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AGAINST TRAFFICKING - The trafficking of young girls from countries like Nepal and Bangladesh into India for forced prostitution shows no signs of abatement, even as three million women are estimated to be sucked up into flesh trade.

This alarming figure comes via a study conducted by the Global March Against Child Labour, led by child rights activist Kailash Satyarthi.

The study titled 'Economics Behind Forced Labour Trafficking', which was spearheaded by the Nobel Peace Prize winner, found that the sex trade in India has flourished over the years.

ILLEGAL BUSINESS

The Ministry of Women and Child Development's statistics, meanwhile, reveal that while this estimate is based solely on women employed in red-light areas, the number stands at nearly six to nine million if other illegal businesses such as dance bars and massage parlours are taken into consideration.

"The figures are shocking. Younger girls are sold at a higher price in the market primarily because they can work for longer as compared to the older women. In India alone, the money

generated through sex trade so far stands at a whopping \$343 billion.

"Research confirms that several agencies such as traffickers, brothel owners, money lenders, law enforcement officials, lawyers, judiciary and to a certain level even the victims of CSE (commercial sexual exploitation) eventually receive money for participation," Satyarthi said in the study.

EXPLOITATION

As per the study, law enforcement officials have gained nearly \$24 billion through child sexual exploitation. Similarly, lawyers and the judiciary in India have gained \$51.5 billion.

While the total potential cost of the child sexual exploitation industry stands at \$309 billion, its potential gain is pegged at \$34 billion.

Nearly 3.6 million children have been forced into child domestic labour by placement agencies in India, the study says. Delhi alone is reported to have nearly 3,000 placement agencies.

"If, assume on a very conservative level, that the total market for child domestic labour in India is 2.5 times the market in NCR, then the illegal money in circulation could be anywhere between \$35 to 361 billion," the report said.

Nobel Peace laureate Kailash Satyarthi, a crusader of child rights, Monday expressed hope that he would "see the end of child labour" across the globe in his lifetime.

"I am positive that I would see the end of child labour around the world in my lifetime as the poorest of the poor have realised that education is a tool that can empower them," Satyarthi told IANS on the sidelines of a media interaction organised at the Foreign Correspondents' Club here.

"Hence, they are educating their children while the number of child labourers are gradually decreasing around the world," Satyarthi said.

Quoting International Labour Organization figures, he said the latest data has showed that the number of child labourers around the world are 168 million as compared to 260 million in the mid 90s.

Calling children his religion, Satyarthi said the issue of child labour has received a lot attention

after he won the Nobel prize but the momentum should keep on going.

"I never go to temples but when I see a child I see god in them. Children are my religion...This issue must not die. The children need a voice and they need everybody's support especially the media," he said.

Satyarthy along with Pakistan's Malala Yousufzai won this year's Nobel Peace Prize.

On a question that Malala has called on Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend the Dec 10 ceremony in Oslo, Satyarthi said: "I am not reacting politically as I am a small man and I am not inviting anyone. Moreover, I don't have much knowledge or deeper understanding of diplomatic issues but I want to work with the people of India and Pakistan to bring peace."

Kailash Satyarthi, Nobel Peace laureate

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