
Female Child Trafficking and Social Work Intervention

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Abstract: *Thousands of women and children are trafficked every day. Human trafficking, or trafficking persons, is a form of modern-day slavery. Every country in the world is affected by human trafficking and it is third largest revenue generated activity in India. Trafficking of human beings especially female child has increased over the last decade. Nearly 60% of the victims of trafficking are below 18 years of age (NCRB 2005). National Human Rights Commission Report on Trafficking Women and Children, in India the population of women and children in sex work is stated to be between 70,000 and 1 million. There are legal protocols for prevention, suppression and punishment related to immoral trafficking. Nations are also attempting to combat this trafficking inhuman misery through Legislative, Executive and social action including Planned Social work Intervention is required for getting female child victims out of the control of traffickers, controllers and exploiters as a priority as is enabling victims to recover and reintegrate into society.*

Key Words: *Trafficking, Female Child, Social work intervention*

Introduction

Trafficking of children is a worldwide phenomenon affecting large number of boys and girls every day. There are legal protocols for prevention, suppression and punishment related to immoral trafficking. Nations are also attempting to combat this trafficking inhuman misery through legislative, executive and social action. Children and their families are often lured by the promise of better employment and a more prosperous life far from their homes. Others are kidnapped and sold.

Thousands of women and children are trafficked every day. Within the overall profile of trafficking in South Asia, India is a country of both transit and destination. There is a considerable degree of internal trafficking as well

as some trafficking from India to Gulf States and to South East Asia. Sale of children and their movement across the state borders takes place within the country too. This study aimed at qualitatively analyzing the nature of families of children who were trafficked and thus deprived of their rights. The study found out that there is correlation between psychosocial factors of family and girl child trafficking. Planned Social Work Intervention is required for getting child victims out of the control of traffickers, controllers and exploiters as a priority as is enabling victims to recover and reintegrate into society.

Magnitude of the Study

Girls and women trafficking in India are endemic and widespread predominantly against women. Around 70% of women in India are victims of human trafficking, according to Renuka Chowdhury Union Minister for Women and Child Development. National Crime Records Bureau reveals that a crime against a woman is committed every three minutes, a woman is raped every 29 minutes, a girl rape death occurs every 77 minutes, and one case of cruelty committed by either the husband or relative of the victim occurs every 9 minutes.

The researcher wants to diagnose the problem from the social work point of view and also will try to identify, assess, and develop some effective strategies through the preventive, curative, rehabilitative and developmental functions of social work.

Causes for Girl Child Trafficking

The root causes include extreme disparities of wealth, continuing and pervasive inequality due to class, caste and most importantly gender biases throughout the region, erosion of traditional family systems and values, iniquitous social conventions, lack of transparency in regulations governing labour migration (both domestic and cross border), poor enforcement of internationally agreed-upon human rights standards, and enormous profits ensured by the trafficking business to the traffickers.

According to Kelly, Meghan and Serio (2005) and Redlinger (2004), there are a number of factors contributing child trafficking, including gender discrimination, natural disaster, political instability, weak laws, family dysfunction, globalization, new communication and technology. Child marriage, social stigma, unemployment, lack of employment opportunities and training,

poverty, migration are some of the causes of push for girl child trafficking. The International Labour Organization (2006) states that child victims of trafficking endure harmful repercussions that affect their physical and mental health, contributing to personality and behavioural disorders which disturb normal child development. These negative impacts require a range of prevention measures, represented by the various professions in a multidisciplinary team including social workers.

Need and Social Work Intervention

The role of social worker can be in preventive and rehabilitative in combating girl child trafficking.

Prevention

Most of the Government personnel as well as the Community members are unaware of the trafficking face of migration. Those who understand this issue are not willing to acknowledge the presence of this phenomenon in their areas of operation. The magnitude and the misery associated with this gross violence are not being given the required amount of attention by the concerned personnel in most of the States. There is a great need for awareness generation at all levels and community policing to reduce the vulnerability of women and children and ensure safe migration and options for jobs and income. Special police officers need to be designated to look into trafficking cases specifically under all police stations. In this context social workers can organize awareness programmes, dissemination of outreach material in different forms like pamphlets, brochures, leaflets etc to address wider audience and sensitizing the public and concerned departments and also through community mobilization.

