



Participatory statistics to measure prevalence in bonded labour hotspots in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar: findings of the baseline study

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Cover photo credits: Praxis Institute for Participatory Practice India

List of abbreviations

BL	Bonded labour
HH	Household
IDS	Institute for Development Studies
MGNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OBC	Other backward castes
UP	Uttar Pradesh

Key findings

The Institute of Development Studies (IDS) has been carrying out a programme of research, learning and evaluation in relation to the Freedom Fund 'hotspot' in northern India, a project that seeks to reduce bonded labour in the states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

The work for this baseline study builds upon scoping visits comprising interviews with non-governmental organisations (NGOs), focus groups with community members, field observations, the participatory collection and analysis of 353 life stories to identify the most significant indicators of change, and the generation of a baseline of participatory statistics of 3,466 households across 82 hamlets in locations covered by 14 NGOs. This is being followed by the roll-out of a systemic action research programme which combines stakeholders analysing and developing solutions to their problems with follow-up participatory statistical analysis. We will conduct an end-line survey approximately two years after the data collection for this study has been completed.

A central aim of the study was to estimate the prevalence of bonded labour in the selected intervention communities of the Freedom Fund hotspot in northern India. The study does not extrapolate from this estimate to make an estimate of the prevalence beyond this intervention area. Prevalence data help mainly to understand the profile of families in bonded labour and 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. A range of other indicators could therefore be generated from the causal factors emerging from the life story analysis. The team facilitated a discussion on the results at the end of the data collection process in each site. These discussions focused on the reasons for the differences in prevalence results using the tallied-up data to explore how gender, age and caste dynamics shape bonded labour, with most adults in bonded labour working inside the village; most boys in bondage working outside the village; and a group of families with all members in bonded labour working outside the village.

The estimates from this participatory statistical analysis 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 with regard to forms of bonded labour in India.

Key findings are as follows:

- Within the sample of 3,466 households, most households have a member in bonded labour. Among the 51% of the families that had people in bonded labour, 29% had all of the working family members in bonded labour and 22% had at least one enslaved family member. The interventions are clearly in the right spot.
- There are huge geographic variations within our sample: in some intervention areas, the vast majority of households had some form of bonded labour (>95%), while in others the rate was less than 10%.
- Within the intervention communities, the prevalence rate of households with at least one member in bonded labour was 53.0%. With a standard deviation of 0.4991032, and a desired confidence level of 90%, the corresponding confidence interval is ± 0.014 , meaning that we can be 90% confident that the true population mean falls within the range of 51.72 to 54.51%.

- Among the total number of 3,366 bonded labourers in 3,466 households, 568 were bonded labourers aged below 18 years and 467 of these were boys. Most of the boys who were involved in bonded labour worked outside the village. Adults in bonded labour worked more often inside the village.
- Caste, gender, age, access to Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) benefits, and loan-taking are the key factors at the individual and household level related to bonded labour in this hotspot. Within the hotspot as a whole there are different economic activities but there are currently few economic opportunities available that do not involve some form of bondage.
- With regard to social status, most people in the intervention areas belonged to the Dalit (or Scheduled Caste) social category, followed closely by Other Backward Classes (OBC).
- The data show a link between land ownership status and bonded labour. While 61.9% of landless households have at least one person in bonded labour, as many as 75.9% of landless households have every working member of the household in bonded labour. As the size of the land holding increases, the prevalence of bonded labour in those households decreases. Within the intervention communities in both states, most people have a stable lease for the house they live in.
- Health expenses are the main reason for taking out a loan among all households in the intervention areas.
- With regard to MGNREGA, as payment received for the number of days worked increases, the incidence of bonded labour decreases slightly.
- Access to a bank account does not have any significant impact on the status of bonded labour.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

According to the Global Slavery Index 2016,¹ India has the largest number of individuals in modern slavery in the world – approximately 18 million people, or 40% of the global burden. According to the Freedom Fund,² most of these individuals are in debt bondage, having taken out loans at extortionate rates from local landowners or inherited inter-generational debts and having thus been forced to work for that employer.³ Most of these people are Dalits.⁴ Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, two northern Indian states that rank very low on human development indicators, have a vast population of Dalits, large-scale poverty and a concentration of forms of bonded labour in the poorest communities.

The Freedom Fund, along with partner organisations⁵ in parts of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh where modern forms of bonded labour are more prevalent, are working towards reducing trafficking, bonded labour and harmful child labour. The above facts form the basis of their programme between 2014 and 2018. The overall objective of the programme is to reduce the prevalence of all forms of bonded labour in 26 districts of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. The sub-objectives are to:

1. **Reduce prevalence** in the specific communities in which the Freedom Fund's partners are working, through direct prevention, protection and prosecution interventions.
2. Improve the **wider enabling environment**⁶ for freedom by:
 - a. Strengthening the functioning of government safety nets;
 - b. Improving the effectiveness of government anti-bonded labour structures, such as district vigilance committees and child welfare committees;
 - c. Building public awareness and changing attitudes about bonded labour;
 - d. Increasing legal deterrence so that slaveholders and traffickers do not enjoy impunity but instead are more likely to face arrest and prosecution.
3. **Increase civil society's capacity** for sustained and effective anti-bonded labour action.
4. **Support rigorous research** and evaluation in the hotspot.

The main objective of this baseline study is to measure changes in prevalence in the specific communities in which the NGO partners are working during the programme period. An end-line survey using the same instrument will be conducted after approximately two years. The current baseline study is also a first step in providing a context of the partners' work and offering inputs to their ongoing programmes to meet the goal of decreasing the prevalence of bonded labour during the intervention period. The aim of the prevalence work is not to show overall prevalence for the districts but to show the *prevalence in the intervention areas* and how it changes over time.

¹ Source: www.globalslaveryindex.org/country/india.

² Freedom Fund (freedomfund.org) is a philanthropic initiative designed to bring strategic and financial resources to the fight against modern slavery.

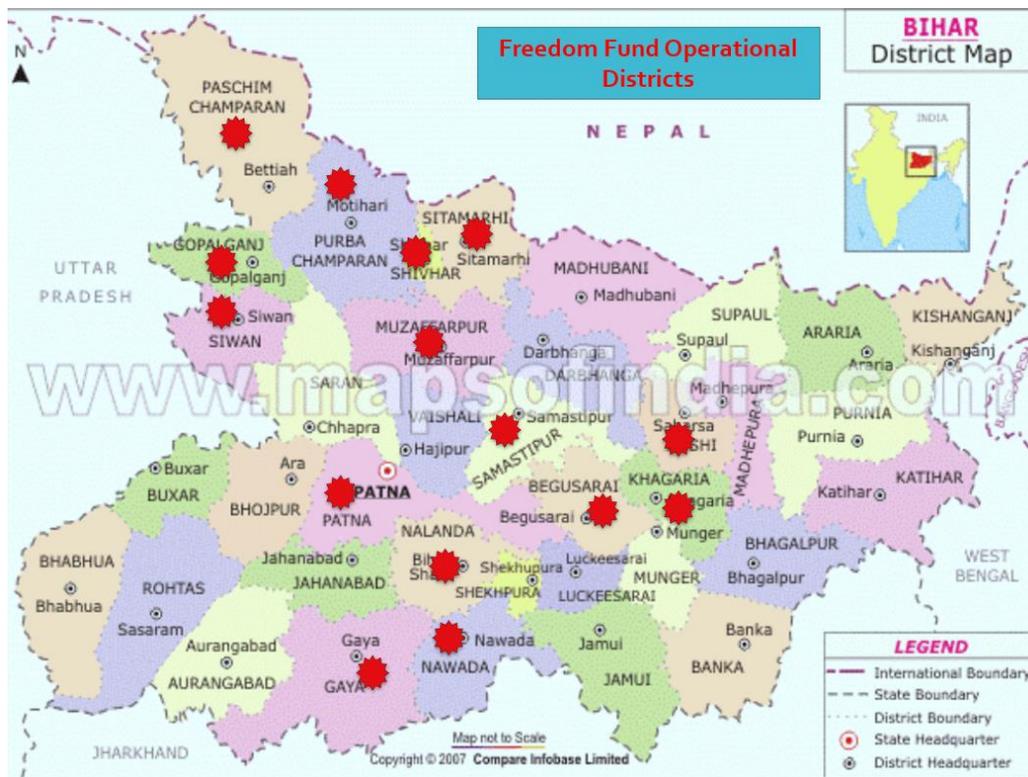
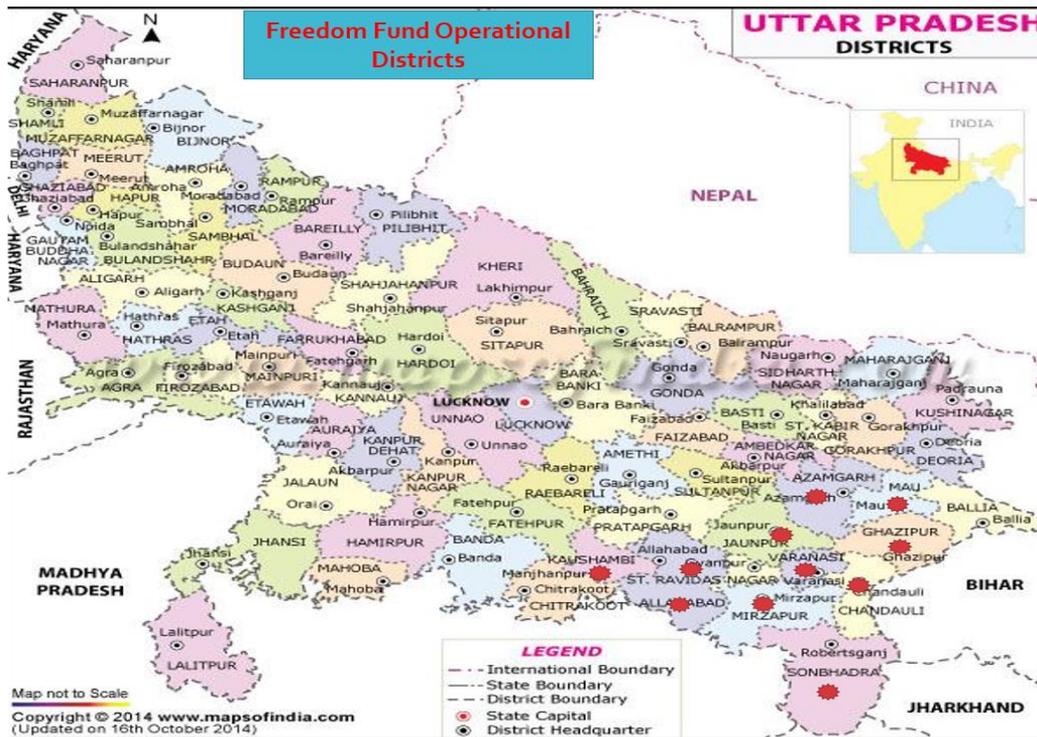
³ As reported in: <http://freedomfund.org/programs/hotspot-projects/northern-india-hotspot>.

