



Chinnan (wearing glasses) was a bonded slave in a rock quarry for 20 years before IJM rescued him and 41 members of his family, including his granddaughter and great-granddaughter. Here one of his daughters explains how they were abused by their slave master. Chinnan exclaimed to IJM staff, “We were suffering so badly without food or water in the quarry—and you are here. IJM is helping us.”

Chinnan – South Asia

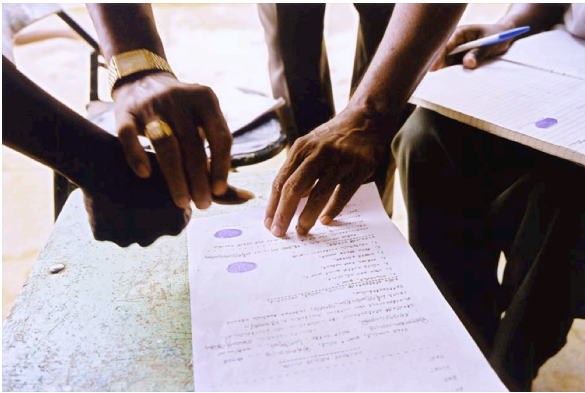
“I am so happy,” the 75-year-old father exclaimed through a crooked-tooth smile. “We were suffering so badly without food or water in the quarry—and you are here. IJM is helping us.” Chinnan was sold for a debt at age 55. Since then, the illegal bond that has weathered his body like dust in the quarry where he’s slaved for 20 years has passed to his children and his grandchildren—42 family members in total.

When the slave owners learned of IJM’s investigation, they threatened the family and other quarry workers by withholding daily supplies of food and water. The families began selling what few possessions they had in order to afford only one meal a day to survive. IJM presented its documentation to local authorities leading to a massive wave of intervention releasing a total of 117 people held in bondage and arresting six of the owners who had enslaved them.

The intervention not only marked an unfathomable day of rejoicing for Chinnan and each mother and father and child among the 117, but it tipped the scales of power in favor of the oppressed. The country’s government has provided rehabilitation funds to each of the victims and extends a powerful message to would-be perpetrators that the price of oppression is costly. For Chinnan and his 32 grandchildren, the act of loving one’s neighbor is a treasure of life and hope and freedom.



After the slaves' release, the government distributed restitution payments of sheep to each of those granted official release certificates. Two of Chinnan's grandchildren stand beside a sheep pen filled with livestock intended to economically assist the family as they return to society.



With IJM assistance, local officials completed documents to fulfill the government's restitution payment to the released slaves. Each of the former slaves receiving payment signed official documents to complete the transaction. Having labored as slaves for 20 years in the quarry, most had not attended school and were illiterate. Here a released slave gives thumbprints as her signature.



One of Chinnan's daughters and a grandson peer into a sheep pen holding livestock the government gave to the family for restitution payment, helping them

transition from a life of slavery to becoming free, working members in their local community.



Chinnanan's granddaughter Sabeshwari (center) and his other grandchildren are free from the bondage of living in the rock quarry where the family was held in slavery.



A mother and daughter are released from a life of bondage in the quarry where their family was held in slavery for twenty years with Chinnanan, their father and grandfather.



Chinnan and some of his family wait to meet with government officials to obtain their restitution payments four months after their release from twenty years of slavery in a rock quarry.



Concerned for his future and his family, one of Chinnan's sons sat dejected while awaiting a meeting with government officials. In an oversight, he did not receive official release papers when he and the rest of his family were freed from slavery in a rock quarry four months earlier. IJM negotiated with local officials to obtain his release papers which dissolved his bond and secured his freedom.