



Sex workers, lawyers seek to amend language of anti-trafficking Bill

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Sex workers, lawyers seek to amend language of anti-trafficking Bill- They are wary that the new law may criminalise voluntary adult sex work

- The anti-trafficking Bill, set to be introduced in the Rajya Sabha, has triggered disquiet among sex workers and lawyers about the proposed law's potential to criminalise all adult sex work in the absence of a clear distinction between the victims of sexual exploitation or human trafficking and persons who voluntarily opt to provide sex to make a living.
- The National Network of Sex Workers (NNSW) has written to Rajya Sabha Chairman Venkaiah Naidu demanding that the Bill be sent to the Standing Committee of the Upper House.
- The NNSW has also urged a "meaningful dialogue" with the communities affected by the Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation), 2018, Bill.
- Their key demand is that the Bill should explicitly exclude adult persons voluntarily engaged in sex work.

'Must seek consent'

- Sex workers also demand that the consent of a person rescued from trafficking should be a mandatory requirement before a decision is taken to send him or her to a rehabilitation centre.
- Clause 4 in Section 17 of the Bill, which allows the dismissal of a victim's application for release "if the Magistrate is of the opinion that such application has not been made voluntarily" has been viewed as a denial of the right to liberty.