⁴ Dalits are a socio-economically disadvantaged group that are considered outcasts by the majority Hindu population; they are discriminated mainly because of the 'menial' occupations practiced by their ancestors.

⁵ The total number of partners has grown over time. 14 NGO participated in this study. The current number of partners is 21.

⁶ This is not just about the immediate villages but about systemic change, though still at the level that is within the reach of partners to affect, mostly at the local level, but with some efforts made at state level where they see that there is scope for change. Activities aimed at this sub-objective would centre primarily around the partners' individual and collective advocacy.

Intervention districts are highlighted in red in the two maps⁷ below.



⁷ Maps provided by the Freedom Fund

1.2 Study context and methods

As part of the Freedom Fund programme, an independent evaluation of the hotspot is carried out by IDS and Praxis India, with a strong focus on the relevance and effectiveness of partners' work. While individual NGO partners have monitoring and evaluation systems to measure the progress of their intervention, the aim of the independent evaluation is to assess the impact of interventions across the Freedom Fund hotspot as a whole.

The Freedom Fund currently supports local NGO intervention programmes in six hotspots where there are high concentrations of modern-day bonded labour (in this case, northern India). The aim of each hotspot programme is to reduce prevalence in the hotspot as a whole with partners in specific communities working 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. IDS is currently undertaking similar work with the Freedom Fund in hotspots in the eastern Terai in Nepal and in western Tamil Nadu in southern India.

The programme in northern India is made up of a variety of interventions, about 20% of which focus on commercial sexual exploitation, 40% on bonded labour, and 40% on child labour. Partners were chosen according to the extent to which they met the following criteria: (1) they address bonded labour; (2) they are involved in rescue/interception; (3) they equip survivors through effective support for recovery and reintegration; (4) they are positioned to contribute to systemic change, including through community-based reflection and collective action against bonded labour; (5) they are engaged in local, district, state and/or national-level advocacy; (6) they are involved in legal services for victim protection and/or prosecution of those who hold or traffic bonded labourers; (7) their capacity, 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, which is why a baseline and end-line is being facilitated. As there were no prevalence data available, the selection of locations of work by local partners was based on perceived high levels of bonded labour or trafficking taking place. Some of the partners have worked in these areas for many years. This evidence of the need to work in certain locations 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 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.⁸ Participatory census and generation of numbers was seen as

⁸ More details are available in CDI Practice Paper, Number 16, February 2016: <http://cdim pact.org/publications/using-participatory-statistics-examine-impact-interventions-eradicate-slavery-lessons>.

a methodology that could overcome some of the problems associated with traditional survey methods. With use of participatory tools, such as a social map or other similar tools, disaggregated socio-demographic data on families and village institutions can be collected, analysed and discussed at the local level. When statistical principles are used, these 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 and other indicators of change as part of an integrated mixed-methods approach including life story analysis, system mapping and action research.

This experiment in the use of participatory statistics for collecting prevalence data on bonded labour has wider importance within the global movement, as anti-slavery 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 Bihar and Uttar Pradesh is a complex setting where multiple forms of bonded labour co-exist with many other types of social-economic and political inequality. Each partner NGO has its own expertise and history covering a range of forms of bonded labour – adult and child bonded labour in communities, trafficking outside communities including trafficking into the sex industry – but all make community-based interventions. Before the prevalence study was conducted, eight 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 and be relevant, and consider 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 353 life-stories included illness, lack of education, high volume of loans, caste-based discrimination and deceit. Participants then used these life-stories to explore causal relations between the themes, creating a wall-wide system 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 two indicators that can be measures of change over time between a baseline and an end-line of (1) prevalence and incidence of bonded labour; (2) access to health services and one diagnostic tool and; (3) the reasons for taking out loans.

In addition, we looked at the following diagnostic indicators: religion; caste; type and size of land ownership; access to Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) benefits; having a bank account; family size; family composition; access to school; school dropout rate; presence of traffickers and type of trafficking; loans; borrower; purpose of loans; reason for loans and early marriage.

A central idea underpinning the programme is that slavery eradication has to come from within communities and that NGO activity should be designed to enable and facilitate this through collective action, including the work of Community Vigilance Committees. NGO activity in villages tends to focus at the hamlet level, the lowest administrative level.

One village can have several hamlets. Residents in a hamlet often share social characteristics, such as caste, and it is at this level that one would expect to see changes in prevalence in bonded and child labour. Due to the focus of the programme we excluded hamlets where NGOs visited less than once a month and those that did not yet have a committee. The two NGOs that focused on

sex work carried out their activities in red-light districts. Under Indian law, sex work and trafficking are conflated and prevalence of sex work in these red-light districts is directly affected by planning and zoning laws, which are outside the authority of the NGO.

For 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 of adults within the village; (2) bonded or trafficked adult labour outside the village; (3) bonded child labour within the village; and (4) bonded or trafficked child labour outside the village.

To identify whether or not a person is in bonded labour we used the following criteria:

1. The relationship between employee and employer is characterised by, or formed due to, any one or more of the following reasons:
 - a. A loan taken by the employee or their family;
 - b. An advance paid to the employee or their family in cash or in-kind;
 - c. Involves force or compulsion;
 - d. Reinforced by custom;
 - e. Entry into the relation by the employee is voluntarily because of economic compulsions.
2. Bonded labour can be paid or unpaid labour (the individuals might have started off the arrangement voluntarily but now the employer uses force as part of the arrangement or will not let them work for someone else).
3. In such a relationship, the employee:
 - a. Does NOT have the freedom to choose their employer;
 - b. CANNOT negotiate the terms and condition of their working arrangement.

These criteria and guidance on questions are detailed in the guidelines.

The debt could be from anyone. We asked about current bonded labour status. While explaining the question to participants, the understanding was that a person is bonded when they are working to pay off a particular debt and had one of the other above-mentioned characteristics.

We looked at prevalence at the household level. Although a specific individual may take out a loan, debts are in practice treated as being held by the household as a collective unit. Consequently, decisions, duties and responsibilities about who is repaying the loan or advance are collective rather than individual.

The IDS and Praxis team were keen to evolve a tool that would utilise the expertise of field staff, would hold the participants' interest, and also encourage the sharing of experiences of community members in a simple, non-threatening manner. A two-part research process was evolved, through which each NGO collected data in a set number of predetermined (randomly selected) 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 a pictorial self-assessment tool was used 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 staff. Respondents indicated the appropriate answers to the questions for themselves and for 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 the fact 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 of the meaning of any questions.

One of the criticisms of participatory quantitative methods is that they lack statistical power and their conclusions thus lack statistical robustness but the design of this study aimed to provide a strong statistical approach to the baseline. As no survey data were 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 this would take them away from other activities, we also wanted to keep the sample small enough for them to manage. Based on discussions we assumed that 5% of households in the hotspot would report a form of bonded labour and that the efforts of the NGOs in the period studied could achieve a significant reduction of 2% (bringing prevalence down to 3%) across the programme, but might not achieve eradication during this short period of a few years. The sample size of baseline and end-line groups to measure that change would need to be 1,506 for each study (baseline and follow up), with a total of 3,012.⁹

Although our task was to estimate the prevalence across the hotspot, a participatory approach requires that beneficiaries not only collect data but can also analyse and use these for their own learning.

In order to ensure that there was a large enough sample to detect big shifts within NGO programmes, allowing them to draw some lessons themselves, it was decided that a minimum of 270 households' data would be shared per NGO. This would allow detection of a change from 7% to 2% at the individual NGO level,¹⁰ a larger shift than in the sample for the hotspot as a whole. Thus, if 14 NGOs each collected 270 samples we would get data for 3,780 households – considerably larger than what we needed for the hotspot as a whole and thus allowing for some adjustments if teams encountered problems.

Indeed, the teams faced several challenges in the field, including that in some cases the average hamlet size had been overestimated, which meant that some partners had to sample more hamlets than planned. Also, some of the eligible hamlets proved to be unsuitable for inclusion and some residents were absent. Forms were sometimes incorrectly completed and so they had to be taken out.¹¹ One NGO had a considerably smaller number of hamlets in which it was carrying out activities, and so the findings would thus probably lack statistical power but this NGO was still included as it was felt that having some idea on the prevalence would be useful for their own understanding of the context and their work. The total number of households in the sample was 3,489. We will only know for certain at the end-line if the sample for each of these NGOs has enough statistical power to measure the observed changes. Currently it looks like only one NGO, Aangan, may not have enough households to detect significant changes at the NGO level.

The actual distribution of the number of households from which data have been collected across partner NGOs, as well as hamlets, in both states is given in Table 1.

⁹ Alpha 0.05, Beta 0.2, Power 0.8.

¹⁰ With Alpha 0.05, Beta 0.2, Power 0.8.

¹¹ Several challenges were faced, including an overestimated hamlet size and non-availability of eligible hamlets to conduct the study in. These along with the mechanisms to overcome the challenges have been detailed in: <http://cdimpact.org/publications/using-participatory-statistics-examine-impact-interventions-eradicate-slavery-lessons>.

Table 1: HH and hamlets per NGO in UP and Bihar

Bihar											
NGO	Adithi	BMVS	Centre Direct	Duncan	FSS	Idea	IDF	Nirdesh	Prayas	TSN	Total
HH per NGO	270	285	270	270	270	270	270	270	245	270	2690
Hamlets per NGO	6	4	6	6	5	6	6	6	6	5	56
Uttar Pradesh											
NGO	Aangan		MSEMVS		MSEMVS – TIP		PGS		Total		
HH per NGO	76		252		243		228		799		
Hamlets per NGO	2		9		9		6		26		

