
Ignored Claims: A Prolific Investigation on Rescued Trafficked Women in Mysore City-India

Nanjunda

Centre for study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy
University of Mysore, India
Email: chairman@kkhf.org

Abstract

Human trafficking is condemned as a violation of human rights by international conventions. Human trafficking is the illegal trade in human beings for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation or forced labor: a modern-day form of slavery. The word 'trafficking' includes the word 'traffic', which we often equate with transportation or travel. However, while the words look and sound alike, they do not hold the same meaning. Human trafficking does not require the physical movement of a person (but must entail the exploitation of the person for labor or commercial sex). Additionally, victims of human trafficking are not permitted to leave upon arrival at their destination. They are held against their will through acts of coercion and forced to work or provide services to the trafficker or others. The work or services may include anything from bonded or forced labor to commercialized sexual exploitation. The arrangement may be structured as a work contract, but with no or low payment or on terms which are highly exploitative. Sometimes the arrangement is structured as debt bondage, with the victim not being permitted or able to pay off the debt. This paper is based on a survey conducted among Trafficked Women (rescued) in Mysore city-India.

Key Words: *Trafficking, Women, Trade, Exploitation, Mysore.*

Background

UNESCO defines Human trafficking as “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.”

Certainly, human trafficking is a modern day slavery where human beings are subjugated by treating them like merchandise for profit. It is contrary to the basic faith of all societies that people everywhere merit to live in safety and dignity. Victims of human trafficking who comprise of young children, teenagers, men and women are subjected to involuntary servitude and sexual slavery by force, fraud or coercion. Human smuggling, particularly of women

and children has become a matter of serious national and international distress. Sources confirm that nearly 800,000 victims are yearly trafficked across international borders worldwide and around 150,000 of them within and around the borders of South Asia alone. The fact is that after drug dealing and unlawful arms smuggling, human trafficking is the world's third largest organized crime, and growing by leaps and bounds. Commercial exploitation of the vulnerable sections of the society has led to massive growth of slave trade into a multimillion dollar business. According to the FBI (USA), this organized crime generates \$9.5 billion in revenue each year. Globalization of the economy, which means globalization of the sex industry, as it becomes an industry without borders. Large and small scale trafficking networks operate across borders, actively recruiting girls and women, especially from villages, city streets and transportation centers. Hotels, airlines, and charter companies, often with direct and indirect government conspiracy and corruption, are involved in the trafficking of women for sex tourism (Agbu, 2003).

The majority of trafficking victims are women and girls, who are especially vulnerable due to limited economic opportunities, illiteracy or low education, and low socio-economic and cultural status. Victims come from all areas of Nepal, but most targeted are those in traditionally disadvantaged, marginalized groups such as the Dalit caste (untouchables) and Jajanti. However, victimization is spreading to advantaged groups and upper caste women as well. The Human Development Report (2004) estimates approximately 20 percent who are trafficked to Arab nations and other countries in Asia are under the age of 16. Most victims were lured with promises of better jobs in areas such as Dubai, or Saudi Arabia; other tactics include false marriages and proposals, force, and approaching indebted families to sell their daughters to pay their debts, sometimes under the guise of a dowry for a marriage. Now a days Human trafficking in general has expanded to almost every state in the country. Tamil Nadu leads with 9,701 cases over the past ten years, followed by Andhra Pradesh (5,861), Karnataka (5,443), West Bengal (4,190) and Maharashtra (3,628). These five states are high source as well as destination areas, trafficking women and young girls to red-light areas; they comprise 70 percent of all reported cases of human trafficking over the past ten years (web sources).

The most vulnerable are women and girls who are illiterate or uneducated, involved in marginalized livelihoods, deserted by their husbands or families, victims of abuse and violence, and those from disadvantaged communities and extremely poor families. In the places of enslavement, victims are often imprisoned, followed with guards, routinely sexually and physically abused across different types of trafficking. Victims receive little or no pay for their

work, work in dangerous conditions for extremely long periods of time, and are threatened physically and psychologically. Victims are often held in debt bondage by their captors, which means, they are forced to pay off a debt for their families or transportation fee. Victims sometimes get away from their captivity through escape, rescue by police raids, or release by their captors when deemed too old to be profitable. There are different types in human trafficking 1. Sex trafficking, 2. Bonded labor 3. Forced labor 4. Child labor (Ghosh, 2009).

