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Judiciary helps MP tribal girls to leave behind prostitution and start afresh



Importantly, the Banchhada tribe (which is native to bordering districts in MP and Rajasthan) for generations has been notorious for pushing their minor girls into prostitution.

BHOPAL: Judiciary in Madhya Pradesh's Neemuch district donned a new role on Saturday - mainstreaming teenage girls rescued from highway prostitution.

Fifteen girls aged between 14 and 17 years, hailing from Banchhada tribe in Neemuch, Mandsaur and Ratlam districts, who were rescued by social activists and police from highway prostitution 2019 and 2020, had a rendezvous with judges led

by Neemuch District and Session Judge Hridesh during a workshop held in Neemuch.

Importantly, the Banchhada tribe (which is native to bordering districts in MP and Rajasthan) for generations has been notorious for pushing their minor girls into prostitution.

The tribe is no longer confined only to using their own daughters, but has also been forcing girls trafficked from other states, including Maharashtra, UP and Bihar into prostitution rackets operated in deras (makeshift shelters) and illegal dhabas on the highway connecting MP with Rajasthan.

Organised under the joint banner of Neemuch District Legal Services Authority and a local NGO Project Mission Mukti, the workshop saw the District and Session Judge and other members of the Authority motivate the Banchhada tribe girls (rescued from highway prostitution) emulate the success attained by young women of their own tribe.

“It’s you and your parents who decide whether to plunge again into earning quick money, which has been the practice for decades or to replicate the feats of other girls of your own community, who have taken a different route and excel in academics to make careers in diverse fields,” Judge Hridesh said.

25 young women from Banchhada tribe alone were rescued, who are now engaged in diverse professions, including teaching, nursing and police force. These young women included health worker Sandhya Chouhan, Anganwadi worker Laxmi Malwi, health department motivator Vaishali

Chouhan and Megha Malwi, a young graduate preparing for a job with MP Police.

“This event exemplifies that the Legal Services Authority is no longer confined only to rendering free of cost legal services/advocates. It has a bigger social role to perform by motivating girls from a particular community to bid adieu to prostitution and achieve something big in their lives, just like other girls and women of the same community. The girls rescued shared with us their pains and problems, we’ve ensured that the Legal Services Authority will help them in addressing their problems,” the Neemuch District and Session Judge said after the first-of-its-kind interaction.

“It’s the first time that judges have taken time out of their busy schedule to act as an ideal medium for mainstreaming girls rescued from prostitution. Importantly, it wasn’t just the girl rescued from prostitution, but also their parents who forced them into it who were present and asked to emulate the positive things the other women of their tribe are doing,” young advocate Akash Chouhan, whose NGO Project Mission Mukti was a partner in Saturday’s event said.

Chouhan had in 2017 filed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in the Madhya Pradesh High Court seeking to end the highway/roadside prostitution of girls from his own Banchhada tribe. The PIL is pending a final hearing in the Indore Bench of the MP High Court.

“As per records with us, around 2000 girls aged between 10-12 years are engaged in prostitution rackets run in deras and

dhabas near 68 villages of Neemuch, Ratlam and Mandsaur district,” Chouhan said.

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