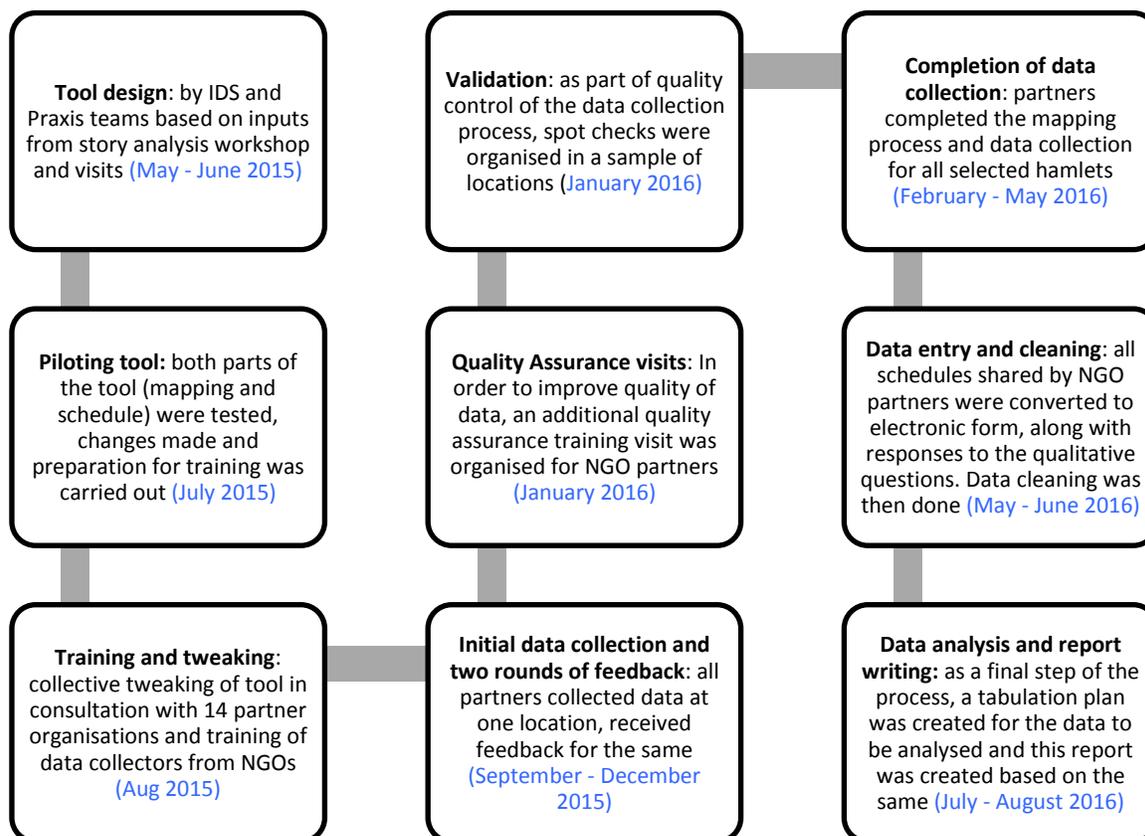
The total number of hamlets in which data was collected is 82. The number of hamlets visited per NGO partner ranges between two and nine. In order to select these hamlets, each NGO shared a list of the hamlets that it operated in and indicated which of these had interventions before 2015 on the issue of bonded labour, which were taken off the eligibility list of the current baseline. (Aangan, an UP-based NGO, was an outlier, with only two eligible hamlets as per this criteria).

An average number of households per hamlet was then shared and random numbers were applied to select the final list of hamlets. To arrive at the desired sample size across all partners, each NGO had to meet an average of 90 respondents (who would share data relating to 270 households). Going by an average number of 100 households per hamlet, each NGO had to select 15 respondent households in each hamlet. Any hamlets that had less than 100 households would have fewer respondents and therefore more hamlets would need to be selected for participation.

1.4 Study process

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

Figure 1: Study process and timeline



Validation

As part of the study's quality control mechanism and as an addition to the original plan, Praxis undertook data validation to explore the extent of deviation from the data collected by the partners and to understand the reasons why (See Annex 1). Validation visits were planned for 36 households (1% of the total sample), but 45 were eventually conducted. Six of the 14 organisations were selected at random to prevent any one organisation feeling singled out. Locations and households were also selected randomly from among locations where the partner NGO had already collected data.

The 17 questions were asked again with the same household and where possible with the same respondent named in the original survey. The individuals themselves, the other respondents in the group and the NGO colleagues were asked to confirm whether or not it was the same person.

Most questions had less than 10% variation, but we did find important differences. First, in some cases, people did not fully understand the question, which indicated that we needed to strengthen the facilitators' skills. For example, the number of bonded labourers in a family was correct, but the facilitators had not detailed the ages of the working members in the household on the forms who were not in bondage, which meant that there was variation in the numbers of children and adults. Second, we learned that gender played a role in the responses. Where the first respondents had been men and the validation respondents women, the answers given about the number of household members differed.

Verification through group discussion showed men were less aware of the actual number of members in the neighbouring families. As a result of the verification, all NGOs had to go back to the households to check all the responses and all the forms about the number of household members. This was a long process that involved some NGOs having to redo their forms three or four times with both long-distance and hands-on supervision.

1.5 Ethical considerations

This baseline study is part of a larger research project that 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 able to share information and insights through discussions. The challenges associated with any community process were all part of this research process as well. These included: crowd management due to mistaken anticipation of a government scheme or NGO programme making beneficiary lists; insufficient time for discussing a sensitive issue like trafficking; mixing participants from different 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 interacting with female respondents due to gender roles restricting women's ability to speak publicly on some issues; and timeline slippages due to other programme activities, festivals and elections.

In addition to these challenges, some limitations of the study include:

- Measuring changes at baseline, midline and/or end-line without a comparison group does not enable us to detect causal relations. In other words, even if prevalence increases or decreases over the period, the study cannot attribute this change to our partners' interventions. Finding a comparison group has been notoriously difficult in slavery research.
- 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, to retain its simplicity, the 'why' aspects (for example, why there were dropouts or why there was no good access to health services) were not probed. The participants discussed the causes of slavery once they had completed filling out the tool. The notes of these facilitated discussions in each hamlet have an uneven quality, the collection was slow, and a full analysis of the discussion notes is therefore not yet feasible. We are exploring an approach and format to analyse these notes so that they can be discussed with the NGO along with other issues that came up during the group discussion based on the notes.
- It is challenging to establish some correlations. For instance, correlation is difficult between children who have dropped out of (or never been to) school and children in bonded labour because the education data relates to ages 5-14 years while the work data relates to ages 0-18 years.

- A lack of trust in organisations that are at an early stage of work in some of the study areas could result in low reporting of bonded labour. One might see an increase of reported levels of bonded labour within a project period caused by low reporting due to low rapport in the beginning with the numbers increasing as people 'open up' as trust increases. Related to this, in the early stages of intervention, people tend to perceive coercive work relationships as normal (especially in a context of inter-generational bonded labour). People's ability to perceive the exploitation and force within relationships may increase over time, and so reported prevalence will increase likewise. Trust dynamics raise important issues in a context where actual reductions in prevalence might be expected to be relatively small. In short, it is not unlikely that a programme's real impact on prevalence might only be measurable after many years while there might actually be an increase in reported prevalence during the first years.
- Validation of findings was, for budgetary reasons, only conducted for six randomly selected NGOs, limiting the generalisability of the findings.

2 Findings

This section details the profile of the respondents and the bonded labour status of the households, with further comparisons made based on the socio-economic and demographic profile of those households.

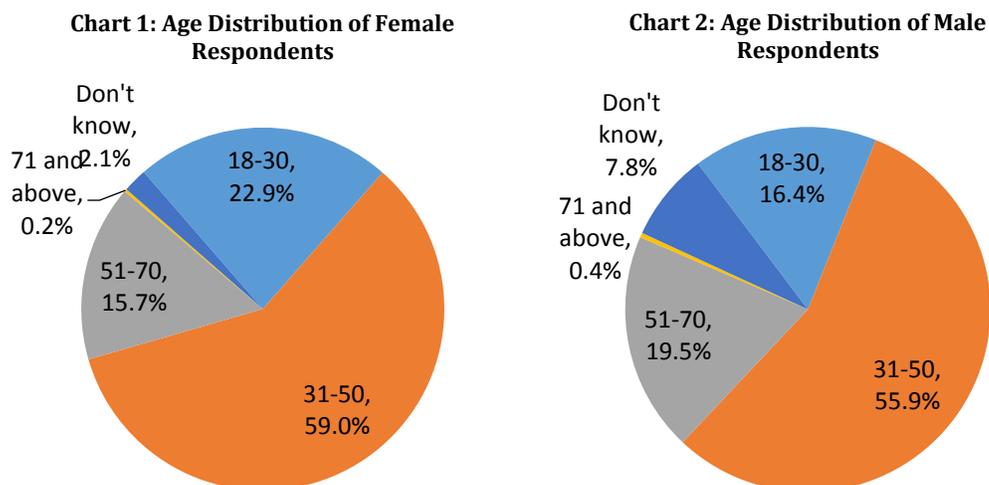
2.1 Background information

2.1.1 Respondent profile

A total of 1,163 respondents were surveyed across 82 hamlets in locations covered by 14 NGOs. With each respondent sharing data about three households (their own and their immediate neighbours on either side), the total number of households about whom data was generated was 3,489. We excluded 23 records because they did not indicate who among the family members are working members and amongst those working who were working in conditions of bonded labour. This means that **N= 3,466**.

Just over 36% (421) of respondents were female and 64% (742) 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. The NGOs could decide the gender of the participants in each hamlet based on their experience in terms of where more women were more likely to come and sit together as a group. Meeting this aim proved difficult given people's availability at the time of the process and men's need to assert their roles as gatekeepers of family information, reflecting gendered confidence levels, norms and roles.

Respondents' age distribution is detailed in Charts 1 and 2.



Among both male and female respondents, between 55% and 60% were from the 31-50 year age group.

2.1.2 Location of data collection

Of the 82 hamlets visited, 56 were in Bihar and 26 in Uttar Pradesh. The hamlets in some locations were considerably smaller than 100 households, as we had expected based on anecdotal verbal evidence prior to making the sample. Some hamlets had less than 40 households, for example. This meant that the NGO had to add more hamlets to get a sufficient number of respondents.

2.2 Bonded labour status and types

2.2.1 Bonded labour status

As stated in the first section, respondents were asked to indicate how many adults and children, disaggregated by gender, were working in each household. For each individual, the respondents then indicated a number from one to five, to specify the nature of bonded labour or its absence. 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'. If it was found that all the working members of a household were enslaved, those set of households have been referred to as 'Exclusively 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 households, only 23 had no working members. These tended to be households with just one or two people, often old and supported by either children or extended families.

Among the 51% of the families that had people in bonded labour, 29% had all of the working family members in bonded labour and 22% had at least one enslaved family member.

Chart 4 provides a state-wise division of the enslaved households.

Chart 3: Summary of Status of Bonded Labour (BL) in study area (n=3466)

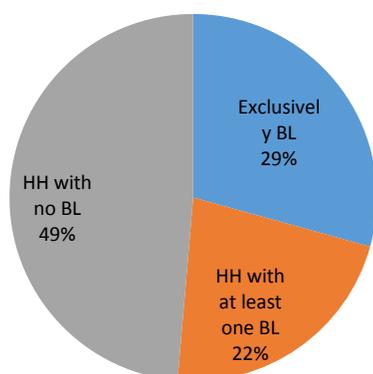
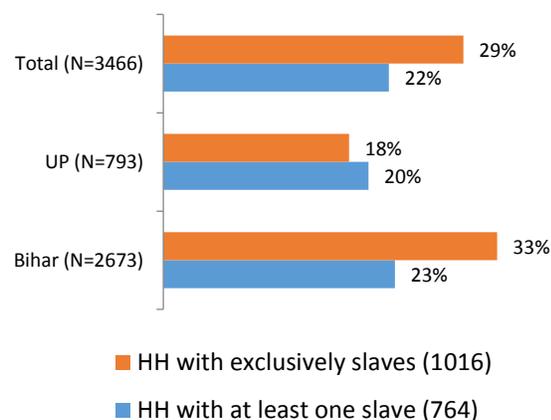


Chart 4: State-wise distribution of BL across households with had any incidence of BL (i.e. from 51% of HH in the chart which indicated having BL)



The distribution of these two categories of enslaved households by partner organisation are shown in charts 5 and 6.

