

Human trafficking in North Eastern region: a study with global perspectives

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Abstract: *Human trafficking poses as one of the greatest threats to human rights all over the world. It occurs in every single country on the globe. Poverty is the basic cause of human trafficking along with the others like political instability, demand for labour, low educational status, migration and rapidly growing sex industry. Women and children are more vulnerable for human trafficking because they have less social empowerment and weak in physical stature. Human trafficking may be of two types- trafficking as sex worker and trafficking for labour. In the North-eastern region, human trafficking problem rises alarmingly and specially girls are duped to other Asian countries with promise of well paid employment and force them to work in red light area. In this paper the investigator tries to discuss the causes of human trafficking in North eastern region & try to find out its solutions.*

Key Words:-*Human trafficking, North-eastern region, Poverty, Sex industry, children, Labour.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Human trafficking is considered as the third largest criminal industry in the world. It is a problem of not only a single state or country, but around the globe. It has gained tremendous attention in all over the world after arms and drug trades. According to the definition of United Nations-‘trafficking is any activity that leading to recruitment, transportation, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or a position of vulnerability’. Human trafficking is one of the greatest problems in Russia and former Soviet Republics, where women and children were mostly affected. The current economic situation in Russia makes it difficult for women to find an employment and provide food and shelter for their families, for that reason they put themselves in this menace. The trafficking of women and children from Eastern Europe has increased following to the collapse of the Soviet Union. Human trafficking continue to be a serious problem in Ukraine also, but in 1998 this country has adopted safety measures to stop this crime by Ukraine legislative law and this is the first country of Europe which formally announced human trafficking as criminal offence. Trafficking is caused by a combination of several factors including poverty, government corruption, and economic instability, lack of strict legal systems and the easy money tendency or high financial gain in the trade.

Today whole world is facing this problem irrespective to caste and creed. But alarmingly North East India is becoming the hot spot of human trafficking from all corner of the globe. Human trafficking has recently emerged in North Eastern region of India because of the diminishing traditional social value along with large levels of corruption. The corruption is so deep that many law enforcement officers are involved in the trafficking industry. Often women and children have no other option to turn to if they are trafficked. Young girls and women from North East India are taken from their native places to faraway states of India or outside India for bonded labour and for sex business. As per the government of India’s statistics in every eight minutes a child goes missing in our country in 2011 and most of them are from West Bengal and North East India. Amongst the states in India, Jharkhand has the highest rate of cases of human trafficking. According to an article in *First post*, Delhi is the hub of human trafficking trade in India and half of the world’s slaves live in India. Girls and women from North eastern region are sold in Delhi by illegal trader by luring their parents for better life of their children. Most of the states of North Eastern regions are struggled for roti, kapra aur makan. So poverty is the prime cause for such kinds of illegal business of human flash. Human trafficking includes sexual exploitation, bonded labour, cross border trafficking and trafficking for human organs etc. It is becoming an organised business all over the country. Despite sixty nine years of independence, the economic development of India is not remarkable. The marginalised section of India is still under the poverty line and they survived for food, shelter and cloths which are basic needs of human beings. Poverty and hunger makes women and children more vulnerable to human trafficking. Trafficking continues to be a problem mostly due to lack of action. The corruption is particularly problematic in neighbouring countries with whom trade is conducted. Law enforcement and local police are often customers and equal partner with the traffickers. Various NGOs provide

needed assistance and aid for trafficking victims, but the high levels of corruption often limit their ability to make a large impact. Some time rescued victims have to remain scarred and they are not able to receive the psychological help they need. Many are dragged back into trafficking. There are several main exporters and importers of traffickers. Russia, Ukraine and Moldova are the prominent in exporters of human beings. These countries are seen as easily accessible, in addition to the fact that there are few possibilities of legal ramifications in these countries. However, trafficking is found everywhere. Sweden, Finland and Israel are some of the main importers. Human trafficking in Russia and the former Soviet Republics is a complex issue. Much more needs to be done to stop human trafficking, but as long as it remains fuelled by economic disparity and local corruption, it will continue.

North Eastern region of India comprises of eight states- Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Nagaland, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Sikkim, respectively. This region covers a geographical area of 2, 62185 sq.kms which is nearly 8% of the total geographical area of the country. This region is located between latitudes 29 degree and 22 degree North and longitudes about 89.46 and 97.5 East. According to 2001 census report, the region has a total population of 3.9 crores. Although the region has plenty of natural resources with bio-diversity, hydro-potential, oil and coal reserves and wealthy forest covers, economically this region is still lagging behind all the states of India. The most important factor for fuelling human trafficking in this region is that, it is surrounded by international borders like China in the North, Bhutan in the West, Myanmar or Burma in the East and Bangladesh in the South. So the problem like human trafficking becomes a tricky one. The threat of child and girls trafficking has assumed alarming proportions. Though child trafficking is prevalent all over the country, its incidence is quite high in the North-Eastern region. Most of the cases of human trafficking in Assam occur in the area of tea estates where people are illiterate and alcoholic. In the North Eastern region of India human trafficking takes place within the states or in India and across the border Of Myanmar, Bangladesh, Nepal due to poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and traditional thinking about the women section. The most vulnerable places of North Eastern region for human trafficking are Mushalpur, Baska, Dumni chaki, Lakhimpur, Arunachal Pradesh, Dhubri, etc. From Central Bureau of investigation Office (CBI), Ulubari, Assam, it is found that during the period 2005-2010, 42.03 percent children are trafficked to the states- Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and West Bengal, where as 31.88 percent children are sent to metro cities such as Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, etc., 14.49 percent children are sent to unknown destinations, 7.25 percent are trafficked within the North Eastern region and 4.35 percent children are sent to others places. Women and children continue to remain unsafe in the state. More than 20,000 cases of crime against women are reported in 2015. Similarly, till October,2015, about 1, 386 minors including girls were reported missing from across the state, in the preceding year a total of 1,577 children went missing. Due to open national and international border and loose security condition of North East India, human trafficking problems become an unsolvable one.

