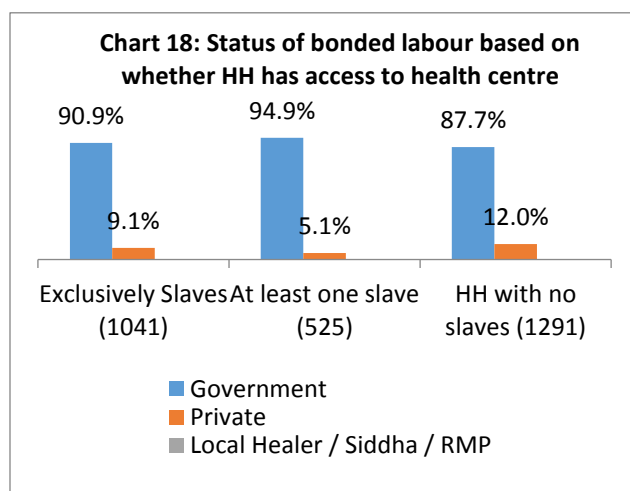
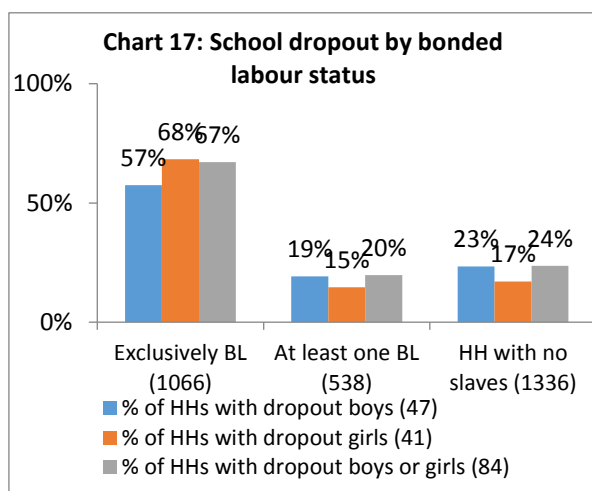
### 2.2.3 School-going children and bonded labour

There were questions in the tool on the school-going status of children in households and the table below details these links with bonded labour status of households:

School going children	Exclusively bonded labourers (N=1066)		At least with one bonded labourer (N=538)		No bonded labourers (N=1336)	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Age in years						
5	34	29	12	6	37	15
6	33	36	17	17	37	21
7	40	29	19	8	48	33
8	44	38	20	10	36	26
9	30	27	16	5	39	24
10	51	30	20	9	43	40
11	30	37	14	10	22	26
12	48	33	13	22	44	47
13	42	45	27	16	60	42
14	56	47	24	26	67	52
No. of children	408	351	182	129	433	326
No. of HHs	340	287	164	113	388	276
% of HHs with school going children	32%	27%	30%	21%	29%	21%

Data on school-going children shows no major variation in case of boys hailing from families with one, all or no bonded labourers. However, the data for school going girls was different – relatively more households that had exclusively bonded labourers had dropouts as compared to other groups.

School dropout status of children under 14 years was also explored in the tool and chart 18 below shows the linkage between dropout rates and bonded labour status. The percentage of dropout by bonded labour status is in the expected direction, with a higher number of dropouts among the households with exclusively bonded labourers and lesser number among the households without bonded labourers. Overall, 84 HHs (2.8%) have at least one dropout.



### 2.3.4 Access to healthcare for households

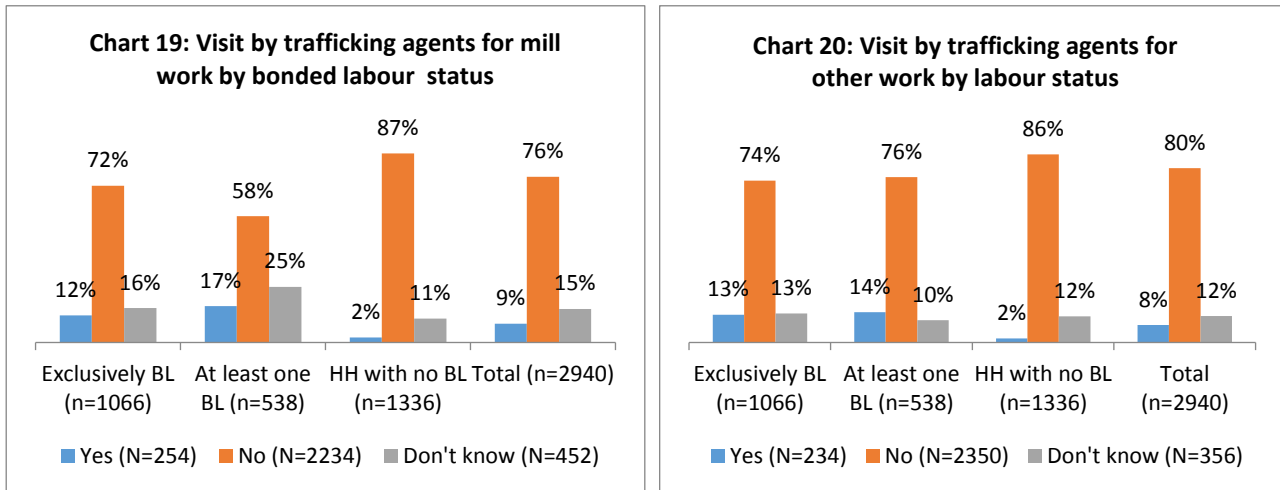
Tamil Nadu has made great progress on maternal, new born and child health.<sup>21</sup> In addition to public investments the private health sector has also expanded which has improved access to care. However, most health expenses are paid out of household pockets. In our sample the vast majority of respondents, (97%) had access to at least health service. Chart 18 above, shows that 91% among the HHs that have all family members in bonded labour and 95% of HHs that have at least one member in bonded labour report accessing government health services. Health emergencies are given as a reason for taking out loans (see below). Health problems are directly correlated with poverty due to the costs of treatment and reduced income due to a reduced ability to work.

