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## A Growing Concern: Modern Slavery and Agricultural Production in Brazil and South Asia

Justin Campbell

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## **A Growing Concern: Modern Slavery and Agricultural Production in Brazil and South Asia**

### **Abstract**

The modern use of slave labor in the production of agriculture takes many forms. In Brazil, the ability of powerful landowners to repress poor workers is an important element of large-scale agricultural production. In South Asia, cultural norms and traditions are used to exploit the most vulnerable communities. In both examples, inequity and poverty are implicit, and debt is a tool used to legitimize bondage.

### **Keywords**

Human rights, Slavery, Contemporary slavery, Agriculture, Brazil, South Asia

## A Growing Concern: Modern Slavery and Agricultural Production in Brazil and South Asia

By Justin Campbell

The modern use of slave labor in the production of agriculture takes many forms. In Brazil, the ability of powerful landowners to repress poor workers is an important element of large-scale agricultural production. In South Asia, cultural norms and traditions are used to exploit the most vulnerable communities. In both examples, inequity and poverty are implicit, and debt is a tool used to legitimize bondage.

Estimates of the number of slaves in Brazil today, virtually all of whom are involved in agricultural work, range from 25,000 to 100,000. This broad range of figures underscores the difficulty of accurately assessing, much less eradicating, the practice of slavery. Several factors contribute to this difficulty, making slavery a deeply entrenched facet of agricultural production in the country.

In Brazil, slave labor is typically utilized to harvest sugarcane and to clear vast amounts of land for raising cattle and for providing access to valuable timber. The importance of these products to the Brazilian economy is a factor that makes the agricultural sector prone to using slavery. Brazil is the world's largest exporter of sugar; an agricultural model of monoculture for export has influenced the expansion of large sugarcane plantations in frontier areas, simultaneously creating work and limiting other options available to the local population. Similarly, vast cattle ranches and logging operations are continually expanding in rural parts of the country, creating the need for a large workforce to clear land while displacing rural communities.

Corruption is a related facet of agricultural production in Brazil that frustrates efforts to eradicate slavery. This is perhaps inevitable in a country where the richest 10 percent of the population controls more than half of the wealth and almost all of the land. Generally, the Brazilian judicial system is more sympathetic to wealthy landowners who have political clout than to impoverished workers; several sources provide evidence that slaves have been discovered on the estates of prominent national figures, including a secretary of agriculture. Furthermore, these landowners are able to escape responsibility by using contractors to operate their estates and by feigning ignorance of how workers are treated on their land. As one Brazilian explains, "In the hinterland, the landowner is king."

Perhaps the most elemental factor perpetuating the use of slave labor in Brazil is the geography of the country itself. Most slaves work on estates in the extremely remote eastern Amazon region; in the fifth largest country in the world, the atrocities associated with slavery occur well out of view of most of the population. Landowners thus feel little restraint in how they treat their workers. In addition, the remoteness of these areas provides a convenient deterrent to escape.

These basic factors make it possible for landowners to utilize a system of debt, deceit, coercion, and violence to maintain their workforces. Enslavement typically begins with a hired contractor, known as a *gato*, who recruits impoverished men from the slums of large cities or poor, rural villages. By offering cash up front and the promise of decent wages, he is able to entice these men to leave their homes for work on a distant estate. The men are then driven hundreds or thousands of miles to a remote ranch or plantation, where they are informed that they are in debt for the costs of

transportation, food provided on the trip, and even tools. The debts are never erased; the illiterate workers have little recourse, and are thus enslaved.

The use of violence is a common aspect of slavery in Brazil, where slaves typically toil under the gaze of armed guards. Human rights groups have documented the murders of more than 1,200 slaves in Brazil; many more likely murders have been officially labeled as farming accidents. In these lawless regions, even government investigators and human rights advocates who attempt to interfere are targets of violence.