Rehabilitation

The rehabilitation is being done for the rescued female children. The social worker may work on the areas to build up the confidence level, individualization, skill based employment, referral service, motivation, counselling to the family members. Their family members could be included in the different livelihood programmes run by State and Central Government. According to the study of Juliet Patience Sambo, Gloudien Spies on the role of the social worker in the prevention of child trafficking in South Africa mentioned the stages of recovery and integration process from the International Labour Organisation (2006) source. Access to the community is important

for the survivors of girl child trafficking. Therefore, during the integration process the children staying in shelters need intensive psychosocial support. Likewise, the right to education, medical care and good nutrition must be promoted in both interim care and during integration. The stages of recovery and integration process are discussed below.

Intake and Assessment

The social worker conducts an individual needs assessment and attends to the girl child's most immediate needs, such as arranging counselling, medical attention and legal assistance. The need assessment of the trafficked child should be updated on a regular basis until the child leaves the facility and integrates into society. Once family tracing is successful, then the family and community assessment begins (International Labour Organization, 2006). Family assessment focuses on the economic status of the family to support the girl child, the risk of re-trafficking, and the risk of reprisals by the traffickers, the risk of harm by the family through neglect or abuse, and changes in family structure since the child left (Thins, 2006).

Similarly, community assessment focuses on the community's attitude toward trafficked children and related issues such as prostitution, HIV/AIDS and political instability.

The social worker should assess any risks of stigmatization and social rejection, and action should be taken to prevent the girl child from being re-trafficked. Furthermore, the social worker should assess the types of resources that exist in the community that will support the child's integration process. Assessment should also focus on external factors that may place the child at risk of further abuse or neglect (International Labour Organization, 2006). From the beginning this is an individual participatory process where the child's expressed views and the best interests are the primary consideration.

Interim Care and Support in Recovery

This is the stage of recovery and healing. The goal is the long-term and sustainable integration of the girl child into the family or community, and this process must start as soon as possible. The case management team involves social services, the legal guardian of the child, organizations and individuals experienced in caring for trafficked children (Thins, 2006).

Reintegration and Continuing Care

The children may have gone back to their families of origin and joined other families such as an extended family system or foster care. In the case of adolescents, they may live independent of others while studying. However, according to the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (2006), the returned victims may still be traumatized and suffering from medical and psychological problems as a result of the experience. Therefore, bilateral efforts between the destination state and the state of origin are imperative to protect the child from danger and retaliation by the traffickers upon the victim's return.

Furthermore, a long-term placement, such as industrial schools or foster care, places the responsibility for the child's development in the hands of the community and family who are legally responsible for the girl child's care and welfare (Thins, 2006).

The Girl Child Trafficking Protection Process involves the physical treatment and rehabilitation which address the capacity to handle complicated girl child trafficking cases. This involves a wide range of perspectives used to analyze problems and arrive at solutions. Moreover, it is important to understand professional protocols and official processes for the handling of child trafficking cases that clearly identify the duties of the respective role players in preventing the problem.

Furthermore, it is imperative to ensure informed decision-making abilities among the role players involved. This will include more accurate investigations into the problem and the utilization of more appropriate intervention approaches. The focus is on networking with other stakeholders in different areas of expertise to minimize system-inflicted trauma to children and their families as responses become more effectively coordinated and sensitive to children's needs.

Monitoring Network

The community needs to initiate and build up some mechanisms for the close monitoring of child trafficking in the form of a child trafficking watch. Meanwhile, efforts must be made to create greater public awareness in schools, communities, hospitals and relevant practitioners to monitor children who are vulnerable to trafficking (Thai Child Rights, 2008).

Investigation or Fact Finding

Upon receipt of suspected cases of child trafficking, the designated social worker must investigate and collect information that can be used to assess the victim. When the information on the child's physical, psychological and social status is being gathered, there will be a need to involve people from different fields such as paediatricians, psychiatrists, forensic doctors, police and lawyers (Thai Child Rights, 2008).

