

AADHAAR COMES IN HANDY FOR RAILWAYS TO TRACE PARENTS OF TRAFFICKED CHILDREN | P7

Aadhaar helps rlys trace parents of trafficked children

505 Kids And Women Reunited With Kin

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Sagarika, 17, from New Delhi was forced to work as a bonded labourer in the city for two years. After several unsuccessful attempts, she managed to escape from the gang's clutches and reached City railway station last month.

Sagarika (name changed) approached the Railway Protection Force (RPF), who traced her family in New Delhi with the help of the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), using her biometric details. Her family had almost given up hope.

She's not alone. As many as 505 children and women were rescued from South Western Railway limits in the past 100 days as part of RPF's Operation Nanhe Farishte.

RPF officials say Aadhaar has served as a boon in tracing the parents of children rescued from traffickers in trains and railway stations. "More than 90% of the 505 children and women were reunited with their families with Aadhaar's help," said Debashmita Chattopadhyay, security commissioner (RPF).

"It has become easier to trace the genuine parents of the rescued children since 80% of the country's population has Aadhaar cards. But we have to resort to other methods for those who haven't enrolled," she said, adding: "We approach local Aadhaar centres to check whether the child's biometric details match UIDAI records. Sometimes, children are un-

RESCUE OP: THE BREAK-UP



Rly division	Male	Female	Total
Bengaluru	216	30	246
Hubballi	117	7	124
Mysuru	118	17	135

aware about their place of residence so Aadhaar data proves crucial".

The maximum number of children and women were rescued from Bengaluru division (246) followed by Mysuru (135) and Hubballi (124). While most are from Karnataka (438), some are from Bihar (12), Andhra Pradesh (8), Uttar Pradesh (7) and Assam (6). Six cases of kidnapping were also cracked by the RPF: two from Delhi and one each from Rajasthan, West Bengal, Gujarat and Punjab.

"We inform the respective state police units to reunite the children with their parents," said divisional railway manager (DRM) RS Saxena. "We have a special team which uses behaviour as a tool to detect suspected cases and also counsels the children," he added.