Despite the seemingly intractable nature of slave labor in Brazil, the government has been praised by the international community in recent years for its efforts to eliminate the practice. In 2003, the new president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva unveiled the “National Plan for the Eradication of Slavery,” which is an ambitious plan that involves harsher penalties for slaveholders and offers improved organization of relevant government agencies. The crux of the plan was providing increased funding for mobile inspection units.

The mobile inspection units are a unique aspect of Brazil’s fight against slavery. These heavily armed squads are charged with the difficult and dangerous task of investigating claims of slave labor in the otherwise lawless countryside. Between 2003 and 2005, the squads were instrumental in freeing almost 7,000 slaves. Kevin Bales, president of Free the Slaves, cited Brazil’s use of these mobile squads as an example that should be emulated by other countries where modern slavery persists.

At the very least, Lula da Silva and his mobile squads represent a uniquely pro-active approach to the problem of modern slavery. Nevertheless, they face an uphill battle; for landowners, the benefits of using slave labor often outweigh the possible costs, and the practice remains a firmly entrenched element of agricultural production in Brazil.

It is important to note that the case of Brazil is only one example of the use of slave labor within agricultural production. The largest numbers of enslaved peoples worldwide are in South Asia, and are toiling in debt-bondage in a number of industries, including agriculture. As in Brazil, landlords in rural, agrarian communities in South Asia use debt to exploit the poor as a cheap source of labor. Whereas slaves clearing jungle at the edge of the Amazon represent an important cog in the economic machinery of export-minded Brazil, laborers bonded by debt in Nepal and Pakistan reflect a system of exploitation deeply rooted in tradition and culture.

The tradition of the Hindu caste system is an important factor in the perpetuation of bonded labor in South Asia. The vast majority of people working in a condition of debt bondage in the region are Dalits and members of indigenous communities. These groups are typically illiterate, live in abject poverty, and have historically been subject to systematic discrimination in all facets of social life. The caste system creates a social hierarchy within which any deviation on the part of an individual or group will incur punishment from the other groups, making it a self-perpetuating element of Hindu culture.

One important element of the caste system is the concept of *begar*, or the requirement of Dalits to provide service without payment. Traditionally, this entailed undertaking the most undesirable jobs as a contribution to the community, a category that includes agricultural work. As a cultural norm, *begar* has endured into modern times, and is often exploited by landowners as a means of sanctioning a system of debt bondage.

The fact that Dalits are typically landless means that they are oftentimes entirely dependent upon their landlords economically. This is particularly true of the indigenous Tharu communities in western Nepal, where most of that country's rice is grown. Within the exploitative debt labor system known as *Kamaiya*, Tharu families depend upon their landlords for even the most basic food and shelter.

Their position at the bottom of the caste system and their complete economic dependence upon landowners make Dalits particularly prone to exploitation. Often they are forced to accept loans from their employers to survive and to meet social obligations associated with death and marriage. These loans are designed to be impossible to pay back, and because Dalits are traditionally denied education, they are left with little recourse but to accept the loans and become indebted to their landlords. Just as one's position in the caste social hierarchy is inherited, so debts are passed from one generation to the next.

Debt bondage in South Asia is implemented with varying degrees of subtlety and coercion. In the Sindh Province in Pakistan, agricultural workers and sharecroppers, most of whom are from indigenous Indian communities, often work under constant watch from guards, and are kept locked up at night. Human rights groups have also documented cases of murder, rape, and assault of these workers. In other areas, a complete lack of options is sufficient to keep workers bonded to their employers.

The International Labor Organization (ILO) is exploring the concept of microfinance lending as a way to provide poor communities in South Asia with alternative options. Microfinance programs are designed to give poor laborers access to appropriate financial services. By gaining access to group-based savings and credit services, communities vulnerable to debt bondage are empowered to build assets and diversify sources of income, and are thus less dependent upon landlords.

