

## WILL ISSUE AADHAAR FOR SEX WORKERS: UIDAI

Relevant for: Developmental Issues | Topic: Rights & Welfare of Women - Schemes & their Performance, Mechanisms, Laws Institutions and Bodies

Advocate Zoheb Hossain, for the UIDAI, submitted that it was an obligation to ensure that sections of society did not lack access to their basic rights like food because they did not have an Aadhaar card.

The court asked the Centre about a Bill it had proposed to introduce in Parliament to curb trafficking and for rehabilitation of sex workers.

The court further directed that State governments should take steps to issue voter cards to sex workers identified by NACO and community-based organisations after the verification of their lists.

The court said the State governments should continue to distribute dry rations to sex workers without insisting on their identities.

Perusing the status reports filed by many States about the identification of sex workers and issuance of ration cards to them, the court said the figures were “not realistic”.

Taking the case of West Bengal, the court noted that it had identified 6,227 sex workers so far.

“States which are smaller in size than you show the number of sex workers to be in the likes of 80,000 to one lakh... And you have only been able to identify 6,227? We are talking about identification for the purpose of providing them ration for survival purposes,” Justice Rao addressed advocate Raghenth Basant, for West Bengal.

He noted that even Tamil Nadu had identified over 87,000 sex workers and provided over 86,000 of them with ration cards.

Amicus curiae, advocate Pijush K. Roy, said even the red light district in Kolkata may have over 6,000 workers in it.

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