<sup>21</sup> [http://ghlc.lshtm.ac.uk/files/2011/10/GHLC-book\\_Chapter-6.pdf](http://ghlc.lshtm.ac.uk/files/2011/10/GHLC-book_Chapter-6.pdf)

### 2.3.5 Trafficking

Agents play a minimal role in trafficking people for mill work and other work (by promising good income and decent working conditions). The data shows that, overall, only 9% of the respondents admitted the role of agents in trafficking individuals to mills and 8% admitted their role in trafficking people.

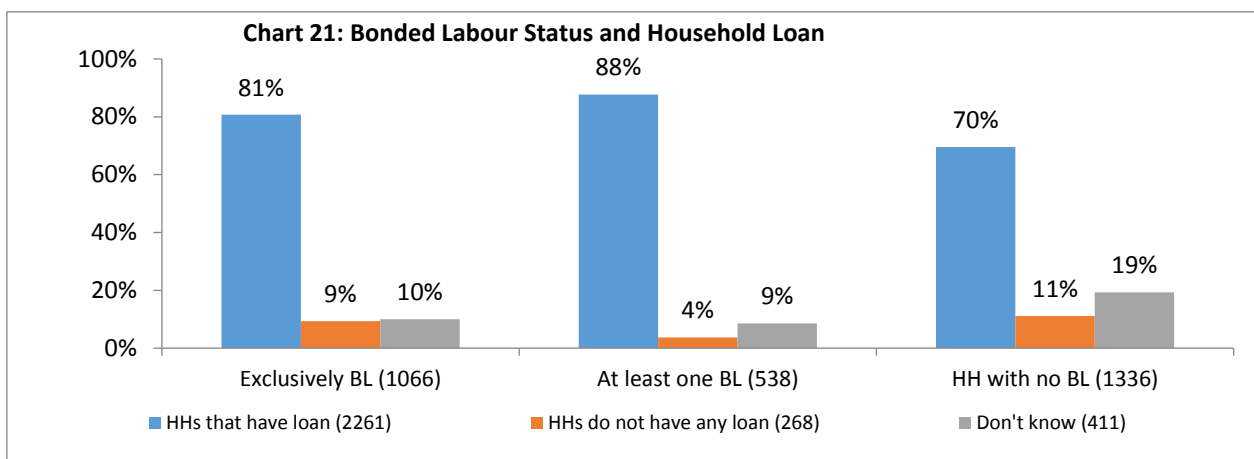
Charts 19 and 20 shows that relatively more households with at least one bonded labourer reported visits of trafficking agents as compared to the households with all members in bonded labour. The houses with no bonded labourers reported the highest number of visits by traffickers and/ or agents for both mill and other work.



### 2.4 Loans and bonded labour

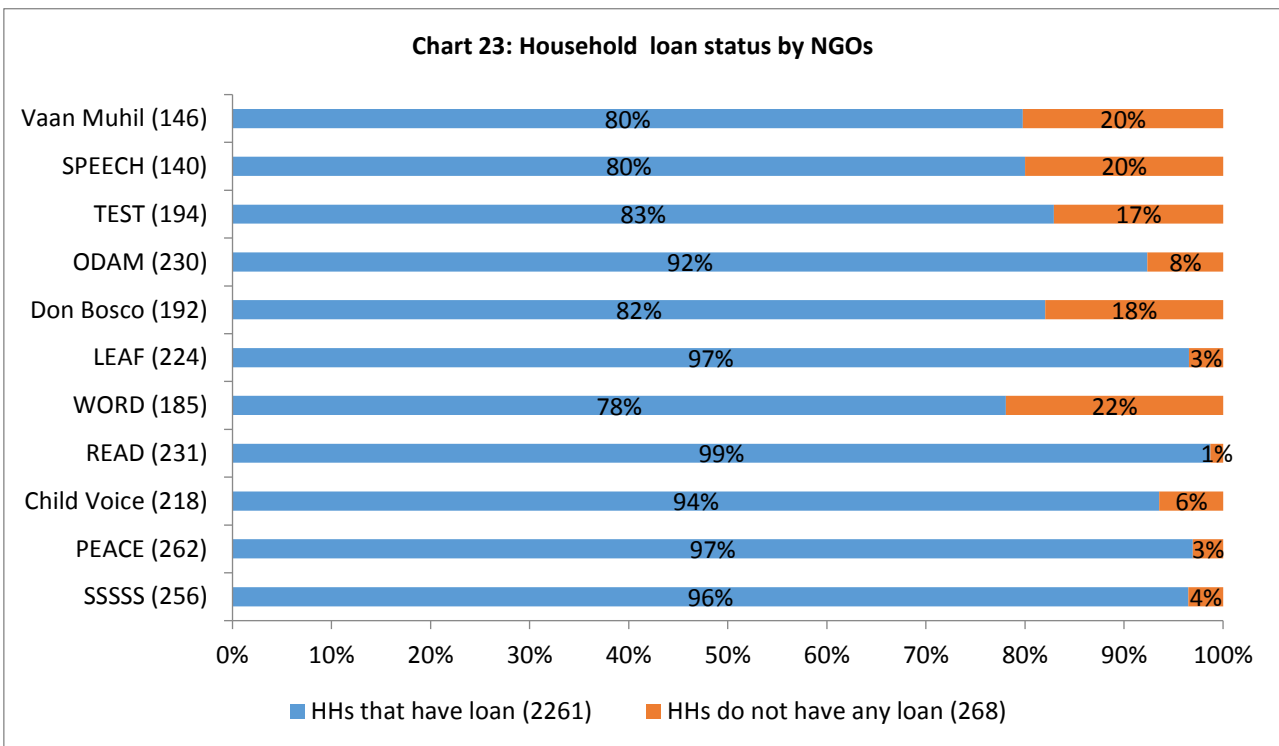
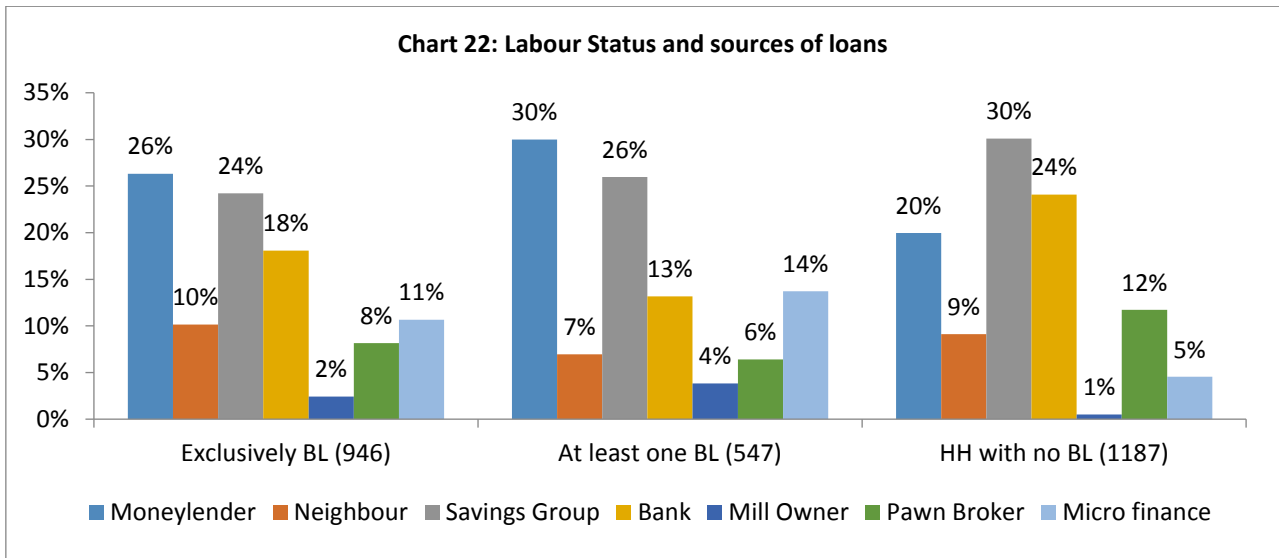
The link between loans and bonded labour emerged as significant during the story analysis workshop and the findings of the baseline study corroborate this.

