

No Ban on Ban

A total number of 6,669 cases of children working in eateries and houses has come to light since the ban came into force last year.

While not a single employer has been convicted, only 18 cases came to light in the states of Chattisgarh, Haryana, Goa, Meghalaya and Tripura.

Andhra Pradesh reported the largest number of cases at 4,308. The state was ahead of others in rehabilitation of the children as it pulled 4426 kids out of illegal employment.

The data was made available by the Union Labour Ministry in response to a Right to Information application filed by an NGO seeking the status of the implementation of the ban, which came into force last October.

The maximum number of prosecution of the employers by a state was 189, as per the report.

The information, provided by the states, pertained to a six-month period between October last and March this year. In the five states, barring Haryana none was able to rescue even a single child working as domestic help or in dhabas and restaurants during the period.

"Clearly, this data, which we received from Ministry of Labour and Employment on October 8, flies in the face of all the hopes raised by the notification when it came into force" said Rakesh Senger of Bachpan Bachao Aandolan , which filed the application under Right to Information Act.

"It shows that the problem of child labour is not on the priority lists of the governments. There is no plan of action, no timeline and no accountability" , he said.

Of the 35 states and union territories, information from 14 states was not provided. Ministry officials said data from states has not been received so far.

The total number has been questioned by the NGO which says that unofficial estimates put the number of children working in Delhi alone at 20 lakh.