

Foundation Course
Semester 1
UNIT 6
GROWING SOCIAL PROBLEMS IN INDIA

TRAFFICKING OF WOMEN

Introduction:

Trafficking is the organized crime which violates the basic human rights for the purpose of slavery, commercial sexual exploitation, organ transplant, begging, circus and forced marriage.

The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, popularly known as the Trafficking Protocol was adopted by the United Nations in Palermo, Italy in 2000. It is an international legal agreement attached to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. This protocol tries to facilitate co-operation of the member nations to solve the issue of trafficking.

The United Nations has listed India in its Tier II List as a country who has failed to combat the problem of human trafficking especially of women. In India women are treated as commodities and are sold in the open market. The women are trafficked from neighboring countries like Bangladesh, Nepal to India and in many cases are trafficked to gulf countries, Middle East and Europe. Women trafficking are mostly found in states like Goa, Assam, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal.

PROCESS OF TRAFFICKING

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The dalals move the victims to the potential sites and for some time they make the victim to stay over there. The victims are first exploited by these dalals. The dalals use drugs, abduction, kidnapping, persuasion or deception to get the target. They know many languages, including the local ones, so they become closer to the victim. Due to corruption, the Police, the Visa or the Passport Officials, Taxi or Auto rickshaw Drivers etc are also befriended by the dalals. They hand over the victims to the brothel owners, escort services or to the managers of the sex establishments.

CAUSES OF WOMEN TRAFFICKING

The major causes of trafficking in women are as follows:

1. Poverty: Especially in poor countries like Nepal, Sri Lanka, poverty is the root cause of trafficking of women. The financially weak parents themselves sale their sons and daughters to the dalals for money.

Unemployment: When the male members of the family are not working then the females have to take the entire burden of running the household. The women undergo immense pressure to satisfy the family needs. This is taken as an advantage by the traffickers who lure women into the flesh trade.

Child Marriage: In India child marriages still exist and even the dowry system. The girls are trafficked in the name of

marriage to Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Mumbai, Bihar and other states.

Social Stigma: In our society especially in the rural areas, the single, divorced, unwed, widowed and sexually abused women and young girls are looked down upon. The unwillingness of the society to accept them may lead to frustration on the part of these women and they become easy prey of the traffickers.

Religious Practices: The decades system wherein the girl is wedded to God and later on exploited by the temple priests, helps to the growth of women trafficking. Still this practice is continued in India. The Scheduled Caste women are made to work as decades. Later on they become prostitutes in the red light areas of the city.

Female Infanticide and Foeticide: The states like Punjab and Haryana have a very high rate of female infanticide and foeticide. Hence the sex ratio is not balanced in such states. The men in these states depends heavily on the human traffickers for the satisfaction of their physical needs.

False Promises: The women who are involved in a love affair with a man without knowing his background are ultimately cheated and lured into prostitution racket. The promises of marriage becomes false when the man makes a DVD or MMS of hers which shows her in a negative way. Ultimately the women is blackmailed and trapped by the traffickers.

Domestic Violence: Due to the dowry system, the women are victims of the domestic violence. Wife battering is glorified in India. A man is considered as masculine if he ill treats his wife and beats her black and blue. Many women who are lucky enough to escape such torture are not accepted by their parents also. This is because even the parents feel that the girl after marriage is someone else's property. Such women ultimately fall prey to the traffickers.

Natural disasters: The women are more vulnerable during natural calamities like earthquakes, cyclones, floods as well as during man made disasters like war. It was reported in the newspapers that in the Gujarat earthquake many women were molested, raped and sold. Prostitution increases much more

during such disasters.

Migration: The men who migrate to the cities live behind their families. Hence to satisfy their physical needs, the market of human trafficking flourishes a lot in the cities.

Tourism: The male tourists who visit our country also demands commercial sex for their enjoyment. Thus the women become more vulnerable in tourists destinations like Goa, Mahabaleshwar etc. Hence many people are afraid to settle down with their families in the tourists areas.

Social Practices: The social practices like expecting women to give sacrifices for the family, develops a sense of duty and Obligation drives the women to migrate for work in order to support their families. They become an easy victim of Traffickers.

Lack of Birth Registry: People who do not have proper registration of birth falls easily in the net of the traffickers because their age and nationality cannot be documented. Children's who are trafficked are called as adults by the traffickers and they are easily passed on from one state to another.

Corruption: The traffickers often bribe the corrupt police and immigration officials to overlook criminal activities. The Civil Servants are also bribed to falsify information on ID cards, birth certificates and passports making human trafficking easier.

