

## **No placement for migrant labour in Railway projects**

BALANGIR: Resentment is brewing among local youths over poor recruitment in three railway projects being undertaken by Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL) in the district.

“Instead of providing jobs including those of daily labourers, the RVNL has been hiring people from outside. We had staged a series of demonstrations in past and brought the matter to the Collector’s notice. But locals are still being ignored,” alleged Baladeb Sahu of Randa village.

Sources said distress migration occurs every year from Balangir to brick kilns of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Chhattisgarh due to lack of work after kharif season. The number of migrant workers is estimated to be around two lakh and the number of migrant youths is around 60,000. Recruitment to Group D posts, caretakers, watchmen, manual labourers, supervisors and cooks in the railway projects can check migration in the area to some extent, opined Subhasankar Patel, an engineering graduate.

But the step-motherly attitude of railway officials in engaging local youths in the projects has frustrated them, he alleged.

Sources said three railway line projects of 182-km Sambalpur-Titlagarh doubling, the `423-crore Titlagarh-Raipur doubling and Titlagarh-Visakhapatnam are being constructed by the RVNL in the district. The RVNL has engaged constructing companies like IVRCL, Rail One, Termet, MRT-JV and Larsen & Toubro Limited for different works of the projects.

As per district employment exchange record, till June 1, at least 34,944 youths have enrolled their names while more than 15,000 having BTech degree, diploma and ITI qualification are running from pillar to post to get employment.

General secretary of a social organisation Ashis Khaitan said while the companies are depending on local markets for daily wagers, they have ignored the local youths in engaging them in the project works and are hiring labourers from outside including Andhra Pradesh.

When contacted, DGM of RVNL Pallivela Gopi said steps are being taken to employ local skilled youths in Sambalpur-Titlagarh project. Similarly, five electrical and nine civil diploma holders will be employed from locals, he added. A few months back, unemployed youths under the banner of ‘Struggling Youths of Balangir’ had staged a dharna for 15 days in front of the Collectorate demanding jobs.