The chart below details the status of bonded labour and loans. A relatively higher number of households with members involved in bonded labour reported taking a loan as compared to the other households. 70% of the HH without bonded labour have a loan.



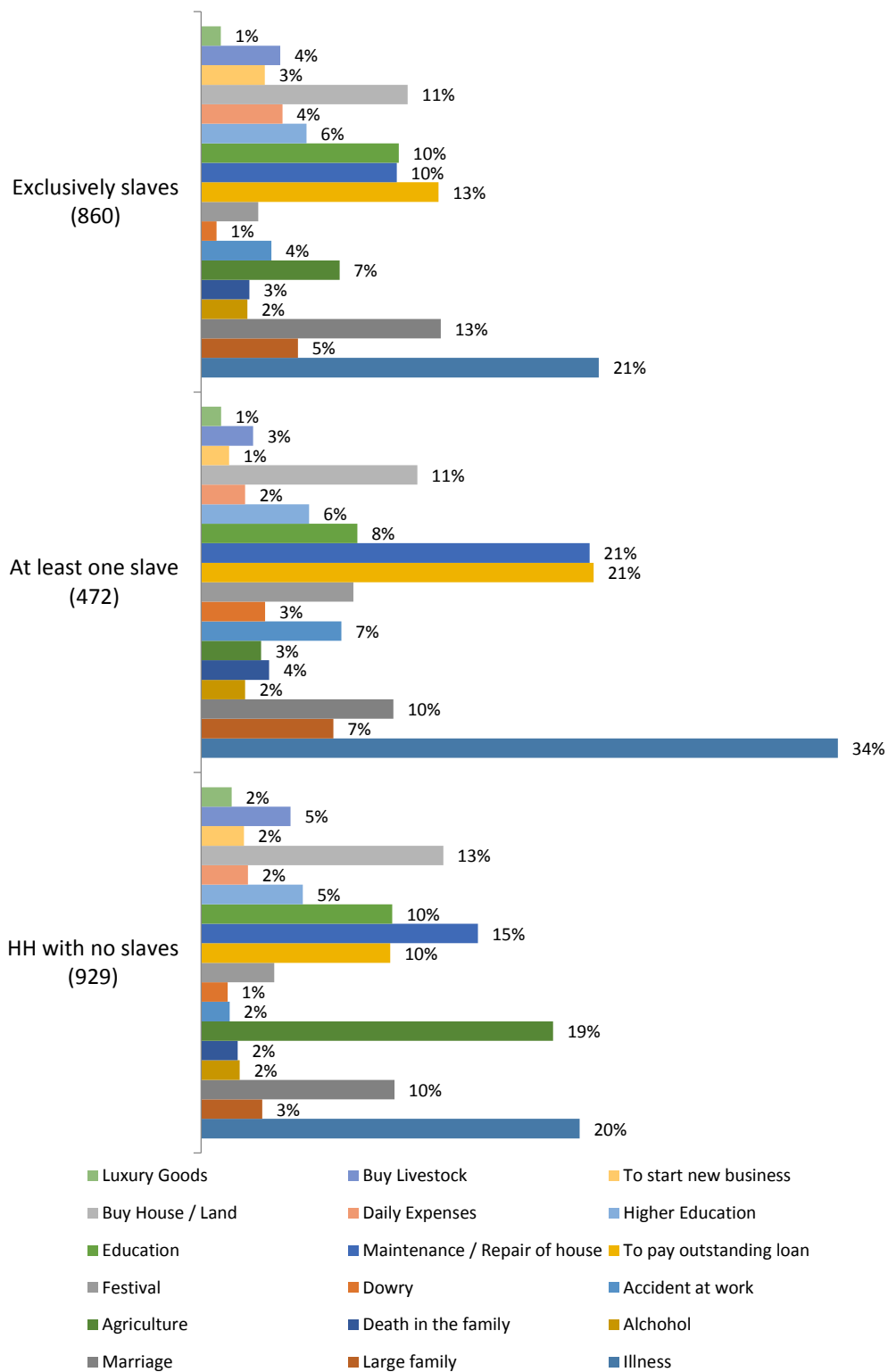
The sources of the loans tended to be wide ranging. The chart below details the status of bonded labour and its linkages with the sources of loans and is calculated only for those who have taken a loan.