Protection

The primary information gathered needs to be assessed to formulate a protection plan. The Multidisciplinary team will hold a case conference to discuss and assess the problem, and to plan for protection. The United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (2006) concurs with the above view and adds that the protection of trafficked children and the provision of assistance to enable smooth reintegration into their original environment are crucial.

Recovery and Treatment

The child victim may need to receive psychological counselling. In addition, depending on the outcome of the primary assessment of the victim's social and physical condition, immediate medical treatment must be given.

Social Reintegration and Prevention

Through treatment and assessment by a multidisciplinary professional team the victims of girl child trafficking are prepared physically, mentally and socially for reintegration into the community.

The purpose of the study was to explore the views of social worker regarding their role in the prevention and rehabilitation of girl child trafficking in Karnataka. In-depth and one to one interview were conducted with the social worker working in selected NGOs working on girl child trafficking. Data were gathered in terms of their understanding of girl child trafficking, role of social worker, perception regarding the services to protect the victim and their rehabilitation, availability of resources to support the social worker in prevention of girl child trafficking, knowledge about the existing legislation related to child trafficking and their training needs in the field of child trafficking for social workers.

Objectives of the Study

To understand the girl child trafficking in Karnataka

To know the root causes for girl child trafficking

To suggest social work intervention strategies in alleviating girl child trafficking

To understand the social worker views on combat girl child trafficking

Research Methodology

The motivation for this study was to understand the role of the social worker in the prevention of female child trafficking in Karnataka. Because Karnataka stands third in Human Trafficking. Therefore a qualitative research approach was used to gain a holistic understanding of child trafficking (Fouché and Delpont, 2011). The social workers' perceptions regarding their role in the prevention of child trafficking were also explored. The most appropriate type of research used in this study was applied research to induce change (Fouché and De Vos, 2011). The aim was to explore and identify the role of the social worker in the prevention of female child trafficking in Karnataka. An explorative collective case study research design was utilized through detailed and in-depth data-collection methods. To reach the goal of the study, the researcher used semi-structured, one-on-one interviews based on the interview schedule. The respondents in this study were 10 social workers who work in different child protection organization in Karnataka. The researcher sought general statements about relationships among categories of data and attached meaning to the collective case study research design on the perception of the social workers regarding their role in the prevention of girl child trafficking (Fouché and Schurink, 2011).

Major Findings

It is evident through the literature study that trafficked female children are going through painful experiences, often characterized by economic hardships, torture, labour and sexual exploitation, as well as lack of love. Furthermore, trafficked female children are denied the right to education as they withdraw from school. The above became clear when the respondents, ten social workers from different organizations, narrated their views and experiences regarding their role in the prevention of child trafficking. All ten respondents expressed that they are not well equipped to deal effectively with trafficked cases and therefore they strongly suggested the need for special child trafficking legislation and guidelines to direct social workers in the intervention

process. Evidently Karnataka has no specific domestic legislation to prevent girl child trafficking. As a result of this, traffickers either get away scot-free or get a lesser punishment which does not match the criminal offence. The empirical outcome has revealed that female child trafficking is a challenging social problem and its dynamics requires specialized training of professional social workers. Very few organizations in Karnataka are working on child welfare and most of the districts have no Child Welfare Committee. The findings will be discussed under each of the themes which formed the structure of the data gathered in the empirical study. The themes are outlined below.

Theoretical Understanding of the Concept Child Trafficking

The views of the respondents with regard to their theoretical understanding of the concept girl child trafficking are summarized below.

From the empirical study it was evident that all ten respondents had a basic understanding of girl child trafficking. All ten respondents were able to define child trafficking. It was also apparent that the respondents knew the various factors that contribute to girl child trafficking as well as different forms of child trafficking. However, only two respondents seemed to have a more extensive understanding and she shared more information on the dynamics of both external and internal girl child trafficking. With regard to the impact of child trafficking, it was apparent from the respondents' views that girl child trafficking victims experience severe psychosocial repercussions and debilitating effects. It was also evident that dealing with girl child trafficking victims, social workers need to link up with other service providers to provide a more efficient and effective treatment to trafficked victims. This study confirms that the best interests of the child must be respected, especially when dealing with the life-threatening traumatic experiences of trafficked girl children. There are a number of indicators that would enable social workers to identify the victims of child trafficking. However, it was apparent during the interviews that the majority of the respondents had little information to refer to that would support them in identifying trafficked children.