Research Design

Objectives

1. To identify the social and economic background of the trafficked women in Mysore District
2. To accumulate information about human trafficking regarding their age, educational and health condition and to identify the causes for the growth of human trafficking in the city

I. Methodology

1. Selection of Samples

A carefully chosen 100 rescued trafficked samples were surveyed using structured questionnaires from the rehabilitated centers being run by the Two Mysore based NGOs and the Govt. agencies. Random sampling techniques were used to select the respondents.

2. Community Norms Study

Community norms data had been obtained through focus group study from key informants including formal and informal government officials, political leaders, media personnel, etc.

3. Institutional Ethnography (NGOs Prospective)

Selected local NGOs working for the betterment of the tribal community had been selected for the study

II. Tools for Data Collection

1. Survey
2. Case Study
3. Interview
4. Content Analysis

Data Analysis: Suitable softwares used to analyze the data

Instruments

The following instruments were structured for collection of both Quantitative and Qualitative data.

1. Sample Schedule
2. Focus Group
3. NGO Schedule

**Table 1: Result and Discussion
Socio Economic Profile of Trafficked Women**

Variables	Number	Percentage	X²	P
Age				
Just Above 20	32	32		
22-25	27	27	2.133	0.000
25-35	41	41		
Educational Level			5.324	0.000
Primary Education	26	26		
High School	9	9		
College	11	11		
Illiterates	42	42		
Professional Education	12	12		
Family Income (in Rs.)			3.501	0.000
3000-5000	68	68		
5000-10000	9	9		
Above 10,000	23	23		
Caste /community			8.430	0.000
SC	31	31		
ST	32	32		
OBC	30	30		
Others	7	7		
Marital Status			3.2109	0.000
Married	18	18		
Unmarried	59	59		
Widow/ Widower	23	23		
Domicile				
Local	35	35	2.001	0.000
Inter District	31	31		
Interstate	34	34		

Table 2: Religion of the Surveyed Trafficked Families

Religion	Count	Percentage
Hindu	47	47
Muslim	37	37
Christian	16	16
Others	25	25
Total	100	100

Table 3: Occupations (parents) of the Surveyed Trafficked Personnel

Occupation	Count	Percentage
Coolie	42	42
Construction Work	23	23
Industrial Labour	20	20
Agriculture	15	15
Total	100	100

Table 4: Total Earnings of the Parents of the Trafficked Personnel

Earning in Rs.	Count	Percentage
2500-3000	54	54
3000-3500	21	21
3500-4000	15	15
Above 40000	10	10
Total	100	100

Table 5: Reasons for the Trafficking

Reasons	Count	Percentage
Poverty	44	44
Big household	10	10
Inadequate income	28	28
No. Dependents more	18	18
Total	100	100

Table 6: How you Rescued

Mode	Count	Percentage
Police	24	24
NGO	12	12
Self	30	30
By local people	34	34
Total	100	

Table 7: Any Sexual Assault?

Reply	Count	Percentage
YES	94	94
NO	6	6
Total	100	100.00

Table 8: Are you Happy with this Rehabilitation Measures

Reply	Count	Percentage
Yes	67	67
Satisfactory	22	22
NO	11	11
Total	100	100.00

Discussion

Although there are insufficient data that report on the various issues of trafficking, evidence suggests that victims have a greater prevalence of illiteracy, homelessness, poverty, and social exclusion. Trafficked women have fewer resources, limited options, and increased vulnerability to violence and abuse than women who are not trafficked.