Unlike that of Brazil, governments in South Asia have been reluctant to address the issue of slavery within their borders. Although the practice has been formally outlawed in most countries in the region, substantial government efforts to actually address the underlying causes of debt bondage, namely cultural norms and abject poverty, have been slow to materialize. Microfinance projects may prove in time to be an effective strategy, but like the mobile squads in Brazil, these efforts represent only a small first step in what will have to be a sustained campaign to eradicate slavery from the process of agricultural production.

### **Annotated Bibliography**

Alexandroni, Sam. 2007. "Cry for the People Trade." *New Statesman* 137 (4858): 17-18.

Annotation: Marking the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade in the British Empire, the author emphasizes the need for increased awareness of modern forms of slavery. The brief article provides a short list of examples of modern slavery: bonded labor in Pakistan, coercion and violence on ranches and plantations in Brazil, trafficking of persons in Haiti and the Dominican Republic to work on sugar cane plantations, and household slaves in Mauritania. The article argues for the necessity of a new abolitionist movement, explaining that slavery is oftentimes overlooked because it does not pose a direct economic or security threat. The article

is clear and concise, but offers little in the way of details or possible avenues for further exploration of the issue.

Anti-Slavery International. 2001. "The Enslavement of Dalit and Indigenous Communities in India, Nepal and Pakistan through Debt Bondage." (February).  
<http://www.antislavery.org/homepage/resources/PDF/PDFbondedlabour.htm>

Annotation: This report addresses how the caste system in South Asia keeps certain members of society trapped in debt bondage. It briefly outlines the existing laws in India, Nepal, and Pakistan that are relevant to debt bondage, and explains why the condition continues to exist. The debate over the actual statistics for debt bondage in the region is discussed, and the report presents a list of recommendations for the three national governments.

Bales, Kevin. 1999. *Disposable People*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Annotation: Bales provides an authoritative overview of modern slavery, explaining how and why twenty-seven million people are enslaved throughout the world. Through case studies that focus on prostitution in Thailand, water delivery in Mauritania, brick making in Pakistan, bonded agricultural labor in India, and charcoal production in Brazil, Bales explores the modern manifestations of slavery in accessible and lively prose.

\_\_\_\_\_. 2000. "Expendable People: Slavery in the Age of Globalization." *Journal of International Affairs* 53(2): 461.

Annotation: Bales contrasts historical understandings of slavery with its modern forms. Slavery has adapted to changing legal, economic, and social conditions, becoming less visible yet more widespread. Whereas slaves were once regarded as property, in the modern world slaves have become disposable commodities. Bales makes this idea explicit with detailed examples from Mauritania and Sudan. He also provides a succinct, useful comparison of three broad forms of modern slavery: chattel slavery, debt bondage, and contract slavery.

\_\_\_\_\_. 2002. "The Social Psychology of Modern Slavery." *Scientific American* 286(4): 80.

Annotation: This article focuses primarily on the issue of debt bondage, by which unfair loans keep workers perpetually bonded to their employers. This aspect of modern slavery is discussed in conjunction with the ways in which psychological manipulation is also used to perpetuate modern forms of slavery. The author clearly demonstrates that slavery is not only persisting, but is in fact increasing in the modern world. The role of organized crime in human trafficking is explored as an example of the ways in which modern slavery continues to evolve and grow.

BBC News. 2007. "Slave' Labourers Freed in Brazil." *BBC News* (July 3).  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/6266712.stm>

Annotation: This news report describes a raid in Brazil that freed more than one thousand laborers from inhumane conditions on a sugar cane plantation in the Amazon in July of 2007. The article explains the ways in which rural farmers in Brazil are held in debt slavery and are forced to work far from their homes while living in conditions described as "appalling." This article explains how slavery remains widespread in Brazil, particularly within the sugar cane industry.

Banaji, Jairus. 2003. "The Fictions of Free Labour: Contract, Coercion, and So-Called Unfree Labour." *Historical Materialism* 11(3): 69-95.

