

26 Minor Girls Rescued from Spinning Mill in K'giri

Express News Service

Krishnagiri: As many as 26 minor girls were rescued while they were being transported to work at a spinning mill at Tiruchengode on Sunday night.

The district administration had received a tip-off that 26 girls, all aged below 18 years, were being transported from Anchetty and surrounding villages in Denkanikottai taluk to a Mothi spinning mill located at Anangur village in Tiruchengode taluk of Namakkal district. Although officials tried unsuccessfully to stop the vehicle at Anchetty village, it was finally brought to a halt by villagers of Natrampalayam in the district.

Later, officials rushed to the spot, and handed over the 26 girl children to their parents.

"Parents in Pooncholai, Vannathipatti, Elumalaithot-

ti, Paiyalkaadu, Ramarkoil and a few other villages in the surrounding areas were willing to send their children to spinning mills and factories.

After parents went to work, girl children often felt

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— LAKSHMI,
Denkanikottai RDO

unsafe at home and hence parents were sending them to the mills to work," District Child Protection Officer Siva Gandhi told *Express*. Lakshmi, Denkanikottai taluk Revenue Divisional Officer (RDO) said, "All 26 children were school drop-outs and

four of them had studied up to Class X and due to financial problems they were sent to mills. Parents are comfortable with sending their children there because they are getting free meals and boarding facility at the factories, which makes them feel safer." Suman, Revenue Divisional Officer of Tiruchengode told *Express* that they will enquire with the spinning mill authorities about the incident and check if the factories have been following norms.

"Using the Factories Act and a few other Acts, children are being exploited by the factories," said Vincent Sundarajan, chairman of District Child Welfare Committee. "Henceforth, section 23-punishment; section 24-punishment for employment, Section 26-punishment for exploitation of child by hazardous employment can be booked on the factory owners," Vincent said.