Chart 5: Distribution of Households with BL in Bihar, disaggregated by partners

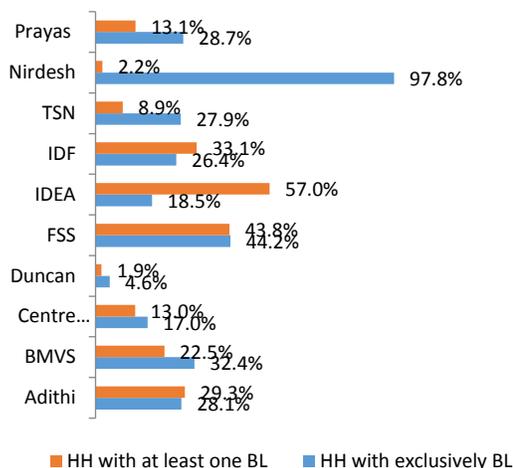
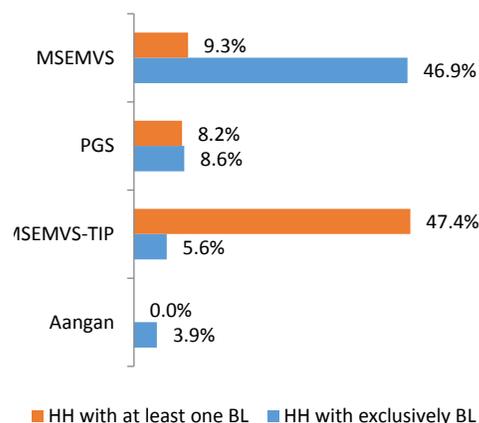


Chart 6: Distribution of Households with BL in Uttar Pradesh, disaggregated by partners



The two outliers in Bihar are Duncan and Nirdesh. While Duncan recorded 6.3% households in their six hamlets as having enslaved members, Nirdesh recorded 99.2% of sample households in their six hamlets as having enslaved members.

In Uttar Pradesh, Aangan has shown 3.9% households as having a person in bonded labour (this is based on data from two hamlets). While MSEMVS and MSEMVS TIP have both reported over 50% of households in some form of bonded labour, PGS has reported approximately 17% households in bonded labour.

These are large differences. Some of the differences are likely to be related to the organisation of bonded labour in a specific sector. For example, it is not unusual that whole hamlets in villages near stone quarries are working in the quarry, which is quite different from a hamlet where individual workers are recruited to work in bangle factories in another state. Another important and related reason for the differences is the expertise and intervention of the NGO itself. An NGO that focuses on rescue works with the community in a different way to an NGO that focuses on community-based collective organisation and action. The study looks at the hotspot as a whole, but these are important dynamics that are affecting the entire hotspot. The findings will therefore be discussed and co-analysed with the NGOs as part of the capacity building and monitoring and evaluation support.

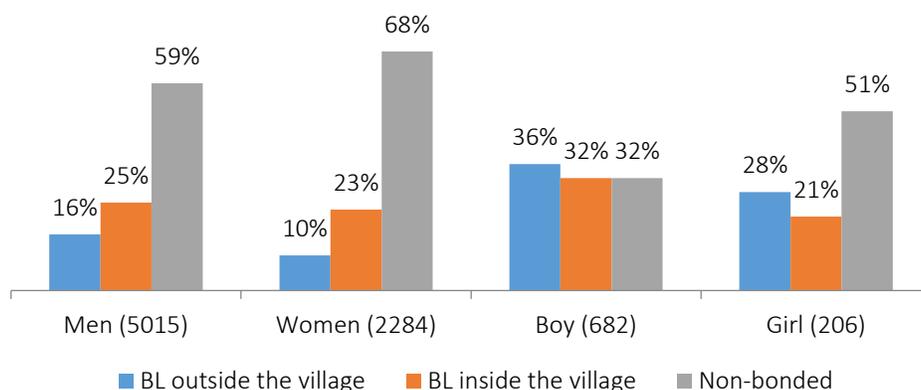
Table 2: Hotspot-level prevalence rate

State	NGO	Total sample	HH with at least with one Bonded Labourer	Prevalence %	Prevalence with inflation weights	Sample used with weights
Bihar	Adithi	270	155	57.4%	64.8	270
Bihar	BMVS	284	156	54.9%	54.5	284
Bihar	Centre Direct	270	81	30.0%	29.7	270
Bihar	Duncan	261	17	6.5%	6.7	261
Bihar	FSS	267	235	88.0%	89.1	267
Bihar	IDEA	270	204	75.6%	73.9	270
Bihar	IDF	269	160	59.5%	62.7	269
Bihar	TSN	269	99	36.8%	36.2	269
Bihar	Nirdesh	268	268	100.0%	100	268
Bihar	Prayas	245	102	41.8%	42.3	245
UP	Aangan	75	3	3.9%	2.3	75
UP	MSEMVS-TIP	249	132	53.0%	43.7	249
UP	PGS	243	41	16.9%	16.1	243
UP	MSEMVS	226	127	56.2%	59.8	226
Hotspot-level average using inflation weights within NGO Hamlets					53.0 %¹²	3466

2.2.2 Bonded labour types

For households that reported any form of bonded labour, the following section details the location (i.e. inside or outside the village), gender and age of those in bonded labour. Chart 7 combines these three categories. Boys and girls are those aged 18 years and below.

Chart 7: Distribution of bonded labour by Gender, Age and Location



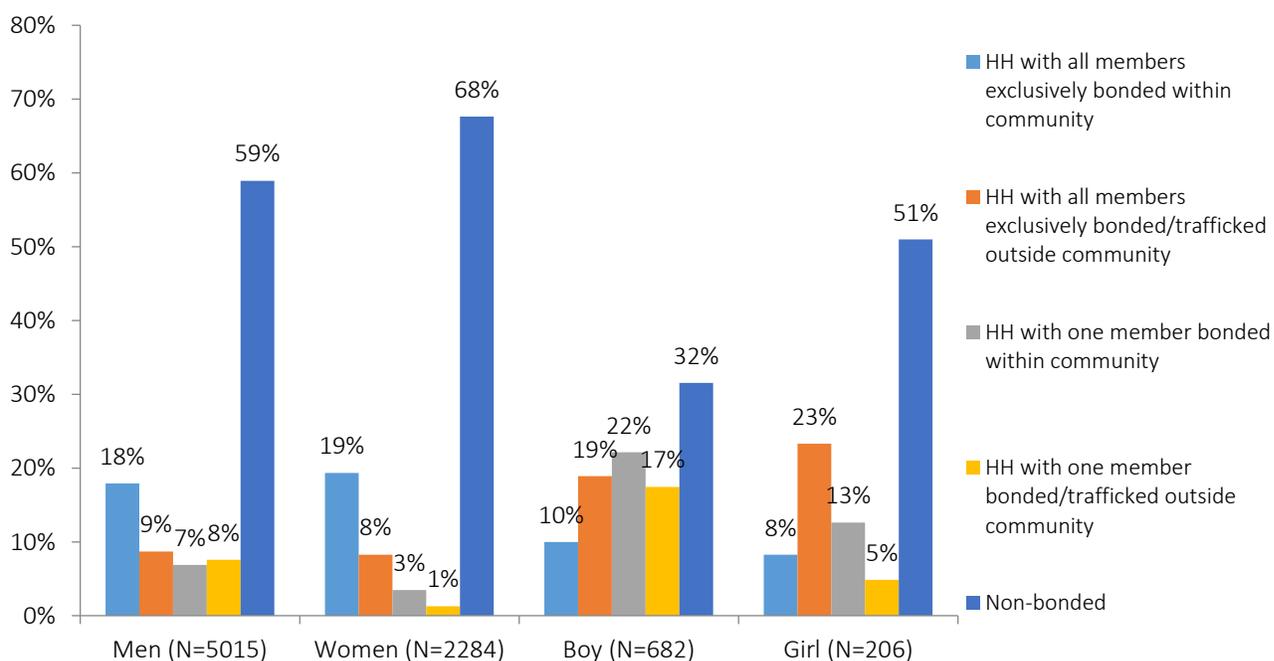
¹² With a mean of 0.5302 (53.0% of households with at least one member in bonded labour), a standard deviation of 0.4991553, and a desired confidence level of 90%, the corresponding confidence interval would be ± 0.014 ; meaning that we can be 90% confident that the true population mean falls within the range of 51.63 to 54.42%.

The absolute numbers and percentages of bonded labour among persons aged 18 years and below are detailed in Table 3.

Table 3: Bonded labour among persons aged 18 years and below

Status of bonded labour (N=3466)	% of HHs with bonded labourers (N)	No. of bonded labourers
Bonded labour outside the village		
Boys 18 years and below	6.1% (211)	248
Girls 18 years and below	1.1% (39)	58
Boys or Girls 18 years and below	6.6% (228)	306
Bonded labour inside the village		
Boys 18 years and below	5.8% (202)	219
Girls 18 years and below	1% (34)	43
Boys or Girls 18 years and below	6.5% (224)	262
Other work		
Boys 18 years and below	5.4% (186)	215
Girls 18 years and below	2.6% (90)	105
Boys or Girls 18 years and below	6.7% (232)	320
Any bonded labourer 18 years and below	12.8% (445)	568

Chart 8: Gender distribution of bonded labour as percentage of total working population disaggregated by working status of family



The prevalence in the different intervention areas within these states varies widely but across the two states, most working people are not bonded. When men (18%) and women (19%) are bonded labourers, this occurs largely within the village. Boys (17%) who are bonded are mostly involved in some form of bonded labour outside the village. The percentage of boys and girls in bondage outside the village suggests that parents prefer not to send their children – girls especially – alone to work outside the village. From the discussions, it emerged that this is because they fear that children may not be able to manage by themselves living far away from home. They would prefer their whole family to go with their boys and girls and so all members would be involved in bonded labour.

2.3 Demographic and socio-economic linkages with bonded labour

2.3.1 Religion and social group distribution of households

While the study provided for respondents to select their religion from a range of options including Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Ambedkarite, Sikh, Buddhist and Jain, all respondents were one of three religions, namely Hindu (89.4%), Muslim (9.4%) or Ambedkarite (1.2%). A household distribution by religion and state is presented in Charts 9 and 10.

