



## India's Slavery Hot Spot

Communities in the state of Uttar Pradesh are home to some of the most economically disenfranchised and vulnerable populations in India. Community members are employed in local agriculture, carpet and brick industries -- widely recognized hubs for exploitative and abusive labor conditions. Victims of forced and bonded labor have their freedom denied and are used, controlled or exploited by another person for profit.

## Free the Slaves Strategy & Activities

[Free the Slaves has partnered with the Indian organization MSEMVS for more than a decade, collaborating in the creation and implementation of community-based anti-slavery interventions.]

- The organization has worked in communities with high levels of exploitation through a community empowerment approach that enables community groups to identify their own key priorities. MSEMVS helps these groups achieve sustainable gains in their organizing capacity by developing education opportunities, generating alternative labor training in new skill sets, increasing an understanding of legal rights and available legal support, and linking these groups together to achieve broader changes.
- A core component of MSEMVS work is to help residents establish community vigilance committees. This strategy is described by MSEMVS as a process through which groups of formerly bonded or forced laborers secure their freedom from oppressive employers or landlords by exercising collective power and by pressuring the local authority to enforce labor protection laws and socio-economic entitlements.
- MSEMVS's strategy focuses on building a movement among exploited community members to leverage the power and impact of collective action.

## Results & Impact

- MSEMVS intervention has resulted in the rescue from situations of bondage or forced labor of approximately 65 men, women and children every month, and in the provision of follow-up reintegration support to facilitate adaptation to and security within the community.
- MSEMVS had a demonstrable, positive impact on other critical aspects of the targeted communities' circumstances, reducing indebtedness and threats of violence, improving wage levels and generating a sense of collective efficacy. The intervention also had a strong effect on food security, access to medical care, civic participation and take up of government programs.

Excerpted from March 2016 [independent evaluation](#) of MSEMVS conducted by Harvard University's FXB Center for Health & Human Rights