Chart 22 shows that the pattern of borrowing seemed to be similar across those households that had bonded labourers. The average percentages of borrowing from various sources across these categories can be seen in the chart above. Households without members in bonded labour have better access to savings groups and banks – which are relatively safe compared to a money lender / pawn broker – but they also still use the moneylenders and they have less access to micro-credit, perhaps because of micro-credit group criteria. For households with members in bonded labour, the moneylender was the reported major source for borrowing money. Chart 20 below provides a distribution of loan status across the NGO partners.



As explained above, families not affected by bonded labour are less likely to have a loan, and the chart below is only for those households that do have a loan. Here too, the major reasons for loans reported by all categories was disease/illness followed by marriages.

**Chart 24: Slavery status and reasons for loans**



Households with no bonded labour borrow more often for agriculture than households with members in bonded labour. All households mention illness as the main reason for taking out loans. One interesting pattern here is that high numbers (across all groups) are incurring debts for marriage (e.g. 10-13% of loans) but they only give 1-3% as caused by dowry. It may be that people conflated the cost of dowry with those of marriage in general.

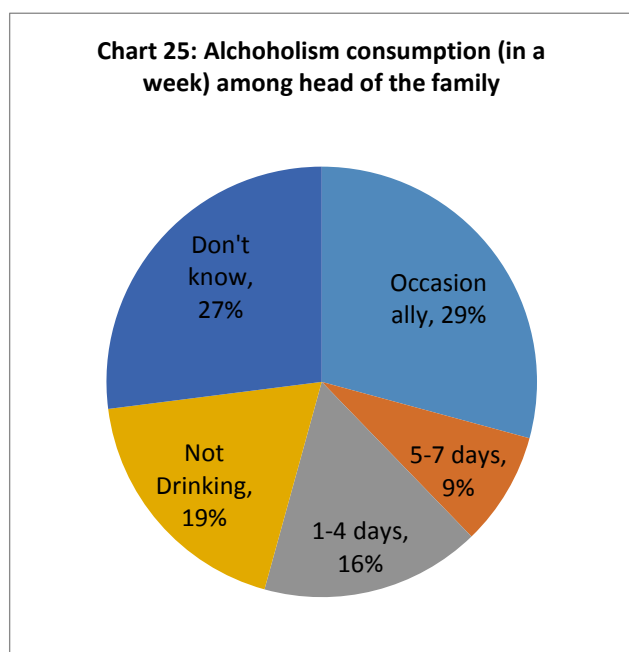
## 2.5 Early marriage and bonded labour

The linkages between the bonded labour status of families and the incidence of early marriage were explored. Early marriage is defined as below the legal age of marriage in India. The table below details the incidence of early marriage in households with different status of bonded labour.

	Child marriage among boys	Child marriage among girls	Any child marriage
Exclusively bonded (1036)	1.06%	0.77%	1.64%
At least with one bonded labourer (535)	1.12%	2.43%	3.55%
No bonded labourers (1324)	0.91%	0.45%	1.06%
<b>Total (2895)</b>	<b>1.07%</b>	<b>0.93%</b>	<b>1.73%</b>
45 HH reporting 'don't know' were not included in the analysis			

Prevalence of early marriage among boys and girls given in the table shows that there is a low proportion of incidence recorded among the sample households. The proportion of early marriage among boys is slightly higher than that among the girls. Note that the legal age of marriage for boys is 21 and for girls, 18. Early marriage by status of bonded labour shows that the households having at least one bonded labourer recorded relatively higher numbers of early marriages as compared to their counterparts.

## 2.6 Alcoholism and bonded labour



An attempt has been made to explore the prevalence of alcoholism among families with members in a situation of bonded labour, due to the reported importance of this topic given by respondents during the scoping visit and life story analysis. In the life story analysis participants saw alcoholism of the head of the family as one of the major factors forcing the family into poverty and pushing the family members to become bonded.

Alcoholism is notoriously difficult to diagnose as alcoholics often hide their drinking from their family members – who therefore cannot estimate the alcohol intake. Alcoholics may also underreport their alcohol intake. But because it came out so strongly we wanted to see if we could collect valid data. The validation exercise showed that the results had high variation and should thus be treated with caution.

54% of the sample families reported that the head of the household drank alcohol - with 9% of the families reporting the head of household drinking 5-7 days in a week, 16% reporting drinking 1-4 days in a week and 29% reporting drinking occasionally (less than one day a week). We did not find clear enough evidence on correlations between drinking and bonded labour.



### 3. Conclusions and recommendations

The aim of the process was to estimate a prevalence of bonded labour in the selected intervention communities of the Freedom Fund hotspot in Tamil Nadu. Prevalence data helps mainly to understand the profile of families in bonded labour and to understand any correlations with different variables. The analysis of life stories provided a better insight into the life situations of families in bonded labour and explored questions of why and how. Due to the clear causal factors emerging from the life story analysis, the current prevalence study was able to focus on these important indicators.