In this study the majority of trafficking victims are between 18 and 24 years of age. The socio-economic background of the majority of the studied trafficked families is very pathetic. Majority of them are poor, belongs to the lower castes, illiterates and are immigrants to the City. Most of the parents are working in unskilled jobs. Hence their economic status is very low. There is a vital link between poverty and human trafficking. Some of the major social factors like caste, religion, gender, culture and traditional background are also conjugate with the economic heterogeneity of the poor families of trafficked. In tune with their illiterate/semi-literate educational level on one hand and largely non-skilled occupations and the consequent low-income levels on the other hand have largely affecting on these trafficked families.

Semi-orphan/destitute condition appears to be one of the leading factor, which led women to take commercial sex workers. It was found that while 24 percent of the trafficked girls in these samples had no mothers and 29 percent had no fathers. Further, malnutrition, stressful work, alcoholism,

unhealthy living condition, lack of social security and proper health care appear to have cut short the span of life considerably. The problem of human trafficking is deeply inter-twined with the caste, class and gender factors etc. It is a clear manifestation of a depressed structural problem. The tender aged girl children are victims of a vicious triangle of oppression related to caste, class and gender. The intense globalization of recent years has only aggravated the problem further. As long as masses continue to be marginalized and pushed to the walls, the girl child prostitution is bound to see an unending proliferation in Mysore city working to Combat human trafficking on the legislators, nonprofit organizations and surviving families have advocated for serious improvements in the ability of officials to protect victims of abductions, trafficking and exploitation.

It is found that 95 percent of victims experienced physical or sexual violence during trafficking. According to this survey women are bought and sold with impunity and trafficked at will to other countries from different parts of India. These girls and women are sourced from Tamil Nadu, Bihar, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Mangalore, Gulbarga, Raichur (from Karnataka). It is found that these women and girls are supplied to Thailand, Kenya, South Africa and Middle East countries like Bahrain, Dubai, Oman, Britain, South Korea and The Philippines. They are forced to work as sex workers undergoing severe misuse and mistreatment. These women are the most susceptible group in contracting HIV infection. Due to inexorable poverty and lack of employment opportunities there is an augment in the voluntary entry of women into sex work.

Trafficking both for commercial sexual exploitation and for non-sex based exploitation is a transnational and complex challenge as it is an organized criminal activity, an extreme form of human rights violation and an issue of economic empowerment and social justice. The trafficking of women and children causes untold miseries as it violates the rights and dignity of the individual in several ways.

NGOs, child advocacy organizations, law enforcement groups, human rights activists and researchers, the media, religious organizations, governments, and others should co-ordinate with the extent of the problem and the tragic reality of a generation of children being commodified, exploited, and victimized. Many NGOs selected by the Govt to run short stay homes are ill equipped to cater to the rehabilitation needs of the trafficked. Lack of sound financial base, human resource came in the way of their being able to sustain the activities.

Conclusion

Inarguably, poverty is a crucial contributing factor for the rise in human trafficking. At the heart of the problem also lies underdevelopment and unemployment. It needs no reiteration that a vast majority of trafficked women are from poor, landless families or belong to dalit, adivasi and low caste communities. Girls from tribal areas and poor villages are most vulnerable to trafficking in sex trade as the need for money is high for their parents. This motivates them to sell their children for paltry sums without even caring for their security. There is also a strong connection between the problem of trafficking and the girl child who faces the higher risk of being sold at birth, living as we are in a gender biased society. Despite the magnitude of the problem of human trafficking, Karnataka has failed to show evidence of increasing efforts to tackle the menace. Though the government boasts of working for the uplift of these tribes and under privileged people, it has not reached to root cause of trafficking as the much touted development schemes are not reaching the poor and backward areas of the region.

References

- Agbu, O. (2003). Corruption and Human Trafficking: The Nigerian Case. *West Africa Review*, 4(1), 1-13.
- Ghosh, B. (2009). Trafficking in women and children in India: Nature, Dimensions and Strategies for Prevention. *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 13(5), 716-38
- Nanda, Ashwini Kumar (2005) 3 Immigration from Bangladesh to India based on Census data 3, *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* 14 (4), pp. 487-99.

Books

- Nair, P. M. and Sankar, S. (2005). *Trafficking in Women and Children in India*. New Delhi: Orient Longman.