

**Combatting
forced and
precarious labour
in global supply
chains**

WSR

**WORKER-DRIVEN
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
NETWORK**

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Defining forced labor

According to the ILO:

“forced or compulsory labour shall mean all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person **has not offered himself voluntarily”.**

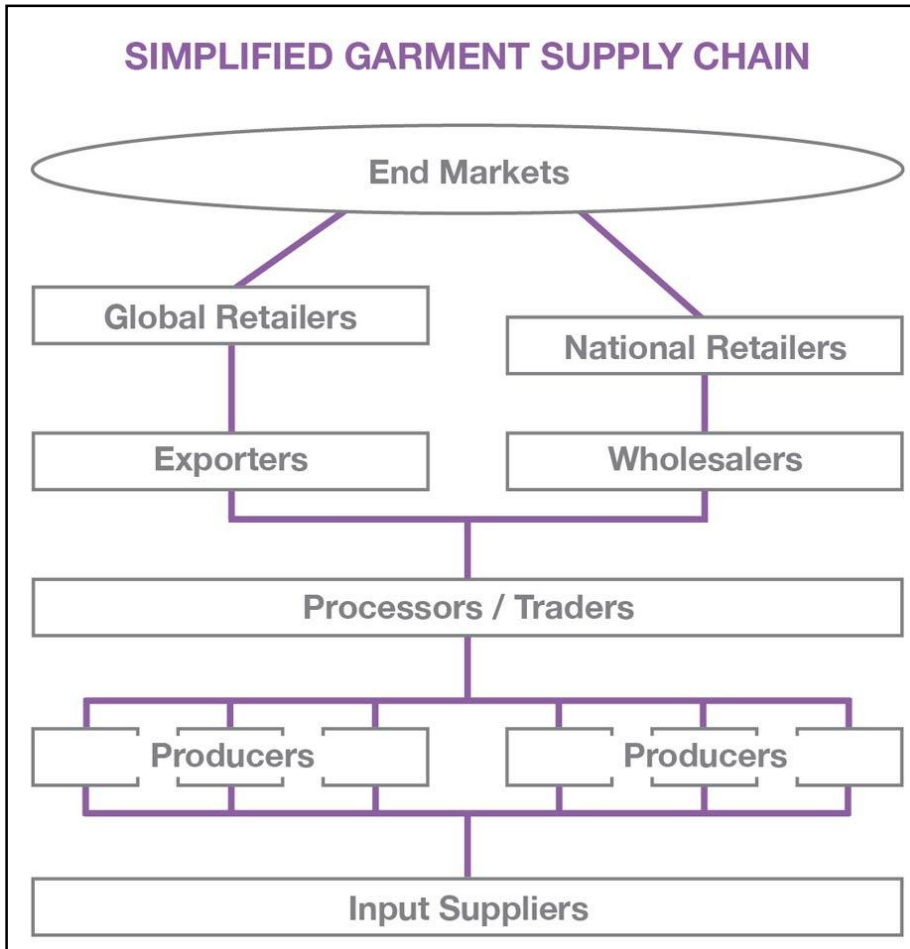
C029 - Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)