The team facilitated a discussion on the results at the end of the data collection in each site. These discussions focused on the reasons for the differences in prevalence results using the tallied up data allowing to explore how gender, age and caste dynamics shape bonded labour, with over 18 year olds mostly working outside and 18 year olds and below mostly inside or near the village of residence. The facilitators tallied up the prevalence data from the forms to facilitate a discussion on the prevalence results. Tallying up all the results was not possible as we worked with pictorials on sheets to allow illiterate people to participate in a transparent process. Facilitators asked the five questions below, observed the interactions and made sure that every participant was given a chance to speak. In places where the prevalence result was very low and nil we did not hold discussions.

1. What are the reasons for the existence of bonded labour?
2. What happens when one attempts to come out of bonded labour?
3. Has anyone came out of bonded labour from this village? If yes, who supported them?
4. Whom to be approached for coming out of bonded labour?
5. What are the ways to reduce/address bonded labour from your perspective?

The quantitative data has been shared by Praxis with the NGOs in Tamil. We have entered the data in excel format and analysed it. A summary of the results is attached in Annex 5.

It might be worthwhile to try to pilot data entry with iPads – tallying up can be easier and thus allows for a more extended immediate comprehensive group analysis on the spot. However, data entry on iPads can have more errors in data entry and is particularly hard for illiterate people to fix or comment on.

The estimates from the current prevalence study show the correlations of bonded labour with various factors. Where possible, conclusions have been drawn about whether this quantitative analysis corroborates certain widely held assumptions about patterns and correlations with regard to forms of bonded labour in India. What can be conclusively stated about a range of factors) is detailed below:

- Within the intervention communities of these partners, 45% of the households had no bonded labourers, 36% had all family members in bonded labour and 18% households had at least one family member in bonded labour
- Geographically, within our sample, Dindigul and Erode had over 80% households affected by bonded labour, whereas Namakkal and Virudhunagar had over 60% non-bonded labourer households. So clearly the interventions are in the right spot
- Among the total population, 9.94% are bonded labourers aged below 18 and most of these (6.57%) are girls. Most of the girls involved in bonded labour are working in the mills inside the village. Adults in bonded labour work more often outside the village
- Caste, gender, age, access to MGNREGA benefits, and loan-taking are the key factors at the individual and household level that contribute to bonded labour in this hotspot. Within the hotspot as a whole there are few economic opportunities available outside the mills and alcohol is easily available and consumed widely
- With regard to social status, SC HH had 38% with no family members in bonded labour and OBC had 56% HH with no bonded labourers. The pattern of population distribution is in keeping with the assumptions that the study made: i.e., that the population in intervention areas of the NGOs is

predominantly made up of persons belonging to the Dalit (or scheduled caste) social category, followed closely by other backward classes

- Households without members in bonded labour have better access to savings groups and banks but they also use moneylenders. Health expenses are the main reason for taking out a loan among all households. Land ownership and bonded labour status shows that as the size of the land holding increases the prevalence of bonded labour in those households' decreases.
- With regard to MGNREGA: As payments for number of days worked received increases, the incidence of bonded labour decreases slightly.
- Access to a bank account does not itself have any significant impact on the status of bonded labour.
- Alcohol usage overall does not seem to show a strong link with bonded labour status of the families. Heavy drinking seems to be a social norm.

### **In terms of the programme**

- An integrated approach which focuses on the prevention of health problems (primary health care) and prevention of risky loan-taking - by facilitating access to safe loans, reducing the reliance on money lenders and improving equitable access the MGNREGA benefits - is likely to increase resilience of households and reduce bonded labour.
- Reducing alcohol consumption may improve disposable income and the wellbeing of households but is unlikely to specifically reduce bonded labour.
- The uptake and dissemination of research results needs to make sure that the results of the mid-term review and the prevalence study are shared with the field staff who worked on the data collection and can continue the discussions at the field level –including with the participants of the survey. IDS/Praxis have shared the results with NGO management teams. Geneva Global and Freedom Fund should now explore how the discussion of the results at the hamlet level can be used for operational program activities including activities that can be led by the communities themselves and via IDS/Praxis supported action research.

# ANNEX 3: Report submitted by Praxis

August 2016



## Background

A study to determine baseline prevalence of bonded labour and trafficking in Tamil Nadu is being conducted by eleven partner NGOs of Freedom Fund. As part of this prevalence study, as a quality control mechanism, a validation of the data was undertaken by Praxis to explore the extent of deviation from the data collected by the partners and to understand the reasons for this. Such an exercise can confirm the likelihood of reliability of answers and consistency of use of survey questions and criteria.

## Sample

The first step was to generate the sample. The validation visits were to be done in five per cent of the total of 2,970 households (i.e. 155 households) and visits were done in all 11 NGOs covered under the study. In each of the organisations, data for between nine and twelve households was to be collected from one location per organisation. The locations were those where the partner NGO had already collected data previously. The data was checked halfway during the process of data collection to allow lessons to be learned and to improve the process if needed. The locations and households were selected randomly. In certain locations, data was collected for more than twelve households. The same member of the household who served as the respondent was interviewed both times.