Chart 9: Distribution of Respondents by Religion, disaggregated by NGOs in Bihar

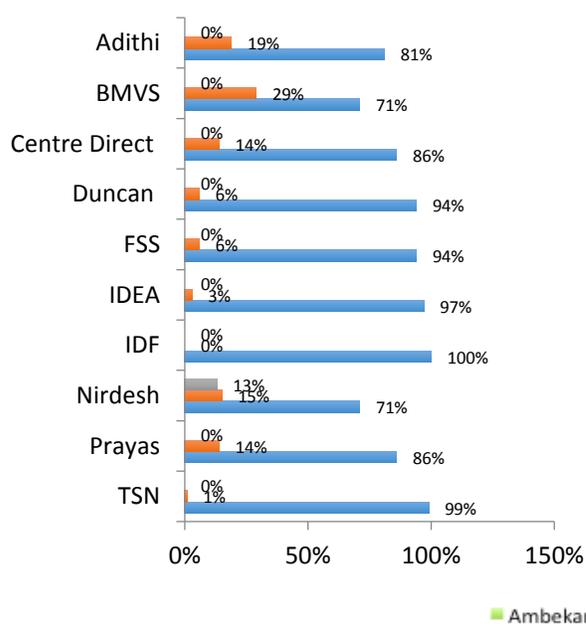
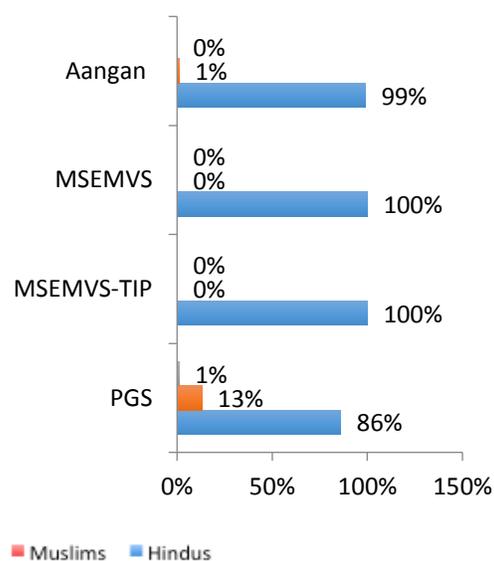


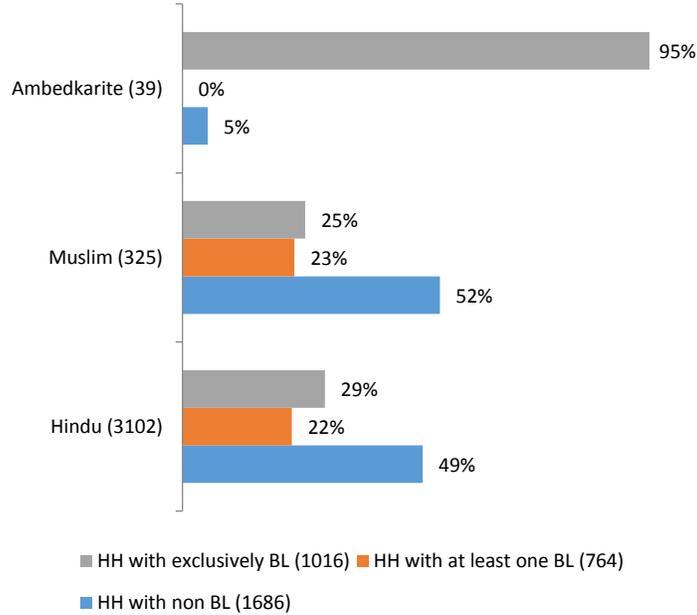
Chart 10: Distribution of Respondents by Religion, disaggregated by NGOs in Uttar Pradesh



Only 39 families across the 83 hamlets in both states considered themselves Ambedkarites. While this is not one of the recognised religions recorded in India's census data, one of the communities stated during the piloting process that they would like this category to be included. The Dalits (who would state Hindu as their religion) all tend to consider themselves followers of Ambedkar but often do not state Ambedkarite as their religion as it is still a nascent and more urban idea. This group is extremely marginalised and vulnerable.

Chart 11 shows the distribution of bonded labour by religion. The Ambedkarite category, based on data for 39 households, seems extremely high at 95% of households having people exclusively in bonded labour. However, almost all reside in the intervention area of Nirdesh where there is 99% slavery, so it cannot be concluded based on these data that this group is at a particular risk.

Chart 11: Disaggregation of bonded labour by religion



The social groups distribution showed that 55.9% of households were Dalit (or Scheduled Caste), 34.6% were from the Other Backward Classes (OBC) category, 1.6% from the Scheduled Tribes category, and 7.9% from none of these – which means that either they were Muslim or belonged to one of the higher castes in the Hindu religion. The household distribution by caste status between the two states is shown in Chart 12. A distribution of slaves by social category is shown in Chart 13.

Chart 12: Disaggregation of respondents by social category and state

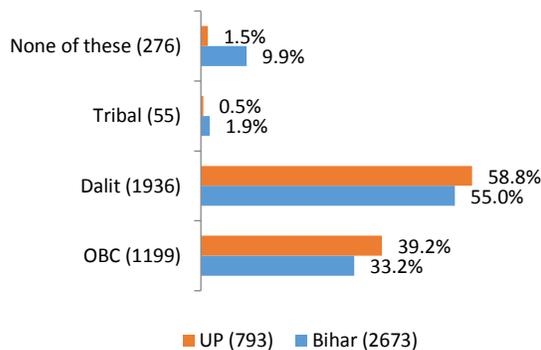
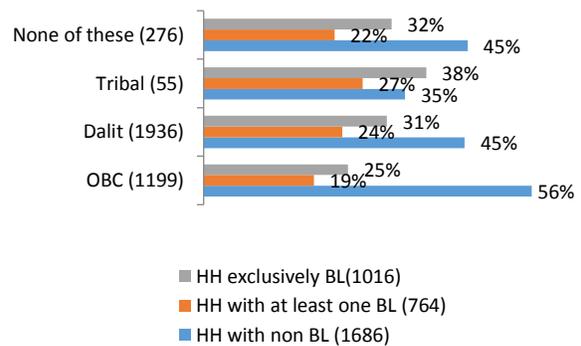


Chart 13: Disaggregation of bonded labour by social groups



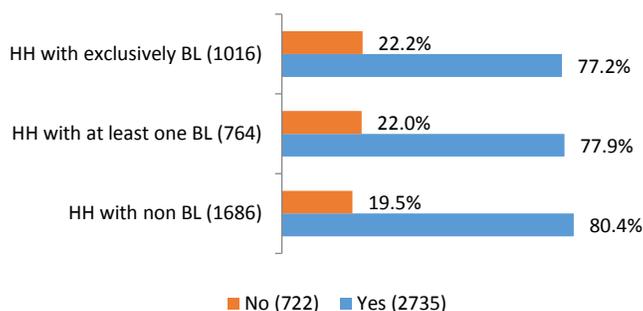
The pattern of population distribution is in keeping with the assumptions that the study made, i.e. that the population in NGO intervention areas predominantly belongs to the Dalit social category, followed closely by OBCs. Respondents from tribal areas are low in number, as expected.

2.3.2 Economic status of households

In order to understand the economic status of households, five parameters were used: (1) ownership of land on which they live; (2) ownership of any cultivable land; (3) access to livelihood through MGNREGA¹³; (4) bank account holder living in the household; and (5) membership of a self-help group. The underlying assumption to be tested was that a viable economic status would mean a smaller number of working individuals per household in bonded labour.

Ownership of homestead land and cultivable land¹⁴ indicates that the family is economically better off; access to a livelihood and linked payments from the MGNREGA scheme indicates that the family has at least one household member guaranteed a hundred days of minimum wage, therefore being 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 patterns of bonded labour in each of these sets of categories.

Chart 14: Disaggregation of bonded labour by house lease ownership



Of the 3,457 households for which a response was recorded to the question about owning or possessing a secure lease for the land on which they lived, 79.1% owned the land on which they lived and 20.9% did not. The prevalence of bonded labour based on lease ownership is shown in Chart 14. The nature of bonded labour (at least one slave versus exclusively bonded labour), does not seem to have a significant bearing on the ownership status of the lease of the land on which the house is built, which runs contrary to assumptions of homestead land ownership and bonded labour.

¹³ The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, an act passed in 2005, guarantees one hundred days of wage-employment in a year to a rural household.

¹⁴ Respondents know if they own the homestead land that their house has been built on and the cultivable land around it. They have documents for these. These rights to the homestead land and cultivable can be transferred if the person dies.

The respondents were asked to share the land ownership¹⁵ status of the households. Charts 15 and 16 detail the distribution of households across the various categories as well as the status of bonded labour among them.

Chart 15: Disaggregation of HH based on land ownership

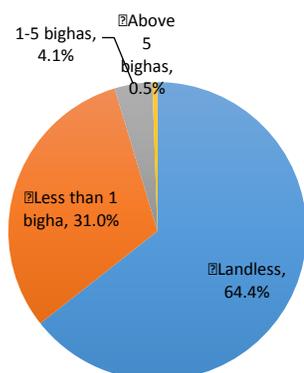
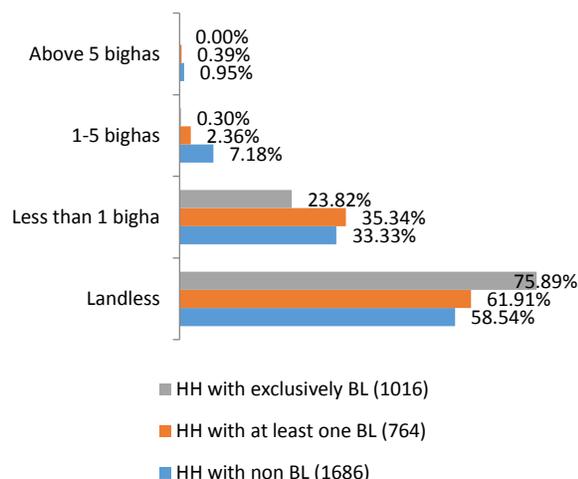


Chart 16: Disaggregation of bonded labour by land ownership



The data show a link between land ownership status and bonded labour. Of the households exclusively in bonded labour, 75.9% are landless. In comparison, of the households with at least one person in bonded labour, fewer of them (61.9%) are landless. As the size of the land holding increases, the prevalence of bonded labour in those households' decreases. Only 19 households reported land ownership of above 5 *bighas* and, of these, 16 had no form of bonded labour and three had at least one person in some form of bonded labour. It is interesting to note that in the case of ownership of homestead land, in Bihar 78% of households owned a secure lease for the land on which they lived, while in UP it was 80%.

An exploration of status of bonded labour linked with possession and use of an MGNREGA card was also explored. Charts 17 and 18 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.