Annotation: Banaji provides a theoretical assessment of the concept of contractual labor, arguing that there is little distinction between free and unfree labor within a capitalist system. The author refers mainly to a dichotomy between free and unfree labor in order to demonstrate that free labor is a construct of liberal ideology. Ultimately, according to this view, all wage labor is subject to coercion and bondage in varying degrees of subtlety. The only freedom any worker has is his or her capacity for resistance. Banaji does not clearly express the implications of this worldview for the issue of modern slavery, but the article's emphasis on the blurry distinction between free and unfree labor is a useful tool for determining which circumstances actually constitute slavery.

Belser, Patrick. 2007. "Building a Global Alliance against Forced Labour." *Global Social Policy* 7(1): 17-20.

Annotation: This article addresses the International Labor Organization's (ILO) plans for a "Global Alliance Against Forced Labor." It is a comprehensive source for statistics drawn from the ILO on the scope of modern forced labor. The article also describes the nature of forced labor and provides examples of where it is prevalent. The information is presented as evidence of the need for policy reform, at both national and global levels, in order to better address the issue of forced labor.

Bhukuth, Augendra. 2005. "Child Labour and Debt Bondage: A Case Study of Brick Kiln Workers in Southeast India." *Journal of Asian & African Studies* 40(4): 287-302.

Annotation: This article addresses of child labor in the brick kiln industry in India. Drawing on surveys conducted in Tamil Nadu, India, the author identifies reasons why children are exploited in the brick kiln industry. This is done within the context of existing analyses of the exploitation of children in the labor market in general. By also exploring many facets of the brick kiln industry in particular, the article concludes that although children are not employed directly, the industry is dependent upon child labor.

Caistor, Nick. 2005. "Brazil's 'Slave' Ranch Workers." *BBC News* (May 11).  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/4536085.stm>

Annotation: This BBC news story uses Brazilian President Inacio Lula da Silva's trip to Africa, where he apologized for historical slavery in Brazil, to draw attention to the nature of modern slavery as it persists in Brazil. The article succinctly but effectively describes the nature of the practice, and describes how workers become enslaved on large ranches and plantations in the Amazon region. There is a sense of optimism that the Brazilian President's dedication to the issue of slavery will bring about positive changes in the country.

Daru, Patrick, Craig Churchill, and Erik Beemsterboer. 2005. "The Prevention of Debt Bondage with Microfinance-led Services." *European Journal of Development Research* 17(1): 132-154.

Annotation: The article focuses on the use of microfinance-led strategies by the International Labor Organization (ILO) to prevent debt bondage amongst the poorest and most vulnerable populations in South Asia. By addressing the definitions, causes, and forms of bonded labor in the region, the authors provide a context for their assessment of the project; this portion of the article also serves as a succinct overview of bonded labor on its own. The tone is cautiously optimistic, as the authors express some hope that microfinance-led strategies can have a positive impact for bonded laborers in South Asia.

Davidson, Osha Gray, and Andre Lambertson. 2005. "In The Land Of Slavery." *Rolling Stone* (982): 74-80.

Annotation: This informative article describes the means used by landowners in Brazil to deceive workers into becoming slaves on vast cattle ranches and farms known as *fazendas*. It also describes the oftentimes-violent means used to keep workers enslaved. This information, as well as a description of government efforts to fight slavery in Brazil, is provided in the context of a narrative account of an uncommonly successful raid by a federal anti-slavery squad on a *fazenda* isolated deep in the country's rugged interior. The article is an excellent source of first hand information on the violent reality of modern slavery in Brazil.

Dodson, Howard. 2005. "Slavery in the Twenty-First Century." *UN Chronicle* 42(3): 28-29.

Annotation: Dodson contrasts modern slavery with the history of the transatlantic slave trade. His short article does not provide useful details, but the author does attempt to put the magnitude of modern slavery in a historical context in order to draw attention to the issue. Whereas the transatlantic slave trade was legal, unique to particular industries, and thus highly visible, modern slavery is illegal, occurs in many varied industries, and thus goes largely unnoticed. The author calls for a modern revival of the abolitionist movement that is focused on the principle of basic human equality.