Defining forced labor

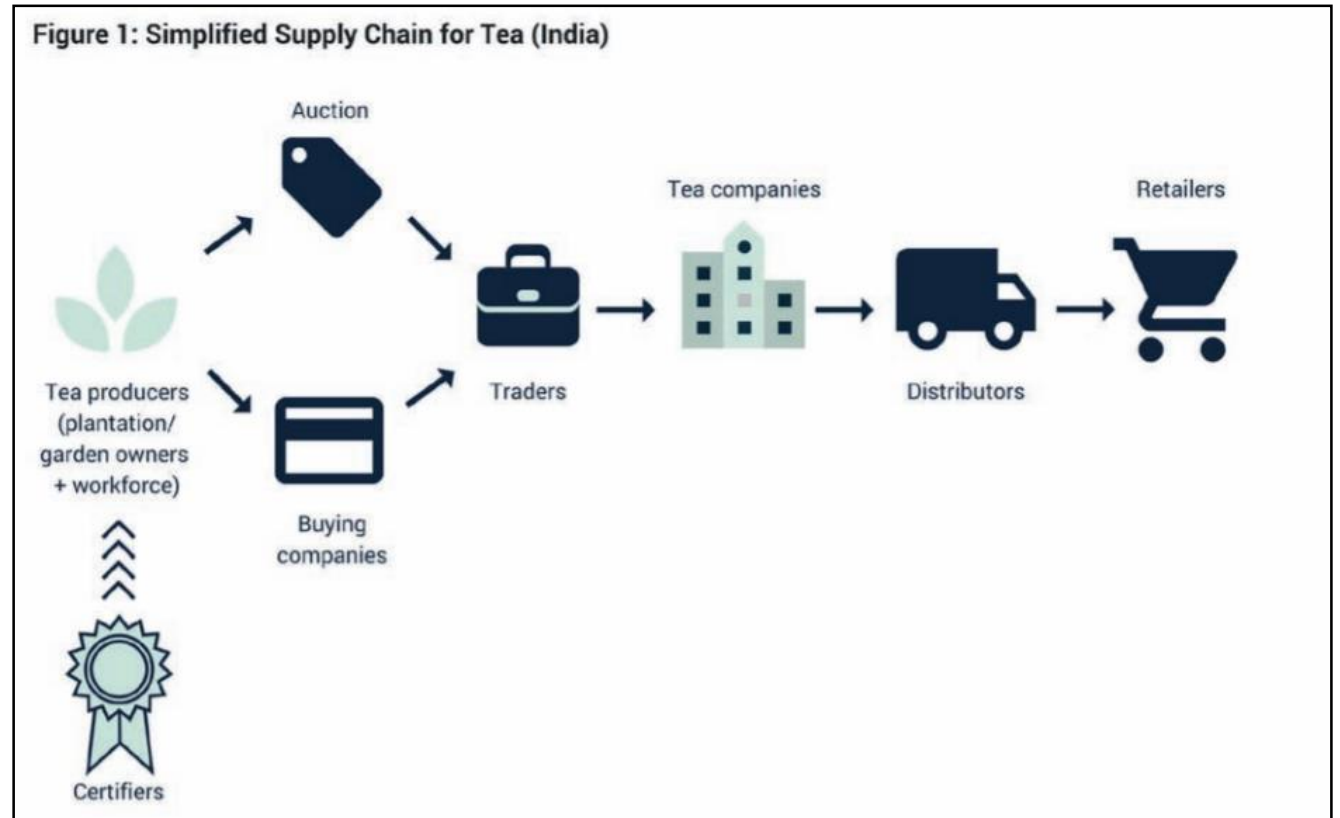
“...the employer or the State are not accountable for all external constraints or indirect coercion existing in practice: for example, the need to work in order to earn one’s living.”

Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) (2007) General Survey on Forced Labour, Geneva: ILO, 20–21.

The rise of global supply chains



E. Saarelainen & M. Sievers (2011) 'ILO Value Chain Development Briefing Paper 2: The Role of Cooperatives and Business Associations in Value Chain Development'.



G. Lebaron (2018) The Global Business of Forced Labor, Sheffield University & SPERI.



**Severe labour exploitation
(including forced labour) is a
stable and predictable feature
of many global supply chains.**