Objectives of the study: The objectives of this study are as follows-

- To find out the causes of human trafficking in North eastern region
- To state solutions of this problem
- Discuss the government policies to solve this problem.

Methodology: The investigator collects information and data for this study from secondary sources like books, articles, news papers and internet sources.

Causes of human trafficking:

Human trafficking happens due to several reasons around the globe. But the root causes are similar all over the countries -

- Economic cause: Economic causes are Poverty, Economic inequality, Migration, Unemployment, Climate change, Environmental degradation or depression etc.
Social causes are Gender inequality, Violence against women and girls, increasing demand for cheap labour in the construction, agriculture sector, mining, poor social protection, etc.
- Political causes are corruption inside the country and international level, terrorism, war, increased armed conflicts, etc.

In the globe, about 80% of the human trafficking is done for sexual exploitation and the 20% is done for bonded labour and others. India is considered as the hub of human trafficking centre in Asia and demand for commercial sex is one of the causes of this crime. Most of the North Eastern region's girls' are trafficking to Thailand, Singapore, Japan as bonded labour or as sex worker because of high demand of their Mongolian look. Poverty and economic hardship coupled with alcoholism has made most of the parents vulnerable to the lure of money in exchange of their girl's children to the world of slavery across the inter-state border. The negligence of tea gardens management to these activities is another noticeable factor for this unlawful trade.

Solutions: Human trafficking is a global phenomenon and one of the fastest growing criminal industries in the world. To stop this heinous crime every citizen should be alert and active. There are few solutions stated below to stop this nuisance:-

- The government should impose strict law against traffickers in the country. The traffickers should be punished vehemently so that they never do such kind of offence.
- The vulnerable area of human trafficking should be identified and awareness campaigns be conducted with the help of NGO and local people.
- All the North-East states should come forward to tackle this menace in a organised way.
- The political corruption level should be slows down and border area should have strict vigil by the concerned authority.
- To stop this menace education has a key role, so that government and NGO and other social organisations should spread education in the remote areas particularly about these kinds of crimes because due to proper knowledge most of the uneducated even educated women and girl child become the easy prey of traffickers.
- On the other hand the concerned authority should take the missing persons report seriously and should take necessary action without fail.
- Due to loss of social value, women and girls child are considered as second class citizens and sold them at a lower price as commodity. This is happened only because of negligence of girl child. The Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi Ji has launched a programme on girl child, i.e., 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' programme, so with effective implementation of such programme can reduce this kind of menace from the society.
- Because of foetus death of girl child, the sex ratio is very poor in Haryana, Rajasthan and some other parts of the country, so girl child trafficking becomes a regular trade in these states. To stop this illegal trade awareness march should be organised to generate knowledge among the people regarding women empowerment.
- Adequate rehabilitation centre should be formed in an organised way so that trafficking women and girl child get proper treatment and counselling.
- Poverty, gender biasness, rapid urbanisation and low awareness are the prime cause of human trafficking in North East India, so action plan should implement to abolish this menace.
- In December 1st 2016, the Supreme Court of India has directed the Central government to operationalise the Organized Crimes Investigating Agency (OCIA) to curb state and international human trafficking of girls. If quick action is done by this agency, such kind of crimes may be abolished one day.
- A comprehensive legislation on human trafficking will give the much needed power to the law enforcing agencies to curb the criminal activity.

Government Policy adopted as anti human trafficking measures: Throughout the 19th and 21st centuries government measures are taken to prevent this menace internationally, through some Acts and Convention, such as- International Anti Slavery Convention, International Anti-Prostitution Convention, International Labour Law, International Human Rights Law and Rights to Children Act, etc. These are one of the several measures taken by government all over the World. In India also government has taken several anti trafficking measures to prevent the exploitation of women and children from the threat of human trafficking. In the Indian Constitution, Article no. 23 (1) Provides that, 'trafficking in human beings are prohibited and any contravention of this prohibition shall be an offence and punishable. In Article no. 39 (1) imposes duty on the state to direct its policy towards saving 'that children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in condition of freedom and dignity and children and youth are protected against exploitation...' The immoral Traffic Preventing Act 1956 is the main legal instrument against the trafficking of human being in the country. In 1998, the Indian Prime minister approved a National Plan of Action to combat trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of women and children.

II. CONCLUSIONS

In December 12th, 2013, Pope Francis stated that, 'Human trafficking is a crime against humanity; we must unite our efforts to free the victims and stop this increasingly aggressive crime'. So, with this saying we should determine our mind to abolish this kind of criminal activity through united venture irrespective of castes, creeds and gender biasness. Human trafficking is ethnically diverse as well as happening to all socio-economic classes. It is harmful to all genders and ages regardless of religious affiliations or country of origin. The evil of human trafficking should be strictly checked before it annihilates our society. Laws should be made for stringent and women and girl children should be educated. It is high time that society should realize the dignity of women and girl child and unite to fight against this heinous crime.

At last with a famous phrase we can say that, 'None of us is as smart as all of us'. This famous saying makes us stop and think over the significance of a team. With team spirit, undoubtedly, we can abolish this menace from our society.

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