

Girls lured to Gulf as dancers exploited

By VINODHINI

Chennai, Aug. 23: Even two months after 22-year-old Vandana (name changed) returned from West Asia where she worked as a bar dancer, she has not spoken a word.

Her family in Chennai received her at the airport and found her in poor health. She cringes when men approach her, and is apparently in a state of shock due to sexual exploitation.

She is the latest victim of a well-organised racket that exists in the state in trafficking of

women to West Asia where they are taken on tourist visas and later given jobs as bar dancers exposing them to sexual exploitation.

Vandana, who dropped out of the eighth standard, started working as a junior artiste in the movies like her father.

According to her mother Geetha, Vandana under the influence of her older friends who worked as bar dancers in West Asia said she wanted to be like them. An agent Shafi approached them and promised that she could earn Rs 35,000 to Rs 50,000 a month.

“The rate is fixed depending on the person. Our Chennai agent Sanal will guide you,” he said in a telephonic interview.

“We were against it. But she went to Dubai on April 29. There were a few other girls with her but I do not know them. She called one month later and said although she was fine she was not happy about certain things.

She did not specify what although we asked her. We called her employer Tagul and asked him to send her back.

He said he would send her only if we gave him Rs 25,000, which we did. But we never thought we would see her like this,” the mother said weeping.

She is now being rehabilitated by the Indian Community Welfare Organisation which works against trafficking.

When this correspondent contacted the employer Tagul in Dubai posing as a girl in search of a job there, he said it would be a three month contract and

there were many women from Tamil Nadu working as bar girls there.

“The rate is fixed depending on the person. Our Chennai agent Sanal will guide you,” he said in a telephonic interview.

The Chennai agent Sanal claimed to be from a travel agency for Gulf bound passengers based in Vadapalani. “We can fix the price once we see you. The visa can be renewed once you reach there,” he said when contacted over the telephone. Asked whether it would involve only dancing or any other work, Sanal said it

involved only dancing.

Geetha’s efforts to file an FIR along with ICWO’s help has proved futile. “We do not know the plight of other women who have gone there.

We have visited the CB-CID and the anti trafficking bureau. They refused to investigate the matter saying it was an issue involving two countries.

They said if it was an interstate matter the case could be registered,” said Ms A J Hariharan, secretary, ICWO who has been helping Geetha and her daughter seek legal remedy.