EFFECTS OF WOMEN TRAFFICKING

The effects of trafficking may have severe impact on the survivors.

Rejection: Those who survive and come back to the normal community are not accepted again. The community rejects them and boycotts their family. The survivor has to return back to the brothel or commit suicide.

Helplessness: The victims feel helpless because they are not able to change the circumstances in which they are locked. They cannot face the situation and in the end they give up. They withdraw and isolate themselves and remain

disconnected from the society. Even if they are rescued and rehabilitated, the feeling of helplessness continues.

Distraction: The victims try to engage themselves in various activities and try to forget their situation. They watch movies, fight with others and also gossip about others. They may also become addict to drugs, tobacco and alcohol. They also seek short term relationships with strangers.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder: The trafficking survivors may experience the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. It is a general anxiety that is triggered by any cue that reminds the survivor of the traumatic abuse that he or she may have undergone. This leads to numbness of sensations.

Depressive Disorder: The feeling of sadness, inability to enjoy oneself, lack of interest in day to day activities and negativity about the future leads to depressive disorder in the victim.

Dissociative Disorder: In this, the victim becomes unconscious. The victim suffers from amnesia and has multiple personality disorder.

Psychotic Disorder: The victim may develop slow and steady degradation of his entire personality. In this disorder the victim has several delusions and starts hallucinating as well as faces various behavioural difficulties. Many rape victims suffer from this disorder. They loose control on their senses and hence they may roam without wearing clothes and they may pelt stones on others.

Eating Disorder: The victim may experience eating disorders. Due to frustration and depression, they may eat more than required or they may take to eating binges or they may not eat at all.

Addiction: The victim even after being rescued may not stop his addiction. They may die due to severe drug addiction and alcoholism.

Legal Effects: Due to illiteracy and ignorance the victims do not understand that they are exploited. They do not even know about the various laws of the country. They are intellectually, physically, emotionally weak. Their utter helplessness and stigma do not allow them to take help from the legal authorities.

RESPONSE TO WOMEN TRAFFICKING

.Response from Constitution: The Constitution of the country contain provisions related to human trafficking as follows:

- Fundamental Rights: The Article 23 of the Indian Constitution says that trafficking in any form of human beings is prohibited under the law.
- Fundamental Duties: One of the eleven fundamental duties of the citizens is to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.

Response from the Government:

The Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, 1956: This act was enacted with reference to the International Convention signed at New York in 1950. Initially this act was known as the 'Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act' which is a main legal tool for preventing human trafficking. Its aim is to prevent women trafficking.

National Plan of Action, 1998: It is known as 'The National Plan of Action to combat trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of women and children in 1998. Its aim is to rehabilitate the survivors of commercial sexual exploitation and bring them back to the normal social life. It has one committee at the central level which is known as the Central Advisory Committee and the other at the state level which is known as the State Advisory Committee.

Ministry of Women and Child Development: It was established in 1985 to give boost to the holistic development of the women and children. Its prominent schemes are SWADHAR and UJJAWALA. The SWADHAR was introduced in 2001 to provide shelter, counseling, medical assistance and vocational training to the rescued victims. The UJJAWALA Scheme was introduced in 2007 for the prevention of sex trafficking and to check cross border trafficking.

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National Commission for women: In 1992, the government established the National Commission for Women to protect and promote the interests of women. It organizes workshops, seminars, conferences and activities related to women trafficking. It has signed an MoU with the United Nations Development Fund for women in order to check the problem of human trafficking in three states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal. Its objective is to eliminate human trafficking by 2015.

National Human Rights Commission: It was established under the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993. It helps to review and amend relevant laws to prevent trafficking. It sponsors research studies on trafficking and takes effective action to ensure safe and voluntary return of trafficked women to their community. It also ensures education, skills training and employment assistance to trafficked women in order to prevent them from re-trafficking.

Response from the NGO's:

The NGO's like Mumbai based 'Prerna' and the Kolkatta based 'Sankalp' have done a god job in indentifying victims from the red light areas and rescuing them as well as rehabilitate them. Prerna is famous for its work in the field of human trafficking at the national and international level.

Response from International Organizations:

There is the SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women, Convention on the Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and the Prostitution of Others and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. India is a signatory to all these international instruments.

Response from the Media:

Media is the ultimate weapon of generating mass awareness of the social problem of human trafficking. It may spread the news of human trafficking in a particular area or it may create awareness about NGO's working for the rehabilitation of the victims. It may even provide helpline numbers for the victims and community members who wish to get involved.