The organisation randomly selected the households for responses in the validations and the number of households for which data was collected is presented in the table below:

Sl. No.	Organisation	No. of households	Sl. No.	Organisation	No. of households
1	WORD	9	7	Child Voice	14
2	LEAF	12	8	Don Bosco	9
3	TEST	21	9	READ	21
4	ODAM	15	10	SPEECH	15
5	PEACE	15	11	SSSSS	12
6	Vaan Muhil	12			

## Validation Results

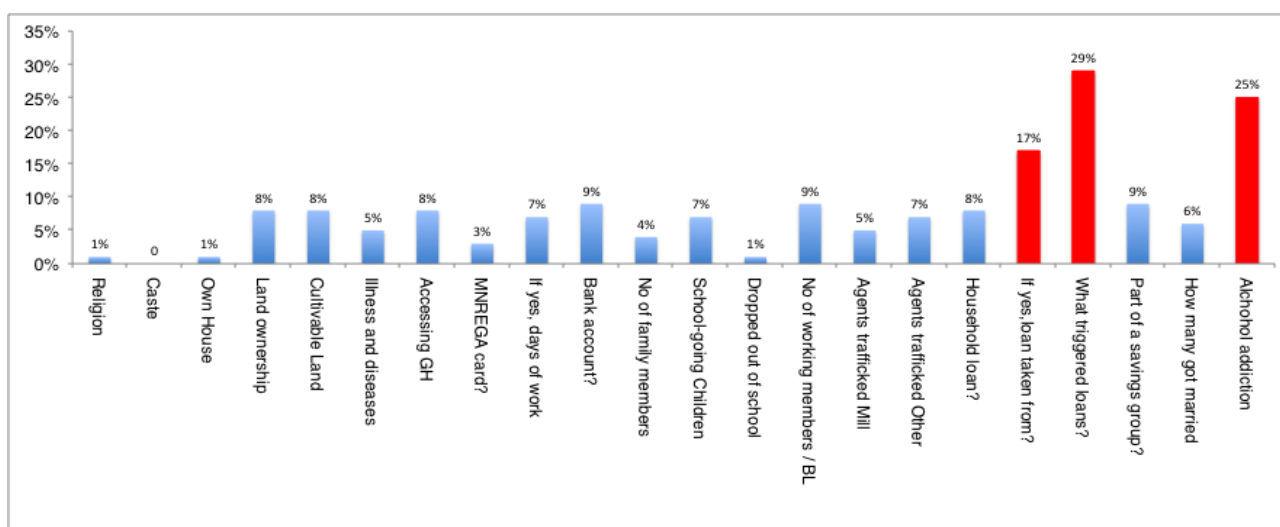
The schedules with 21 questions were redone with respondents from 155 households. The table below as well as the graph presents the numbers of households (of 155 households) that had a different response from when the data was earlier collected. The table also provides an explanation in cases where the variance is more than 10 per cent.

S.No	Questions	Number of households	Number of HH with variance in response	% of HH with variance in response	Reason for variance (detailed for all variance above 15%)
1	Religion	155	1	1%	
2	Caste	155	0	0	
3	Do you own the land you live on?	155	2	1%	
4	Land ownership in acres (landless, less than an acre, 1-2.5 acres and more than 2.5 acres)	155	12	8%	
5	Size of the land under cultivation (landless, less than an acre, 1-2.5 acres and more than 2.5 acres)	155	13	8%	
6	Where do you go for illness and diseases (Government facility, private, local healer, don't know)	155	7	5%	
7	Any difficulty in accessing free government health care (yes or no)	155	13	8%	
8	Does the family have an MNREGA card? (yes or no)	155	6	3%	
8(a)	If yes, for how many days of work did the person get payment in last one year?(0 days, 1-25 days, 26-50 days, 51-75 days, 76-100 days)	155	11	7%	
9	Bank account? (yes or no)	155	14	9%	
10	Number of family members in this house	155	7	4%	

S.No	Questions	Number of households	Number of HH with variance in response	% of HH with variance in response	Reason for variance (detailed for all variance above 15%)
11	Number of school going children between 5-14 years and their ages	155	12	7%	
12	Number of dropouts and age at which they dropped out	155	2	1%	
13	Number of working members in the family (who are currently working) and their status of bonded labour inside or outside the village, in mills or elsewhere or none of these	155	14	9%	
14	Have agents trafficked persons in the last one year for mill work?	155	9	5%	
15	Have agents trafficked persons in the last one year for other work?	155	12	7%	
16	Has the household currently have a loan?	155	12	8%	
17	If yes, from where the loan has been taken from?	155	31	17%	Some of the respondents are not sure about the loan taken by the neighbours
18	What has triggered loans in these houses?	155	46	29%	There are 18 options for this question and respondents can give multiple answers. Given this vast choice, the respondents chose more reasons during validations. It has been discussed with partner NGOs that they need to spend more time on this question, for the respondents to think of more reasons, which have triggered loans. The NGOs have taken note of

S.No	Questions	Number of households	Number of HH with variance in response	% of HH with variance in response	Reason for variance (detailed for all variance above 15%)
					it and have given more time while discussing this question in the field.
19	Anyone in the family, part of a savings group?	155	15	9%	
20	How many BOYS or GIRLS got married in the following ages in the last three years within the family? (Boys under 21 and girls below 18 and 18)	155	9	6%	
21	Alcohol addiction in the family?	155	39	25%	Many households were unsure about the number of days of consumption, so there are changes in frequency of days in a week. Some are not interested in revealing information on alcoholism in neighbour' houses.

**CHART 1: Variance in data as per validations**



■ = Variance above 11%

The table below presents a summary of the number of variances for each question, disaggregated by NGO partner.

**Table 1: NGO-wise variance across questions as per validation visit**

Questions	Child Voice	Don Bosco	ODAM	PEACE	READ	SPEECH	SSSS	Vaan Muhil	TEST	WORD	LEAF	Total
Gender											1	1
Relation with the head of the family												0
Religion					1							1
Caste												0
Do you own the land you live on?		1					1					2
Land ownership in acres (landless, less than an acre, 1-2.5 acres and more than 2.5 acres)	5					2	4		1			12
Size of the land under cultivation (landless, less than an acre, 1-2.5 acres and more than 2.5 acres)	4		1		1	1	2	2	2			13
Where do you go for illness and diseases (Government facility, private, local healer, don't know)				2		2	1	1		1		7
Any difficulty in accessing free government Health care (yes or no)		1		4	1	3	1		1		2	13
Does the family have an			1			1		1	3			6



