

Curb begging by children, rights body tells Delhi govt

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New Delhi: The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) on Tuesday sent a letter to the Delhi government seeking an action plan to curb the menace of child-begging on the streets of the capital. The letter, dated July 19, addressed to the chief secretary of the Delhi government, KK Sharma, has asked for a three-pronged plan to deal with the menace.

“There is a need to rescue children from the undesirable condition of begging. And child labour on the street. The government of NCT of Delhi to make an action plan at all the three levels, namely

pre-rescue, rescue and after-rescue of the children,” read the letter. “As you may be aware that Child Begging (sic) and Child Labour are prohibited u/s 76 and u/s 79 respectively of the JJ Act 2015. Fur-



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ther you may be aware that Child cruelty is a punishable offence u/s 75 of the said Act.”

The NCPCR has been holding discussions with the CWCs, Delhi Police, NGOs and ChildLine in the last month to curb the menace. A survey carried out by ChildLine studying the behaviour of over

535 child-beggars in the capital last month found that there are over 35 prime spots in the city where children are routinely exploited. The study, which was handed over to the Delhi government along with the letter to help work on the action plan, names the ITO-Tilak Mark red light, Barakhamba Road, Rajouri Garden, Hanuman Mandir and Inner Circle of onnaught Place, the metro stations of Karol Bagh, Nirman Vihar, Laxmi Nagar, and Akshardham, Moolchand crossing, Kalkaji temple, Nehru Place flyover, Lajpat Nagar Main Market, Defence Colony traffic signal, amongst others.

“Studies has found that parents have a larger role to play in this. As per the amended Juvenile Justice Act, forcing a child to beggary can land one in jail for over five years, and if we start prosecuting parents, it will help curb the social problem,” said Yashwant Jain, member, NCPCR.

Jain added that recently concerns of a

begging syndicate was brought to the notice of the Delhi Police. “The police carried out an inquiry and told us in writing that there was no syndicate involved,” said Jain.

Last year, union minister of state for social justice Vijay Sampla said in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha that there are over 4,13,670 beggars in the country, where 2.2 lakh were men and 1.91 were women. Delhi had over 2,187 beggars. As per ChildLine data, more than 500 beggars are children below the age of ten years.

As per the amended Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, a child beggar is identified as a child in need of care and protection of the state. A person found forcing a child to beg is liable to a sentence of five years, with a fine of one lakh. And if the child is maimed or hurt, the punishment extends to seven years in jail and seven lakhs in fine.

DNA, Mumbai
Thu, 21 Jul 2016,