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GHMC's sham show: See, no beggars!

HYDERABAD: You might not get accosted by alm-seekers for the next few days, as you venture out onto the city streets. Since Tuesday evening, Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) staff have started picking up beggars from all nooks and corners of the city and lodging them in community halls and makeshift temporary shelter homes.

So far, they have picked up some 500 beggars from busy junctions, traffic signals, main roads, bus stations, railway stations, bus depots and shopping malls. This sudden action plan is due to the proposed visit of officials from different parts of the country to study the project of rehabilitation of beggars being implemented by the GHMC, so that the same model can be replicated by their respective states.

A few months ago, the GHMC had filed an affidavit in Supreme Court informing the court that it is going to rehabilitate beggars by establishing beggar homes, temporary shelters and providing them with food, clothing and shelter. Based on the affidavit, the SC asked other states to visit Hyderabad, to follow the model adopted by GHMC.

Worried by the visit of officials from different states, GHMC has

started picking up beggars from the streets and lodging them in community halls and rehabilitation homes, to show officials how GHMC is rehabilitating them. Though the state government had assured the court that it would eradicate begging in public places, nothing has happened on the ground level.

A few years ago, the corporation made an attempt to rehabilitate beggars by shifting them to temporary shelters but 95 percent of them escaped and returned to their familiar trade, as they found it to be more lucrative, according to GHMC officials.

“We brought them to these homes and also conducted counselling but they always returned to the streets to resume their old profession,” said a GHMC official. However, only moving them to temporary homes would not eradicate the problem. They should be given elementary education and training in job skills.