Questions	Child Voice	Don Bosco	ODAM	PEACE	READ	SPEECH	SSSS	Vaan Muhil	TEST	WORD	LEAF	Total
MNREGA card? (yes or no)												
If yes, for how many days of work did the person get payment in last one year?(0 days, 1-25 days, 26-50 days, 51-75 days, 76-100 days)	1	1		1	3	1	4					11
Bank account? (yes or no)	2	1	3			2		2	1	2	1	14
Number of family members in this house			1		2			1	1		2	7
Number of school going children between 5-14 years and their ages	2	2		2	1	2	1			2		12
Number of dropouts and age at which they dropped out			1					1				2
<b>13. Number of working members in the family (who are currently working)</b>												
BOYS under 14 years												
BOYS 15- 18 years						1						
MEN over 19 years	1	1	1			1	1					
GIRLS under 14 years												
GIRLS 15- 18 years												

Questions	Child Voice	Don Bosco	ODAM	PEACE	READ	SPEECH	SSSSS	Vaan Muhil	TEST	WORD	LEAF	Total
WOMEN over 19 years							1					
<b>13. Number of BONDED LABOURERS in the family (who are currently working)</b>												
BL BOYS under 14 years												
BL BOYS 15-18 years												
BL MEN over 19 years			1	1	1				1	1		
BL GIRLS under 14 years												
BL GIRLS 15-18 years				1								
BL WOMEN over 19 years									1			
Have agents trafficked persons in the last one year for mill work?				3	1	1	1		3			9
Have agents trafficked persons in the last one year for other work?			1	4	1	3	1		2			12
Does the household currently have a loan?			2			1		3		4	2	12
If yes, from where the loan has been taken from?	8	4	4	4	1	1	2			3	4	31
What has triggered loans in these houses?	7	4	8	7	4		3	3	1	3	6	46
Anyone in the family, part of		2		3	1	3	3	2	1			15

Questions	Child Voice	Don Bosco	ODAM	PEACE	READ	SPEECH	SSSSS	Vaan Muhil	TEST	WORD	LEAF	Total
a savings group?												
How many BOYS or GIRLS got married in the following ages in the last three years within the family? (Boys below 21 and girls below 18 and 18)	1	2		1			3	1			1	9
Alcohol addiction in the family?	8	2		4	2	4	5	2	6	2	4	39
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>23</b>	

## **ANNEX 4: Deliverables for Southern India mid-term review**

Summary of points agreed with IDS, 15 July 2016

### **Contents of this mid-term review**

In September 2015, IDS was contracted jointly by C&A Foundation and the Freedom Fund to conduct an independent evaluation of the Freedom Fund's hotspot in Tamil Nadu, with the contract running up to April 2017. The overall evaluation is primarily conducted through research accompaniment, with IDS and its contracted Indian counterpart, Praxis, undertaking training and technical support, and enabling the hotspot partners to conduct the data collection and some of the analysis. The intention is to ensure that the direct learning from these activities is immediately available to contribute to the effectiveness of local partner activities.

The primary focus of the evaluation is on assessing and strengthening the relevance of the programme interventions and evaluating the overall programme, including through measuring a reduction in prevalence of forms of bonded labour within intervention communities. The scope of the independent evaluation is limited to the community-based work undertaken through local NGOs. It does not include an evaluation of the impact of the hotspot's other work to improve supply chain performance or the contracted work inside mills (apart from efforts by local NGOs).

While concentrating on measurement of prevalence and assessment of relevance of strategies, the TOR for evaluation activities up to the mid-term report had included reviewing with partners the evidence for effectiveness of some of their strategies, as well as assessing whether the monitoring and reporting system already in place is providing effective measurement of actual progress on the ground. However, due to the importance of bringing forward the next funding proposal, in order to provide continuity and security to the work, the mid-term review reporting has been brought forward from April 2017 to September 2016, which does not permit these aspects of the evaluation to take place before delivery of the report.

Following the TOR of September 2015, the mid-term review should include:

- Outline of what the hotspot programme consists of from IDS's perspective, i.e. the main activities and scope of work of the hotspot
- Reminder of the key elements/deliverables of the overall evaluation and progress of the evaluation so far
- Summary of life story analysis
- Summary of findings of prevalence study
- What these findings mean in terms of the present design of the hotspot and its relevance.
- Conclusions
- Recommended adjustments to strengthen relevance and reduce prevalence during next three years

Report length: Approx. 7–10 pages, with the full life story analysis and prevalence report in annexes.

Given that this is bringing forward the report that was planned for next April, it would NOT include two of the previously planned elements:

- Preliminary discussions with partners about what has been working and what has not
- Assessment of partners' monitoring and reporting system

## ANNEX 5: Hamlet Level Discussions on the Survey Results

### Community feedback and discussions

Discussions on the results of the survey took place after the participants had completed the questions. The facilitators tallied up the prevalence data from the forms to facilitate a discussion on the prevalence results. The facilitators wrote down the answers that had reached a group consensus, and one group could give multiple answers to a question. All the participants were encouraged by the facilitators to take part in the discussion.

### Questions for open discussion

1. What happens when someone attempts to come out of bonded labour?
2. Who supported the people who managed to escape from bonded labour?
3. Who can help people to come out of bonded labour?
4. What can be done to reduce and respond to bonded labour (from your perspective)?

<b>Table 1: Reasons for the existence of slavery</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
No work other than mill work	59	28 %
High interest loan needs to be repaid	33	16 %
The family is in poor condition	17	8%
Agriculture failure and there is no other work	16	8%
Marriage expenses (Dowry)	12	6%
Alcoholism among head of the HH. This forces women and children to take responsibility for family finances	10	5%
Large family size	9	4%
No transport facility results in dropout	8	4%
Mills provide transport facility	8	4%
Even though educated, can't able to find a suitable jobs so continue in mill work	8	4%
Irresponsible parents and husband. which results in people going into bonded labour to meet family expenses	7	3%
Siblings marriage and children's education	5	2%
Delayed payment for 100 days work	5	2%
Lack of awareness on importance of education among parents	4	2%
Intergenerational bonded labour	3	1%
Advance money and bonus is an incentive to go for mill work	2	1%
Village on the hill side do not get government schemes so going for mill work.	1	0%
Familial relations in agriculture	1	0%
Landlessness	1	0%
	209 *	

**NB: 209 is multiple answers**

Absence of alternative work, loan taken with high interest by the people, poverty and the failure of agriculture mentioned as the major factors for the existence of slavery.