Chart 17: Disaggregation of HH by possession of MGNREGA Card

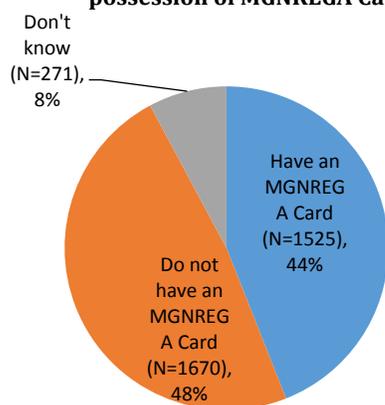
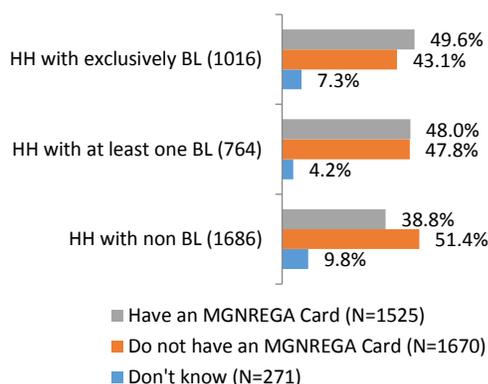


Chart 18: Disaggregation of bonded labour by possession of MGNREGA Card

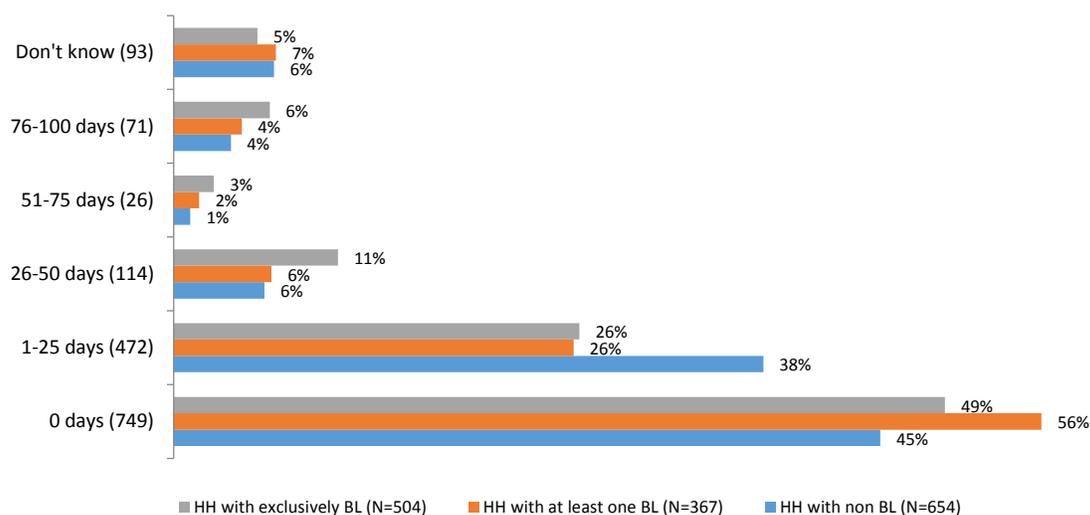


¹⁵ Land ownership has been measured in *bighas*. One *bigha* is roughly 2,500 square metres or 0.25 hectares.

While a household may have an MGNREGA card and receive one hundred days of employment, the question focused on receipt of payment for a number of days worked. This was emphasised because the scheme is fraught with corruption in many places, with payments not reaching those who have worked.

Chart 19 shows the linkage between payment through MGNREGA and bonded labour. As anticipated, as the number of days worked increases, the incidence of bonded labour decreases.

Chart 19: Disaggregation of bonded labour with MGNREGA Card by number of days worked



Charts 20 and 21 below show the status of bonded labour linked with an individual in the household having access to a bank account and membership of a self-help group, respectively.

Chart 20: Disaggregation of bonded labour based on whether HH has SHG membership

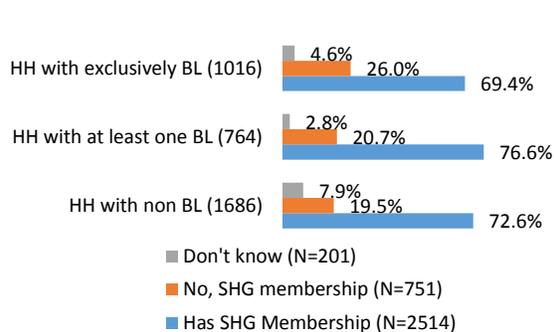
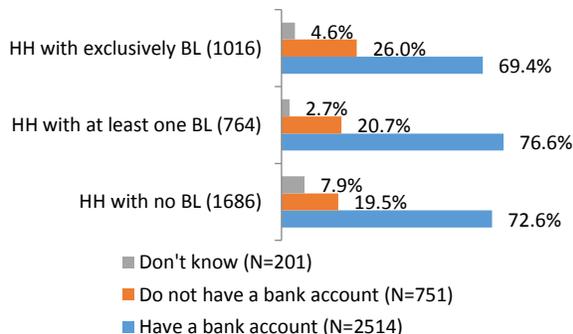


Chart 21: Disaggregation of bonded labour based on whether HH has bank account



Access to a bank account and membership of a self-help group do not have any significant association with the status of bonded labour. People with at least one member in bonded labour had more bank accounts than people with no members in bonded labour.

2.3.3 Access to healthcare

The life-story analysis conducted with communities prior to this baseline study showed a strong linkage between bonded labour and loans. Health expenditure was reported to be a major reason for taking out loans. Our findings showed that lack of access to healthcare is a major issue for all residents in the intervention areas. Only 13% of households with at least one person in bonded labour, 16% of households with all workers in bonded labour, and 17% of households without bonded labour had access to a health facility close by without facing discrimination based on their social category or status (Chart 22).

Chart 22: Disaggregation of bonded labour based on whether HH has access to health centre

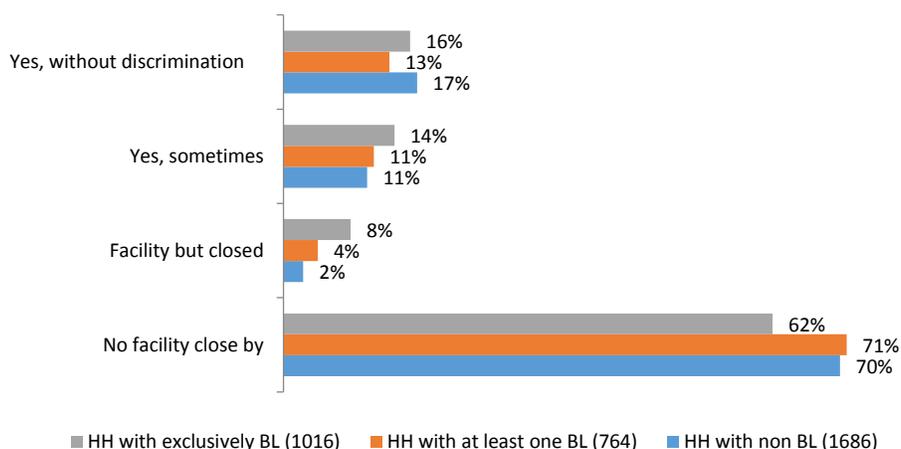
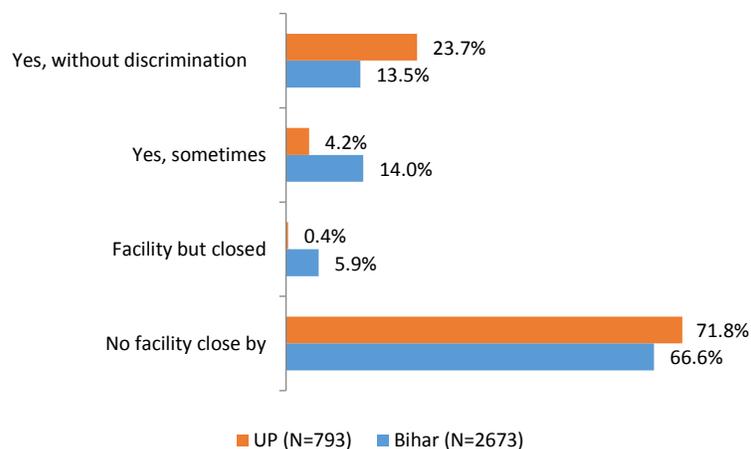


Chart 22A: Disaggregation of respondents by access to health centre and state

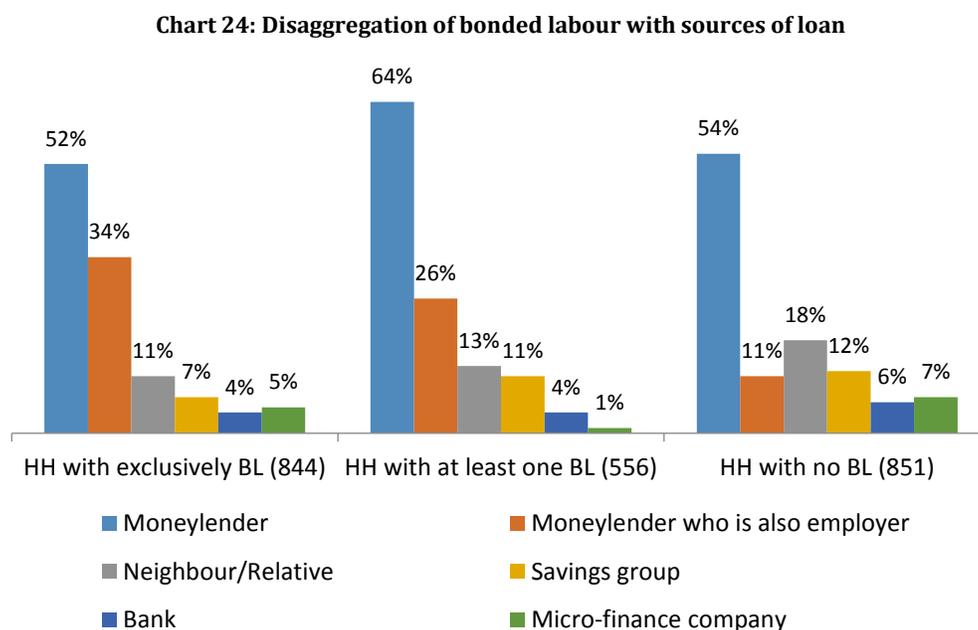


Access to healthcare in the intervention areas is slightly better in UP than in Bihar.

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.