Doyle, Rodger. 2006. "Modern Slavery." *Scientific American* 294(1): 30-30.

Annotation: This article describes the ILO's work in identifying the scope of forced labor, but focuses primarily on the aspect of sexual exploitation. Sex-oriented forced labor is discussed within the context of state-imposed exploitation, which Doyle claims represents 20 percent of cases of forced labor worldwide. The short article is a useful source for statistics related to forced labor and its role in the world economy.

Epstein, Jack. 1995. "Slavery Nags Brazil as it Moves Ahead." *Christian Science Monitor* 87(166): 1.

Annotation: The article records efforts made by the government and by other institutions to address the issue of modern slavery in Brazil in the 1990s. At a time when the issue was beginning to attract international attention, the Brazilian government began imposing stricter laws to try to curtail the practice of slave labor. Various human rights groups insist, however, that widespread corruption is a well-entrenched element of slavery in Brazil. The tone of the article is thus doubtful of the effectiveness the measures taken by the government to eradicate slavery.

Hall, Kevin G. 2004. "Slavery Exists Out of Sight in Brazil." *Knight Ridder Newspapers* (September 24). [http://www.mongabay.com/external/slavery\\_in\\_brazil.htm](http://www.mongabay.com/external/slavery_in_brazil.htm)

Annotation: This online news article uses interviews with former slaves in Brazil to describe how people in the Amazon region are manipulated into working as slaves. The article also addresses the living and working conditions that slaves endure. They are held captive by violence or the threat of violence; for instance, the workers interviewed by the author worked at gunpoint to clear the jungle. The article identifies two reasons for the persistence of slavery in Brazil. First, the ranches and plantations that most often use slave labor are typically located in extremely remote areas of the Amazon rainforest, where law enforcement and the threat of inspection are virtually nonexistent. Second, the use of slaves to clear land is the first step in the lucrative process of exporting a variety of products; the author suggests that to abolish the slave labor would be disruptive to this process.

Human Rights Watch-Asia. 1995. "Contemporary Forms of Slavery in Pakistan." *Human Rights Watch*. <http://www.hrw.org/reports/pdfs/c/crd/pakistan957.pdf>

Annotation: This comprehensive report addresses the issue of modern slavery in Pakistan and provides recommendations for its eradication. The role of credit, the contract system, and the socioeconomic structure of the country are discussed as causes of modern slavery in Pakistan. Slavery is widespread in brick-kilns, carpet-weaving, and agriculture, each of which the author explains in detail, from the nature of the work to the ways in which workers become trapped in a

condition of slavery. The complacent and sometimes coercive role of the government of Pakistan is also identified as a factor that is perpetuating modern slavery in the country.

Human Rights Watch. 2002. "Labor Rights and Trade: Guidance for the United States in Trade Accord Negotiations." <http://hrw.org/press/2002/10/laborrights-bck.htm>

Annotation: Human Rights Watch argues that labor rights should be a priority of the United States in its role in trade accord negotiations. This report details reasons for this position and outlines ways to put it into practice. Freer trade has not prevented millions of people from being marginalized by the process of globalization; trade agreements should include mechanisms for ensuring that globalization does not occur at the expense of human rights.

\_\_\_\_\_. 2003. "Small Change: Bonded Labor in India's Silk Industry." <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/india/>

Annotation: Human Rights Watch provides this extensive report on the role of bonded child labor in India's silk industry. The report provides detailed recommendations for the government of India, the international community, retailers, suppliers, and consumers, on how to eradicate the practice. An exhaustive description of the process of silk production is supplemented by testimonies from child workers interviewed by the organization. Particularly useful is a section that explains the relationship between debt bondage and the caste system in India.