<b>Table 2: What happens when one attempts to come out of slavery?</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Forced to return advance money with interest	28	17%
Family's poor economic condition forces them to stay in mill	26	16%
Mill threatens them in multiple ways	17	10%
Parents insist children continue working in the mills	17	10%
Fear of losing livelihood if they come out of the mill work	14	9%
Fear of siblings/children's education will be affected	13	8%
Mill owners persuade/ use family members, local people and leaders to persuade people to go back	10	6%
Supervisors force them to stay back	7	4%
They undergo stress expecting the backlash from the mill and family	7	4%
Marriage savings will get affected	6	4%
Family persuade their children to continue working in mill	6	4%
Company will give them a higher work load	6	4%
Agents will not allow them to leave	2	1%
Mill owners put pressure them to pay the advance amount immediately	2	1%
Mill owners will not allow	1	1%
Flower vendors give them interest free loan and demand that they stay as slaves	1	1%
	163	

**NB: 163 is multiple answers**

The list of responses given above shows that employers would force them to repay the money with interest immediately, which they cannot repay. The family's poor economic situation and the absence of a fall-back system for their survival is what makes them continue as slaves. Mill owners will threaten them in many ways to prevent them attempting to leave the work. Parents insist children continue working in the mills when they want leave.

<b>Table 3: Number of people who came out of slavery</b>	<b>N</b>
One	18
Two	5
Three	5
Four	1
Five	1
Six	1
Few*	6

**\*4 from Dindugul and one each from Virudunagar and Erode.**

In total, 58 people escaped from slavery from within the study locations (Dindugul 19, Virudunagar 14, Namakkal 14 and Erode 11). Some of them could not recall the actual number of people who had come out of slavery.

<b>Table 4: People/groups that have supported people in their escape from slavery</b>	
CSG, Panchayt President, Police, VAO and RI	11
NGO	4
Self-initiative	4
Parents	5
Parents, Friends and self-initiative	3
Don't remember	2
Village head	1

People who were supported in their escape from slavery had substantive support from both their family and the CSG.

<b>Table 5: People/groups that may be approached for assistance in escaping slavery</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Panchayat President	30	16%
Parents and relatives	20	11%
Police	19	10%
Village head	17	9%
NGOs	15	8%
Community Support Group	11	6%
Ward Councillor	10	5%
Volunteers	7	4%
Thasildhar	6	3%
Village administrative officer	6	3%
1098 emergency	5	3%
Revenue inspector	5	3%
Agents	4	2%
SHG members	4	2%
Social workers	4	2%
Trusted people	3	2%
VIP in the village	3	2%
Educated youth	2	1%
Politicians	2	1%
Teacher	2	1%
Workers collective	2	1%
Anganwadi Incharge	1	1%
Mill owner	1	1%
Older people in the village	1	1%
People who are on good terms with the company	1	1%
Those who work in the same mill	1	1%
Village Leaders	1	1%
	<b>183</b>	

**NB: 183 is multiple answers**

There was widespread awareness about who could be approached to facilitate the escape from slavery – such as the Panchayat President, parents and relatives, police, village head, NGOs, Community Support Group and Panchayat Raj member (Ward Councillor). However, a few also stated that the ‘mill agent’ was someone who could help slaves to leave slavery.

<b>Table 6: Ways to reduce/address slavery</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Provision of vocational training and entrepreneurship skills with a loan facility	51	18%
Provision of loans with less interest for farmers, self-employment and SHG	39	13%
Complete ban on alcohol consumption	21	7%
Government provision of suitable jobs for educated youth	17	6%
Awareness of the importance of education among the parents and villagers	15	5%
Free higher education for children beyond the 12th standard	14	5%
Provision of public transport facility to address the issue of dropouts	13	4%
Address the reasons leading to children dropouts	13	4%
Awareness of issues and consequences of modern slavery among the parents, children and villagers	11	4%
Alternative employment / livelihood opportunities need to be created for adults and youths	10	3%
Entrepreneurial skill training to boys and girls after education	10	3%
Job opportunities for those who are educated	7	2%
MGNREGA for all in the village	7	2%
Livelihood opportunities for the parents of the working girls and boys	6	2%
Abolition of the dowry system	5	2%
Diploma courses/training for girls (beautician course, tailoring)	5	2%
Improvement of basic infrastructures (road, water and sanitation and education)	5	2%
Compulsory schooling for both boy and girls	4	1%
Improvements in the infrastructure and quality of education in public schools	4	1%
Education support programme for low performing students	4	1%
Strong laws to stop slavery (should be enacted)	4	1%
More industries and factories in the area	3	1%
Increase in wages in the mills will stop workers taking loan/advance from mill owner	3	1%
Special welfare schemes for the villagers working as slaves	3	1%
Provision of loans for higher education	3	1%
Water availability for agriculture	2	1%
Rehabilitation programmes for alcoholics	2	1%
Protest and demands	2	1%
Skill building by NGOs	2	1%
Free education for orphan children	1	0%
Standard income for families	1	0%
	<b>291</b>	

**NB: 291 is multiple answers**



Respondents suggested the following for addressing the issue of slavery:

- Vocational training and entrepreneurship skills with a loan facility
- Provision of loans with less interest for farmers, self employed people and SHG
- A complete ban on alcohol in the state
- Government provision of suitable jobs for educated youth
- Awareness of the importance of education among the parents and villagers
- Free higher education for children beyond the 12th standard