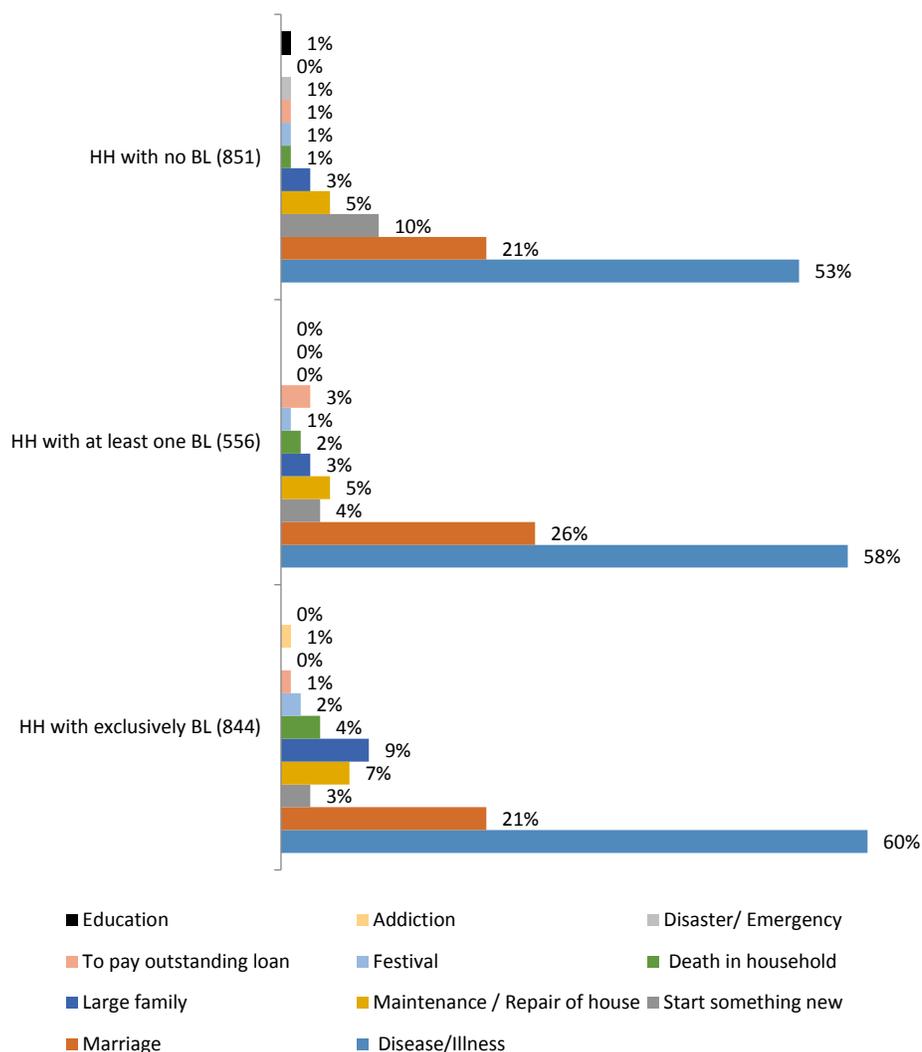
Chart 24 details the status of bonded labour and loans. A significantly higher number of households with members involved in bonded labour reported taking a loan as compared to the other households. For example, 86.2% of the households with all workers in bonded labour had loans. The corresponding percentage for households with at least one person in bonded labour is 74.3%.



The sources of the loans tended to be wide-ranging and people often borrowed from multiple sources.

Chart 24 shows that the pattern of borrowing seemed to be similar across those households that had no one in bonded labour, those who had at least one, and those where all workers were in bonded labour. The average percentages of borrowing from various sources across these categories can be seen in Chart 25. The moneylender was named as the major source for borrowing money by all households. One-third of the households where all workers are in bonded labour borrowed from a moneylender who was also the employer. Institutions such as banks, micro-finance institutions and savings groups and neighbours were more significant sources of loans for households that had no one in bonded labour than for the households affected by bonded labour.

Chart 25: Disaggregation of bonded with loans based on reasons for loan



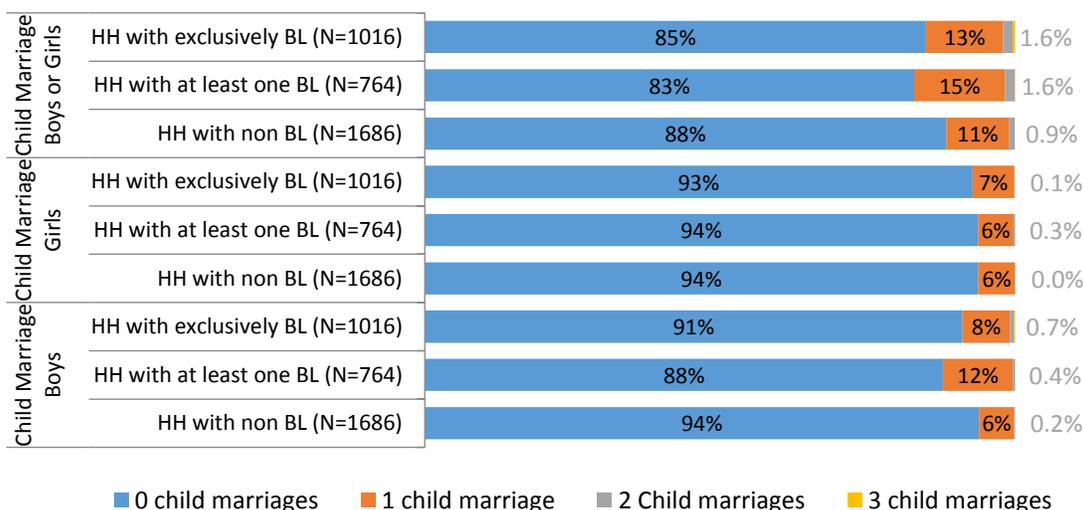
The major reasons for the loans are detailed in Chart 25. Here too, by far the major reason for loans reported by all categories was disease/illness, followed by marriage. This is a very significant finding especially when taking into account that bonded labourers are more likely to take loans from money lenders and employers at high interest rates.

Ten percent of the households that did not have people in bonded labour took loans for entrepreneurship ('to start something new') as compared to 3% and 4% of households that had either one person or all workers in bonded labour. No families with one or all members in bonded labour took loans for the purpose of education or because of natural disasters, and 1% of these households took loans because of addictions.

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 here defined as marital union below the legal age of marriage in India (18 years for girls, 21 years for boys). Chart 26 details the incidence of early marriage (by 0, 1, 2 or 3 cases in a household) in households with different bonded labour statuses.

Chart 26: Disaggregation of bonded labour status and child marriage



As shown in Table 4, the prevalence of early marriage of girls in the household in the last three years does not vary much between the groups. However, marriage among boys under 21 years is more frequent among households with at least one person in bonded labour in comparison to other groups.

Table 4: Prevalence of early marriage

	Child marriage among boys		Child marriage among girls		Any child marriage	
	No. of HHs	No. of marriages	No. of HHs	No. of marriages	No. of HHs	No. of marriages
HH with exclusively BL (N=1016)	90	101	73	76	153	177
HH with at least one BL (N=764)	93	96	48	50	131	145
HH with no BL (N=1686)	103	107	106	106	197	213
Total (3466)	286	304	227	232	481	535

The table shows that 13.9% of households reported early marriage overall, with a slightly higher proportion of incidence recorded among the households with at least one person in bonded labour (17.1%), compared to households with exclusively bonded labours (15.1%) and households with no bonded labour (11.7%), with the differences found to be statistically significant at $p < .05$. The proportion of early marriage among girls is higher than that among the boys.

Note that the legal age of marriage is 21 years for boys and 18 years for girls. Early marriage by status of bonded labour shows that households with at least one bonded labourer recorded relatively higher numbers (17.1%) of early marriages as compared to their counterparts, households having exclusively bonded labours (15%) and households with no bonded labours (11.6%).

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 in 82 hamlets. Discussions did not take place in hamlets where there were no or very few cases of bonded labour found. Facilitators asked the four questions below, observed the interactions and made sure that every participant was given a chance to speak.

1. In your opinion, what happens to people who want to come out of bonded labour?
2. If anyone has managed to escape from bonded labour, who helped them?
3. Who does the community approach to help people in bonded labour?
4. What do you feel will help prevent bonded labour? Please prioritise them.

Many residents of these hamlets are living in fear. They report that that people who express that they want to come out of bondage will face physical, emotional and verbal violence by landlords. They will be socially ostracised and pushed deeper into poverty by the money lenders with higher interest rates. A small group of people in less than half of the hamlets (32 hamlets) had tried and managed to come out of bondage, mostly with the help of NGOs. In contrast, respondents mentioned that they would approach various authorities – traditional and state authorities – in order to get out. They also emphasised the importance of raising awareness in the community about modern bondage as the main pathway to ending it. Although there is mention of self-help groups who, in addition to thrift and savings groups, often also play many additional community roles, their role is minor compared to those of the NGO. Education and access to banking or livelihoods received remarkably little attention by comparison. It would be quite useful to present these results to communities living with bondage to have a discussion about the programme's current priorities and focus.

3 Conclusions and recommendations

The aim of the study was to estimate the prevalence of bonded labour in intervention communities of the Freedom Fund hotspot in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, as well as access to health services and the reasons for taking out loans.

Within the sample of 3,466 households, most households have a member in bonded labour. Among the 51% of the families that had people in bonded labour, 29% had all of the working family members in bonded labour and 22% had at least one enslaved family member. The interventions are clearly in the right spot.

- There are huge geographic variations within our sample: in some intervention areas, the vast majority of households have some form of bonded labour (>95%), while in others the rate is less than 10%.
- Within the intervention communities, the prevalence rate of households with at least one member in bonded labour was 53.0%. With a standard deviation of 0.4991032, and a desired confidence level of 90%, the corresponding confidence interval is ± 0.014 , meaning that we can be 90% confident that the true population mean falls within the range of 51.72 to 54.51%.
- Among the total number of 3,366 bonded labourers in 3,466 households, 568 are bonded labourers aged below 18 years and 467 of these are boys. Most of the boys who are involved in bonded labour work outside the village. Adults in bonded labour work more often inside the village.
- Caste, gender, age, access to MGNREGA benefits, and loan-taking are the key factors at the individual and household level that relate to bonded labour in this hotspot. Within the hotspot as a whole there are different economic activities but there are few economic opportunities currently available that do not involve some form of bondage.
- With regard to social status, most people in the intervention areas belonged to the Dalit (or Scheduled Caste) social category, followed closely by Other Backward Classes (OBC). The data show a link between status of land ownership and bonded labour. Of the households exclusively in bonded labour, 75.9% of them are landless. In comparison, of the households with at least one person in bonded labour, fewer of them (61.9%) are landless.
- As the size of the land holding increases, the prevalence of bonded labour in those households decreases. Within the intervention communities in both states, most people have a stable lease for the house they live in.
- Health expenses are the main reason for taking out a loan among all households in the intervention areas, but this impacts on bonded labourers more significantly because a higher proportion of those bonded labourers take high interest loans from middlemen or employers.
- With regard to MGNREGA: As payments for the number of days worked received increases, the incidence of bonded labour decreases slightly.
- Access to a bank account does not have any significant impact on the status of bonded labour.