Two respondents stated that a language problem could also be an indicator. It was evident that when a social worker comes into contact with an unaccompanied child who is not able to communicate in the local language, one can suspect child trafficking. One respondent expressed the view that

physical indicators enable the social workers to identify a trafficked girl child. The child might be beaten (for not complying with the trafficker's commands) and would have bruises, scars or red eyes. Another respondent indicated that another indicator could be that trafficked children may not know the physical address of the place and the names of the people with whom they were residing. This implies that trafficked girl children may have gone through different experiences of exploitation and can present different signs and symptomatic indicators. These indicators will enable the workers to identify the child as a victim of trafficking. The indicators range from psychological, physical, social and economic features.

Views on the Role of the Social Worker in the Prevention of Girl Child Trafficking

All ten respondents expressed the view that, at the primary prevention level of child trafficking, it is the social worker's role to raise awareness about child trafficking. Through their experience, the respondents stated that prevention should target vulnerable individuals, groups and communities. It was evident that the respondents were aware that the dissemination of information to the communities about the danger of child trafficking is paramount.

Experiences regarding obstacles social workers face in the prevention of girl child trafficking and knowledge about the existing legislation related to child trafficking

All the respondents indicated that the lack of knowledge and training regarding girl child trafficking is the major obstacles which the social worker face for prevention of child trafficking. The study confirms that lack of knowledge about protection also result in poor service delivery. However there is an emergent need to train the social worker on The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956, legislation and policies of child protection. It was noted that lack of communication, trust and cooperation among service providers rendering services to trafficked children is viewed as an obstacle for participation in the prevention of child trafficking.

Training Needs for Social Workers in the Field of Girl Child Trafficking

All the respondents mentioned the importance of training to understand and prevent child trafficking. They specifically indicated that training will add capacities to understand the psychology and dynamics of child trafficking. The development of training aid and trainers for organizing training programme by civil societies and community factor is important and crucial. The training of social workers to prevent child trafficking needs to focus specifically on the role of the social workers , the effective use of legislation, understanding the socio-psychological impact as well to identify a trafficked child.

Recommendations and Conclusion

Evidence from the research suggests numerous recommendations, which are discussed below.

Research has shown that social workers need to be trained to understand the dynamics of girl child trafficking, the effects on the trafficked child, the factors that contribute to girl child trafficking as well as the roles of the social worker in the prevention strategies. Training on the above aspects will enable social workers to render a more effective service to trafficked children. The training can take place through workshops and short courses, and child trafficking information could be incorporated into the curriculum at universities. Well trained social workers can inform communities through community development about the dynamics of girl child trafficking. This can strengthen the abilities of the social workers in the prevention of girl child trafficking. The social workers' roles in the prevention of child trafficking include knowledge dissemination. The social workers should impart knowledge to vulnerable and trafficked children, sensitize the community members about girl child trafficking, educate children on their fundamental rights and responsibilities which are necessary for their survival and protection from potential child traffickers, impart knowledge to other professionals and role players who work with children; social workers should also advocate on behalf of the vulnerable children and groups in the community. Research verified that social workers need to collaborate with local stakeholders and national stakeholders working with trafficked children. The Department/School of Social Work should deploy trained social workers who are equipped with child trafficking prevention strategies in other departments such as the police,

immigration and civil aviation facilities (airports) to identify and deal with potential victims of child trafficking.

The social workers should be more proactive and do more research on the topic of girl child trafficking. This will support them in playing a more prominent role in the prevention of child trafficking. While social workers currently are vaguely aware of the seriousness of child trafficking, very little research has been carried out to render an effective service on prevention and rehabilitation levels. More research based work needs to be done to guide the social workers in their task of preventing female child trafficking. The Department/School of Social Work could provide some resources for social workers to do the above mentioned research. Scientific articles based on research need to be published as a way to sensitize professionals to the traumatic effects of child trafficking. Department of Social Work must incorporate subjects like Human Rights, Refugees' Rights as main/specialized subject and encourage research on these subjects.

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