Downward pressure on labour

excessive and compulsory overtime

**harassment and
intimidation**

**unsafe work
conditions**

constraints on freedom of
movement

delayed payment

Wage theft

repression of freedom of
association

illegal wage deductions

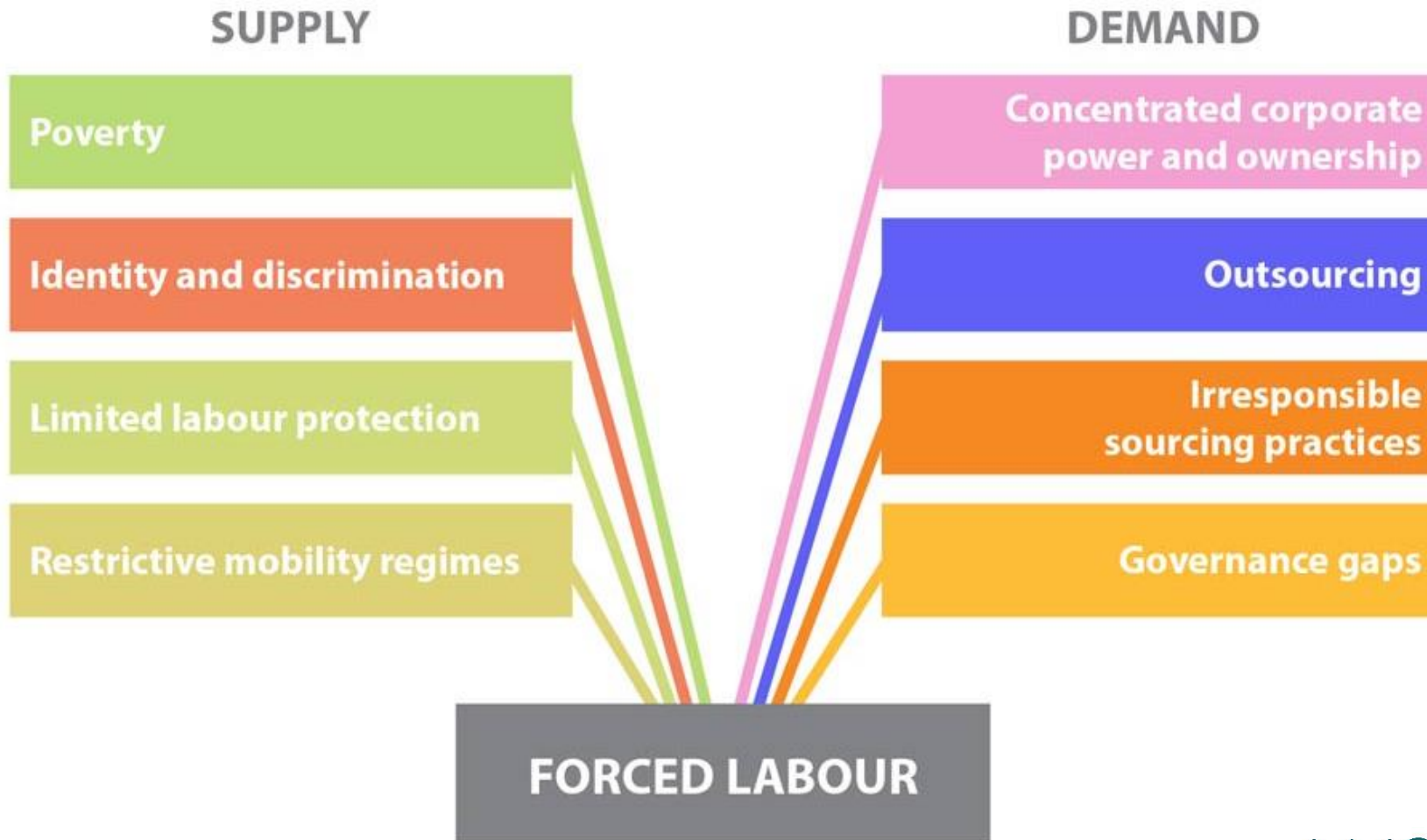
punitively high quotas

**Sexual
violence**


physical abuse or discipline

gender-based violence

The political economy of forced labor



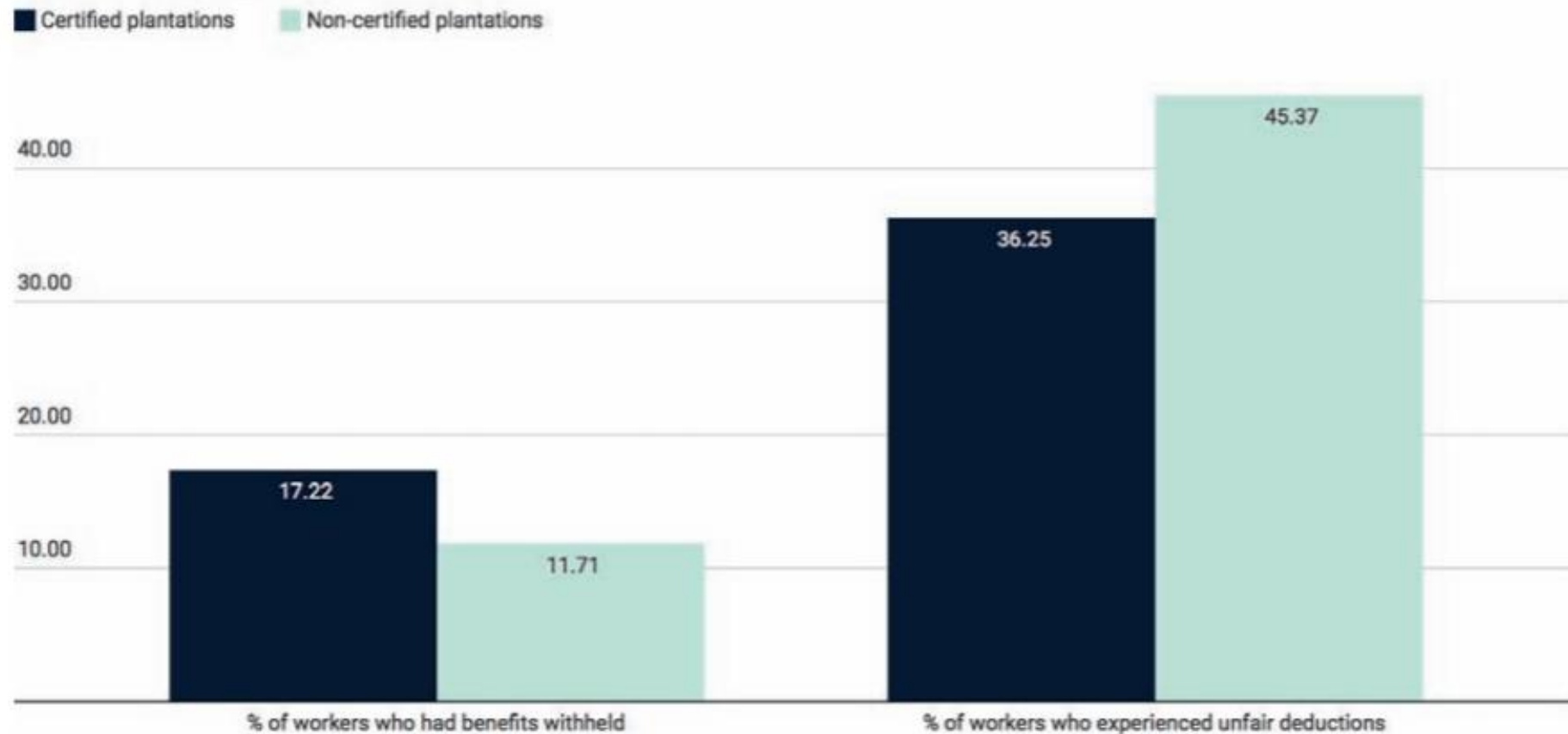
Source: Beyond Trafficking and Slavery (2018) 'Confronting root causes: forced labour in global supply chains'.

