

Rescue Operation in Patiala Frees 19 Child Beggars, Boosts Anti-Begging Drive



In a concerted effort to eradicate child begging and protect vulnerable youngsters, authorities in Patiala successfully rescued 19 child beggars during a targeted operation on Monday, July 21, 2025. This significant rescue is part of a broader, statewide initiative by the Punjab government to make the state "beggar-free" and ensure the safety and rehabilitation of children exploited for alms.

The rescue operation in Patiala was conducted by district child protection teams under the "Project Jeevanjyot 2.0" campaign. These teams carried out specialized raids at various public locations known for child begging, including bus stands, railway stations, and busy market areas. The rescued children, whose ages and backgrounds vary, were immediately taken into protective custody following the operation.

According to Dr. Baljit Kaur, Punjab's Social Security, Women and Child Development Minister, the state government is intensely focused on rooting out the menace of child begging. "When we see small children forced to beg on our streets, it is not just their dignity that suffers; it raises serious questions on our society's collective conscience and on the honor of Punjab itself," Minister Kaur stated in a recent press briefing. She highlighted that similar raids are being conducted continuously across all districts of Punjab.

Following the rescue, all 19 children from Patiala have been presented before the local Child Welfare Committee (CWC). The committee is now tasked with verifying their identities and circumstances. Children whose parents can be traced and verified will be reunited with their families after thorough counseling and assurances that they will not be forced back into begging. For those children whose parents or guardians cannot be identified, or if there is

suspicion of trafficking or exploitation, they will be safely placed in Child Care Institutions (Bal Ghar) for proper care and protection.

A crucial aspect of the state's intensified campaign, "Project Jeevanjyot 2.0," involves the use of DNA testing in suspicious cases. This measure aims to ascertain the true biological relationship between children found begging and the adults accompanying them. If DNA reports confirm that the accompanying adults are not the biological parents, strict legal action, including charges under anti-trafficking and child protection laws, will be initiated against those involved. This proactive step is designed to combat child trafficking and its exploitation more effectively.

The Punjab government is not only focused on rescue but also on comprehensive rehabilitation. This includes enrolling rescued children in schools, providing financial support to impoverished families to ensure continued education, and monitoring their progress to prevent them from returning to the streets. The authorities have also appealed to the public to refrain from giving alms to child beggars and instead to report such instances to the Child Helpline at 1098, thereby aiding the government's efforts to provide a safe and secure future for every child in Punjab.