


Trafficking in Bengaluru: Nowhere to run, nowhere to hide

By Kiran Parashar K M | Express News Service | Published: 10th April 2017 02:00 AM |

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BENGALURU: Bengaluru may pride itself in being ranked the most dynamic city in the world, but it hides a dark underbelly where hundreds of people are trafficked and forced to work with minimal or no benefits in its many factories, and quarries and kilns on the outskirts.



With the promise of jobs and decent wages, people from as far as Odisha, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Assam and even Nepal are trafficked to Bengaluru and pushed into sex trade, rigorous labour, begging and also used for harvesting organs, and as domestic helps. With successive droughts, many landless labourers from across the state are also brought to Bengaluru, say experts working for their rehabilitation.


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According to a study by International Justice Mission (IJM), “In many cases of bonded labour, for example in the brick industry and in quarries, whole families are trafficked to Karnataka. We have come across several cases where the children and women work through the day alongside the men in these places. The children and women are also often used as collateral to ensure that the family does not leave the factory. When the male labourers are allowed to go to the market to buy provisions once a week, the women and children are forced to stay back so that the male labourers promptly return.”

Modern-day slavery

Trafficked people are put to work in menial jobs without any protection or security. They are forced to work in factories producing bags, shoe soles and agarbattis, plastic recycling units and even as domestic helps, farm labourers and panipuri vendors.

Esther Daniel, IJM’s director of justice system engagement in Bengaluru, says, “Human trafficking is a crime. Under Section 370 of the Indian Penal Code the minimum sentence is seven years which can extend up to life.

In typical cases of bonded labour trafficking, the employers and traffickers lure victims through false promises or cash advances and use force, verbal and physical abuse and, at times, even sexual exploitation to confine the victims as bonded labourers.

“Once a victim of bonded labour trafficking has been rescued, it is crucial that immediate assistance and protection is given by the state government. Eventually, successful rehabilitation including rehabilitation assistance, livelihood options and community support is important for the survivors.”

TAGS Bangalore Traffic