\_\_\_\_\_. 2004. "Turning a Blind Eye: Hazardous Child Labor in El Salvador's Sugarcane Cultivation." <http://hrw.org/reports/2004/elsalvador0604/index.htm>

Annotation: This extensive report covers many facets of the sugarcane industry in El Salvador, particularly emphasizing its dependence on child labor. The process of sugarcane cultivation, the role of sugar in the Salvadoran economy, the health risks posed to workers and particularly children, and the complacency of particular multinational corporations are all addressed in a comprehensive manner. Human Rights Watch interviewed many child laborers, and reports with authority on the hazardous conditions they face. The article suggests that businesses purchasing sugar from El Salvador are contributing to one of the most dangerous and most widespread examples of child labor anywhere in the world.

Kapstein, Ethan B. 2006. "The New Global Slave Trade." *Foreign Affairs* 85(6): 103-115.

Annotation: Kapstein focuses on human trafficking and the international slave trade. He argues that governments are capable of solving this problem, but that they have not shown a substantial interest in doing so. Within the context of globalization, the benefits of the international slave trade outweigh the costs associated with government sanctions. The author addresses the international treaties that have been formed to prevent human trafficking, and posits the suggestion that those countries most complicit in the act are not adequately punished.

Lerche, Jens. 2007. "A Global Alliance against Forced Labour? Unfree Labour, Neo-Liberal Globalization and the International Labour Organization." *Journal of Agrarian Change* 7 (4): 425-452.

Annotation: Lerche's focus is on the International Labor Organization (ILO) and its approach to forced labor. He begins with a brief history of the ILO, and discusses the organization's most recent report, "A Global Alliance Against Forced Labor," which, he contends, does not adequately address the relation of the global economy to forced labor. The theoretical positions of several contemporary experts on this issue are discussed. An extensive case study on debt bondage in India is provided and explained within the context of the larger relationship of capitalist development to forced labor.

Marrin, Pat. 1997. "Brazilian Poor Used as Slaves, Bishop Charges." *National Catholic Reporter* 33(40): 13.

Annotation: This article focuses on the efforts of American-born Brazilian Bishop Herbert Hermes to draw awareness to the issue of modern slavery in Brazil. The descriptive account of the means by which landowners enslave the poor is particularly interesting. The article also touches on the difficulties involved in documenting human rights concerns in the face of corruption and indifference, and addresses efforts to inform and to warn the poor people of the country. The article eventually wanders from slavery to the issue of displaced peoples in the rural countryside, with little effort made to connect the two. Nevertheless, it is an informative piece on the intractability of modern slavery in Brazil.

Masland, T., and R. Nordland. 1992. "Slavery." *Newsweek* 119(18): 30.

Annotation: This article introduces readers to the realities of modern slavery by using specific cases as well as a contextual overview of the causes and manifestations of the practice. Religion, tradition, and economic necessity are cited as cornerstones of slavery in modern times. Chattel slavery in Mauritania and debt bondage in South Asia are given particular attention, as are the efforts of Anti-Slavery International to fight modern slavery.

Mendonca, Maria Luisa. 2005. "The WTO and the Destructive Impact of the Sugarcane Industry in Brazil." Sao Paulo: Comissao Pastoral da Terra.  
<http://www.landaction.org/gallery/cartilhaRedeEmIngles.pdf>.

Annotation: This report focuses on the expansion of the sugarcane industry in Brazil and on the negative consequences of this industry for workers and the environment. The Brazilian government's proposal to negotiate market access within the World Trade Organization (WTO), as well as the resulting monoculture of sugarcane for export, are viewed as causes of widespread devastation of rural communities. The author argues that an agricultural model based on

monoculture and large estates creates unemployment; many workers end up enslaved because of a lack of other options. This article is a useful source of information regarding factors that make slave labor in Brazil so entrenched, although the scope of the article is limited to the sugarcane industry.

Miers, Suzanne. 2000. "Contemporary Forms of Slavery." *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 34(3): 714-747.

