

# UP lacks serious effort to rehabilitate child labour

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LUCKNOW: There is a reason why child labour is still visible on the roads. State government is though rescuing children working in factories and roadside stalls and eateries, it is not ensuring their rehabilitation. Those rescued, therefore, might be getting employed again.

An RTI response from the office of the labour commissioner, Kanpur, shows that in 20 years while state has rescued child labour and collected fine from people who illegally employed children it has not spent the fine collected for rehabilitation and welfare of the child rescued.

The district-wise amount of money collected under child labour rehabilitation-cum-welfare fund from December 1996 till March 2016 by

UP government shows hardly 10% of the fund has been spent in 20 years for benefit of children rescued from various types of employment.

UP has recovered Rs 4.4cr (4,44,64,501) from employers of child labour in 20 years but it has spent only Rs 7 lakh (7,14,288) on the cause for which the fund has been created. As many as 56 districts out of 75, including Lucknow, have spent '0' amount.

Varanasi has spent about Rs 1.2lakh out of Rs 11.8 lakh collected, Kanpur nagar has spent around Rs 25,000 out of Rs 20 lakh, Ghaziabad has spent Rs 1,375 out of Rs 57 lakh, Bahraich has spent Rs 396 out of Rs 6.7lakh and Ghazipur has spent Rs 281 out of Rs 3.4lakh collected as fund for the welfare and rehabilitation of the child labour.

Azamgarh has spent more, Rs 2.5lakh, than the fund collected which is around Rs 1.8 lakh shows the RTI response by the labour commissioner's office to applicant Umesh Gupta.

SC in 1996, in the MC Mehta vs State of Tamil Nadu and others judgement dated December 10, 1996, ordered that employers illegally employing children must pay Rs 20,000 into a fund known as `Child Labour Rehabilitation-cum-Welfare Fund' to be used for the benefit of that child. The government has to recover the money from the employer and use it for welfare of the child.

The order came on a petition claiming that fundamental rights of children were being grossly violated in contravention of Article 24 of the Constitution of India, which provides that no child below 14 years of age should be employed to work in any factory or mine or engaged in any other hazardous employment.