A large-scale industrial fire is taking place at a factory. A red fire truck with a white aerial ladder is positioned in the foreground, with the ladder extended towards the burning building. The building is multi-story and heavily obscured by thick, black smoke that rises into the sky. Several people are visible in the foreground, some appearing to be observing the scene. The overall atmosphere is one of a major disaster.

The fire at Ali Enterprises killed nearly 300 people. The factory had been inspected and certified as safe just three weeks before the fire.

Global business of forced labour study

Figure 8: Wage Violations



The problem with CSR/MSIs

- **Voluntary, not binding, commitments;**
- **A lack of clear consequences for suppliers who violate workers' rights;**
- **No role for workers in the design of the program or monitoring compliance with its standards;**
- **Little or no transparency; and**
- **A failure to address to root causes.**

Worker-driven social responsibility (WSR)



The Fair Food Program

- **Created by the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW)**
- **Legally binding agreements between CIW and brands**
- **Worker-to-worker education**
- **24-hour complaint process**
- **In-depth field and farm office audits**
- **Independent monitoring by the Fair Food Standards Council**

Worker-driven social responsibility (WSR)

Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh



- **Independent inspections by qualified professional safety engineers**
- **Full public reporting**
- **Brands/retailers must require factories to undergo all necessary renovations and must help pay for them**
- **Central role for workers and unions**
- **All commitments are binding and enforceable by labor unions**

Worker-driven social responsibility (WSR)

Milk with Dignity Program

- **Legally-binding agreement between Ben & Jerry's and Migrant Justice**
- **Worker-to-worker education**
- **Independent monitoring by the Milk with Dignity Standards Council**
- **Mandatory consequences for farms for non-compliance**
- **Ben & Jerry's will pay a premium to all participating farms in their supply chain.**



**Labor rights initiatives must
be worker-driven.**

**Obligations for global
corporations must be binding
and enforceable.**

**Buyers must afford
suppliers the financial
incentive and capacity to
comply.**

Consequences for non-compliance by suppliers must be mandatory

**Commitments by
corporations must be
quantifiable &
time-bound.**

“for nearly two decades, workers’ rights and trade union organizations, scholars, and auditors themselves have documented the flaws of the audit regime; yet, corporations have done little to transform it. The problem is not one of finessing the institutional design or audit methodology, but rather relates to corporate power, politics, and profits”

G. LeBaron et al. (2017) ‘Governing Global Supply Chain Sustainability Through the Ethical Audit Regime’.

**For questions or additional information, please
visit <https://wsr-network.org/>
or email penelope@wsr-network.org.**