

Brick kiln owner gets 10-year jail for bonded labour

TNN | Mar 16, 2017, 12.30 AM IST



BENGALURU: The additional sessions court, Ramanagara, sentenced a brickkiln owner from Kanakapura Taluk to 10 years rigorous imprisonment. Also, a fine of Rs 16,000 has been imposed upon him under Section 370 (trafficking of persons) of the IPC and the Bonded Labour System (abolition) Act, 1976.

Activists fighting bonded labour said this is the first time an owner has been convicted under Section 370 in Karnataka. However, the claim couldn't be independently verified.

The case first came to light on August 13, 2014, when the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU), CID, the district administration and local police assisted by International Justice Mission (IJM) rescued 12 bonded labourers and three infants from the brickkiln in Kanakapura, Ramanagara and arrested Nanjappa, the owner.

Nanjappa's bail was rejected five times by various courts, including the Karnataka High Court.

"On careful perusal and on appreciation of the oral and documentary evidence adduced by the prosecution, it could be seen that there was exploitation and victims were treated as slaves and bonded labourers," the court noted in its judgement.

"The owner ran his brickkiln for over four years, confining and exploiting these 12 bonded labourers from six families. In 2010, the owner trafficked a married couple from Mandya after visiting their village and giving them an advance of Rs 40,000. He

falsely promised them good wages of Rs 350 for every 1,000 bricks made, which a couple usually makes in one day," the IJM said in a press statement.

It added that four more families from Mandya and one from Kanakapura were recruited to work in the kiln in a similar manner; they were given advances ranging from Rs 35,000 to Rs 50,000.

"The prescribed minimum wages weren't given to any of the labourers and each of them received only Rs 72 a day while being severely exploited and confined to the brick kiln. They had to manage all their expenses and also take care of their children with this amount," the statement read.