In terms of the programme:

- The NGOs are working in areas where bonded labour is highly prevalent. As such, interventions to eradicate bonded labour are well-located.
- As a next step, NGOs should explore the 'why' questions behind some of the data found in the current study – especially the fear and lack of agency expressed through the post-survey results - and use it to inform their programme to make mid-course correction, and develop activities that can be led by the community themselves to increase their confidence and programme sustainability.
- Health issues lead to people taking high-interest loans which in some families lead to bonded labour or the perpetuation of bondage. Health is central to the whole programme and needs much greater attention. More information is needed about these health problems and for what and where people take out loans. Perhaps some of the health problems can be prevented. Action research can help to understand some of these patterns, and pilot remedial actions and responses.
- As there are few employment opportunities available to the people in the hotspot that do not involve bonded labour, improving access to paid work through MGNREGA is important.
- The uptake and dissemination activities relating to this study needs to ensure that the results of this study are shared with the field staff who worked on the data collection so that they can continue the discussions at the field level –including holding further discussions with the participants of the survey.

Annex 1: Praxis spot-check report

REPORT

Spot-checks for Prevalence Study in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh

*Submitted by Praxis
February 2016*

Background

A study to determine baseline prevalence of bonded labour and trafficking in Tamil Nadu was 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 likelihood of reliability of answers and consistency of use of survey questions and criteria.

Sample

The first step was to generate the sample for the spot-checks. Spot-checks were to be done in 1% of the total of around 3500 households, i.e. 36 households. Six organisations were randomly selected of the 14 organisations, using the random function on Microsoft Excel. In each of the six organisations, data for six households was to be collected from one location per organisation. The locations were those where data had already been collected. The locations and households were selected randomly. In certain locations, data for less than six households was collected owing to the unavailability of community members. In other locations, data was collected for more than six households. The number of households for which data was collected is presented in the table below:

Sl. No.	Organisation	State	No. of households
1	MSEMVS	Uttar Pradesh	6
2	Aangan	Uttar Pradesh	3
3	TSN	Bihar	9
4	Nirdesh	Bihar	9
5	IDEA	Bihar	9
6	FSS	Bihar	9
Total			45

Spot-check results

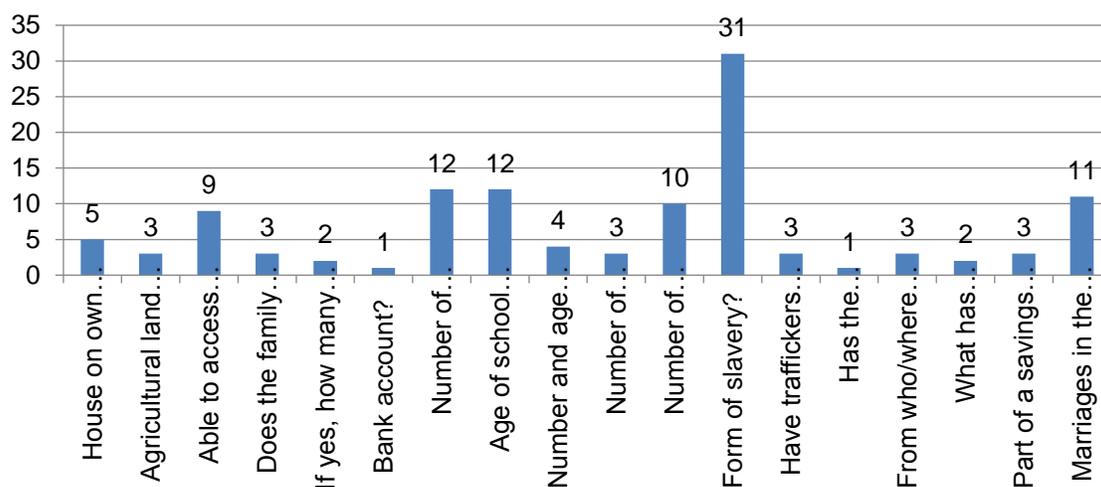
The 17-question schedules were redone with respondents from 45 households. Below are tables and graphs that present the number of households (of 45 households) that had a different response from when the data was earlier collected. The table also provides for explanation in cases where the variance is more than 10%.

*Participatory statistics to measure prevalence in bonded labour hotspots in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar:
Report of preliminary findings of the baseline study*

		Number of households with variation in responses	Percentage of households with variation in responses	Reason for variance
1	House on own land?	5	11	Question not explained in detail.
2	Agricultural land ownership?	3	7	
3	Able to access healthcare?	9	20	Respondents were unable to understand the codes.
4a)	Does the family have a National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) card? (This 2005 act was renamed as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act).	3	7	
4b)	If yes, how many days of pay did the person get in the last one year?	2	4	
5	Bank account?	1	2	
6	Number of family members in this house?	12	27	The respondents at the spot-checks were women and in most cases the respondents to the original schedule were men. The men were not aware of the actual number of members in the neighbouring families.
7	Age of school-going children?	12	27	The respondents at the spot-checks were women and in most cases the respondents to the original schedule were men. The men were not aware of the actual number of school-going children in the neighbouring households.
8	Number and age at which they dropped out?	4	9	
9	Number of children between age 5-14 who never attended school?	3	7	
10	Number of working family members?	10	22	Not certain of the reason.
11	Form of bonded labour? (1) bonded labour of adults within the village; (2) bonded or trafficked adult labour outside the village; (3) bonded child labour within the village; and (4)	31	69	There was an issue with the way the question was facilitated, as most facilitators were not sure of how the data had to be recorded. Most respondents did not indicate the code for

	bonded or trafficked child labour outside the village.			bonded labour against the working members in the family and thus higher instances of variation for the question.
12	Have traffickers visited in the last one year?	3	7	
13	Has the household taken a loan?	1	2	
14	From who/where was loan taken?	3	7	
15	What has triggered loans in these houses?	2	4	
16	Part of a savings group?	3	7	
17	Marriages in the family in the last three years. Give the ages of members at the time of marriage.	11	24	The question was not facilitated correctly.

**Number of households with variation in responses
(n=45)**



Annex 2: Hamlet Level Discussions on the Survey Results

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 in 82 hamlets. Discussions did not take place in hamlets where there was no or very few cases of bonded labour found. Facilitators asked the four questions below, observed the interactions and made sure that every participant was given a chance to speak.

1. In your opinion what happens to people who want to come out of bonded labour?
2. If anyone has managed to escape from bonded labour who helped them?
3. Who does the community approach to help people in bonded labour?
4. What do you feel will help prevent bonded labour? Please prioritise them.

Many residents of these hamlets are living in fear. They report that that people who express that they want to come out of bondage will face physical, emotional and verbal violence by landlords. They will be socially ostracised and pushed deeper into poverty by the money lenders with higher interest rates. A small group of people in less than half of the hamlets (32 hamlets) tried and managed to come out, mostly with the help of NGO's. In contrast respondents mentioned that they would approach various authorities, traditional and state authorities- in order to get out. They also emphasised the importance of raising awareness in the community about modern bondage as the main pathway to ending it. Although there is mentioning of self-help groups who in addition to thrift and savings groups often also play many additional community roles, their role is minor compared to those of the NGO or otherwise externally initiated. Education, access to banking or livelihoods received remarkably little attention by comparison. It would be quite useful to present these results to communities living with bondage to have a discussion about the programme's current priorities and focus.

Table 1: In your opinion, what happens to people who want to come out of bonded labour?	N	%
Physical and/or emotional violence and intimidation	65	30.52%
Abusive language/ verbal abuse by employer	29	13.62%
Higher poverty and indebtedness	25	11.74%
Restrained from leaving room/ Workspace	20	9.39%
Wage cut	15	7.04%
Forced to do more work for less pay	14	6.57%
Rendered homeless or landless	12	5.63%
False lawsuit/ falsely implicated in criminal cases	8	3.76%
Middleman linked violence	6	2.82%
Disallowed from working with other employers	6	2.82%
Discrimination and ill treatment of people	6	2.82%
Not being fed/ starved	3	1.41%
Family members made to work instead	2	0.94%
No social support and lack of faith in family and community to sustain a person after escaping	1	0.47%
Social isolation, not being allowed to talk to anyone	1	0.47%

NB: 213 is multiple answers

List of responses given above shows that restriction on movement, physical violence and demanding them to repay the loan in shorter duration with interest are often meted out by the employer when they want to come out of bonded labour.

Table 2: If anyone has managed to escape from bonded labour, who helped them?	N	%
Through NGO working in the village	14	22.22%
CVC	10	15.87%
Self	7	11.11%
Family and relatives	6	9.52%
Migration registration and information centre	5	7.94%
Police	5	7.94%
Legal Help (advice centre, through District magistrate etc.)	4	6.35%
Officials	2	3.17%
Women's development committee	2	3.17%
People in the community	2	3.17%
Self-help groups (thrift and saving society)	1	1.59%
Task force committee	1	1.59%
ChildLine	1	1.59%
Village headman	1	1.59%
Non formal education centres	1	1.59%
Child protection committee	1	1.59%

NB: 65 is multiple answers

Only 32 hamlets reported that a person escaped from bonded labour. Those who did escape mostly did so with the help of a local NGO, the CVC, family or found their own way out.

Table 3: Who does the community approach to help people in bonded labour?	N	%
Panchayat representative	49	25.52%
Local police	33	17.19%
Local NGO	32	16.67%
Community vigilance committees (CVC)	19	9.90%
District level functionaries	8	4.17%
Anti-human trafficking unit	7	3.65%
Labour department functionaries	7	3.65%
Legal representative	6	3.13%
Ward level representative	6	3.13%
Block level representatives	5	2.60%
Local community	5	2.60%
Self	4	2.08%
Contractors, money lenders or powerful people	3	1.56%
Self-help groups (thrift and saving society)	3	1.56%
MGNREGA representative	2	1.04%
Women's development committee	1	0.52%
Child protection committee	1	0.52%
People outside the village	1	0.52%

NB: 192 is multiple answers

Although local village heads (*Mukhiya*) played a very minor role in the known escapes, they are mentioned most often as the person communities approached to ask for assistance, followed by the police, government officials, NGO and CVC. This could suggest an awareness that these authorities should help them, a consciousness of their rights as citizens but also a disconnection with the current ability or willingness of the authorities to do so in practice.

Table 4: What do you feel will help prevent bonded labour? Please prioritise them	N	%
Community awareness programmes (including legal literacy)	37	21.64%
Community based mechanisms like CBOs, CVCs and community monitoring	25	14.62%
Innovative communication - radio, movies, street theatre.	24	14.04%
NGO programme	19	11.11%
Strengthen PRIs, police and other local officials	17	9.94%
Self-help groups (thrift and saving society) S	16	9.36%
Educational facilities - formal and non-formal	9	5.26%
Bank linkages and internet banking	8	4.68%
Livelihoods opportunities and skill building for employability	7	4.09%
Anti-human trafficking unit	5	2.92%
Adolescent girls groups	2	1.17%
Government scheme	2	1.17%

NB: 171 is multiple answers