

**A Christian Perspective Human Rights: The Case of Modern-Day Slavery
With Reference to the Indian Case***

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Abstract:

**Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute.
Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.**

(Proverbs 31:8-9)

**The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these
brothers of mine, you did for me.’ (Matthew 25:40)**

Modern-day slavery (MDS) represents one of the most alarming and unjust practices in this fallen world. It still exists in many countries, especially in less developed countries (LDCs) where significant numbers of poor and vulnerable are being transformed into MDS victims and forced into different forms of enslavement, in what is known as modern day slavery (MDS).

MDS is a complex subject due to the large number of participants; the forced participation of the victims (the enslaved and enslaveables); the presence of asymmetric information and strategic behaviors; the important role of cultures, norms, and institutions; the dual roles of some participants; the different forms of MDS; and, the rise of national and international interests to eradicate MDS, or participate in it.

This research utilizes the new institutional economics framework in the analysis of MDS in LDCs, with reference to India. MDS practices are strongly influenced by the existing institutions (informal norms, formal rules, and the governance structure of the game). Such institutions reflect the relative power structure and distribution in society; they tend to lean toward the interest of the more powerful group(s). In such an environment, the poor, vulnerable, and marginalized are forced to accept such societal norms and rules that are imposed on them. Some of these norms and rules result, directly or indirectly, in oppressing the vulnerable and marginalized, especially women and children, the major victims of MDS. The results of this analysis are used to recommend remedies and considerations for effective interventions.

The section on effective Christian perspective on MDS illustrates the Biblical foundations and teachings regarding the fallen practices such as MDS, and redemptive interventions. It reflects proper understanding of MDS, based on the findings of the study. The importance of churches and Christian civil society organizations stems from their earnestness to seek justices and redeem the victims. They are more likely to withstand and face harsh and unfavorable environments and corrupt settings.

*A revised and updated version of this research is included in the forthcoming publication: Abadeer, Adel S. The Entrapment of the Poor into Involuntary Labor: Understanding the Worldwide Practice of Modern-Day Slavery. New York: Edwin Mellen Press, December 2008. (Updated August 08)