Annotation: This article provides a broad overview of contemporary slavery. It provides a short history of slavery since the 1920s before moving on to describe various forms of modern slavery. The section dealing with debt bondage is particularly useful for its succinct description of the processes by which the system is perpetuated; several brief examples provide a solid basis from which to explore the issue further. The other themes covered include: sexual slavery, child slavery, forced labor and sweatshops, servile marriage, and ritual slavery. Anyone looking for information on one of these specific themes would do well to begin with Miers.

\_\_\_\_\_. 2003. Slavery in the Twentieth Century: The Evolution of a Global Problem. Lanham, MD: Alta Mira Press.

Annotation: Miers recounts the course of development of the anti-slavery movement over the last one hundred years, focusing mainly on Great Britain and Africa. Having provided a broad historical context, the author describes modern forms of slavery and many of the difficulties associated with their eradication. While it is largely a historical study, the book is a useful resource for understanding both causes and manifestations of modern slavery.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. 1991. "Fact Sheet No. 14, Contemporary Forms of Slavery." Geneva: United Nations.  
<http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu6/2/fs14.htm>.

Annotation: This short introduction to modern slavery is provided by the United Nations to raise public awareness of the issue. The fact sheet describes several forms of modern slavery: child labor, children in armed conflict, traffic in persons and sexual exploitation, the sale of children, and debt bondage. For each subject there is a very brief description of the general conditions that characterize each form of slavery. However, there is little in the way of hard facts and countries or regions where the practices are prevalent are not addressed. The document also gives an overview of several treaties, declarations, and conventions that deal with slavery, as well as addressing the particular role of the United Nations in eradicating slavery. The report concludes with suggestions for how individuals can help fight slavery.

Oli, Punya Prasad. 2003. "Poverty Reduction and Land Distribution to Kamaiya (Bonded Labor) in Nepal." *FIG Working Week*. Paris.

Annotation: Oli's report is somewhat difficult to read as the translation is imperfect. It is informative, however, and provides a detailed description of the Kamaiya system of bonded labor in Nepal. Oli outlines steps taken by the government in Nepal to eradicate the system. Although there were many difficulties in the implementation of the government plan, Oli's tone is optimistic. The author concludes that efforts made by the government have been largely successful. The extremely narrow focus of the report and the lack of any historical or global context make it unlikely that it would be useful to anyone looking for more than a comprehensive definition of the Kamaiya system.

United Nations Commission on Human Rights. 2002. "Combating Forced and Slave Labour and Violence in the Countryside." E/CN.4/2002/199.  
<http://www.unhcr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/0/4f6bd292687f80d1c1256bd0004b1d56?Op=endocument>

Annotation: The Brazilian government provided the United Nations Commission on Human Rights with this report outlining recent Brazilian efforts to combat slave labor. The document describes the campaign to better coordinate the efforts of various branches of the Brazilian government in fighting slavery. It also describes the Special Mobile Inspection Unit, an enforcement unit responsible for inspecting claims of slave labor in the interior. The tone of the document is optimistic, and cites both successes of the newly formed agencies and help from non-governmental organizations working in rural parts of the country as evidence that the situation in Brazil is improving.

Villanger, Espen. 2006. "Is Bonded Labor Voluntary? Evidence from the Liberation of the Kamaiyas in the Far-Western Region of Nepal. In *Bonded Labor in Nepal*." *Working Paper 2006:16*. Bergen, Norway: Chr. Michelsen Institute.

Annotation: Villanger describes in depth the Kamaiya system of bonded labor in Western Nepal, and explores the effects of the Nepalese government's efforts beginning in 2000 to ban the deeply entrenched system. Drawing from numerous interviews with families in several isolated villages where the Kamaiya laborers were given varying degrees of governmental help, the author presents empirical evidence needed to assess whether the system constitutes non-voluntary labor, and whether the government ban was beneficial or harmful to the welfare of the laborers. While the scope of the paper is limited, it could prove useful to anyone seeking a definition of bonded labor. The specific strategies described for its eradication could also be applicable to other similar situations.