

## **EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

### **INTERNAL TRAFFICKING OF WOMEN INTO SEXWORK IN INDIA: PROBLEMS IN REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION**

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#### **Introduction and literature review**

Trafficking in women has become part of transnational organized crime and has been referred to as the “dark side of globalization” (Ministerial Conference Communiqué 1999, Nepal). Within the South Asian region, Nepal and Bangladesh have been designated as “sending” countries or countries of origin in the regional web of trafficking. India and Pakistan are usually referred to as countries of “transit” or “destination.” Due to illicit nature of people trafficking, the number of children and women trafficked for commercial sex work is difficult to quantify in nature. However the national and international sources agree that the global trade has increased substantially over a decade. An estimated 600,000 to 800, 000 persons especially women and children, are sold each year across international borders. South Asia is the highest contributor, sacrificing 150,000 persons to this heinous trade. Recent estimates by United States suggest that globally trafficking of women and children is an operation worth \$5-7 billion annually. Estimate indicates that more than 2 million women of Indian, Nepalese, and Bangladeshi origin are engaged in the commercial sex trade in India. Of these, at least 500,000 are under the age of 18 years. It is estimated that 200,000 Nepalese women and girls are trafficked to work as prostitutes worldwide and approximately 12,000 are trafficked to India each year. Trafficking of persons is not a new phenomenon in Asia, but there is evidence of new forms, routes, and sources. It is estimated that the cross boarder trafficking represents about 10 percent of the coerced migrants, with approximately 2.17percent from Bangladesh and 2.6 percent from Nepal. Interstate trafficking, therefore, could make up as much as 89 percent trafficked victims (Mukherjee.K.K., Sutapa Mukherjee. 1991). Given this, addressing internal trafficking issues is essential to any strategic approach at national level. Central Social Welfare Board of Government of India lists Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh as the high-supply zones of women in prostitution. According to the Report of the National Crime Records Bureau (1998), Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India states that there was a 22.2 per cent increase in the cases of selling of minor girls for prostitution for the year 1998 over 1997. In accordance with the constitution, the government of India enacted the Suppression of Immoral traffic in Women and Girls Act, 1956, which criminalizes trafficking. The Act does not prohibit prostitution related activities such as keeping a brothel or allowing premises to be used as a brothel, living on the earnings of prostitution and procuring, inducing or taking a woman or a girl for the purpose of prostitution. Majority of the Indian girls into prostitution belong to the Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities (Times of India. November, 1998). With the advent of the security forces, prostitution has emerged as a growing menace in Nagaland. According to a study by Centre of Concern for Child Labour four pockets in India are said to be recruiting grounds. The four pockets are Andhra Pradesh (Adilabad,

Kurnul and Enadi), Karnataka (Belgaum and Raichur), Tamilnadu (Madurai and Coimbatore), Bihar (Dhanbad, Dumka, Sahebganj, Ranchi and Purnea) and West Bengal (Mushirabad, Nadia and Jalpaiguri) (Child Prostitution in India. 1998).

The issue of the trafficking is complex in nature. India saw a whopping 87.2 percent increase in trafficking of girls during 1997-98. It is estimated that 35 percent of the total girls and women trafficked to India have been abducted under the pretext of false marriage or good jobs (Trafficking of women in India, Country Report, ADB, 2002). The children of indigenous people and ethnic minorities are especially vulnerable to trafficking. (UNICEF. 1995). “Every year thousands of girls are dedicated to goddess ‘Yellamma’ ‘Renuka’ (mostly in the states of Karnataka and Maharashtra) and after a brief period of concubinage, they become accessible to urban prostitution. With in these mechanics we find that three socialised instruments perpetuate the fate of these women namely, economic organization, brute force and religious rituals” (Ishwaraprasad Gilada. 1993). Sixty percent of the girl child among traditional entertainer groups in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka are ushered in the sex profession by family member (The Times of India. 10 November 1998). The HIV pandemic has also added a sense of urgency to the problem since the social and economic processes underlying trafficking are in many ways similar to those fueling the spread of HIV (AIDS Action 1998; UNDP 2000). The causes, processes and outcomes of trafficking are complex and subject to considerable debate (Coomaraswamy 1997). Majority of females are in the age group of 12-35 years in the red-light areas of Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Goa are from Andhra Pradesh. Infact an alarming 80 percent of women and girls are engaged in flesh trade in Goa are from Andhra Pradesh. Eighty percent of victims belong to socially and economically disadvantaged families. Seventy percent of them hail from backward and draught-prone areas and a whopping, 85 percent of them are illiterate (Shattered Innocence, Prajawala, 2002. The "catchment" areas for the racketeers include almost all the 23 districts spread across coastal Andhra (Coastal Andhra), Rayalaseema and Telangana regions in Andhra Pradesh state. the study says.

The trafficking involves much extent involuntariness in mobilizing the people from known place to unknown place. The laws do not always provide for compensation/rehabilitation allowance from the State or from the exploiter to the victim. This makes it much less risky for organized crime syndicates to indulge in human trafficking. It is also necessary to identify the victims of trafficking and the reasons for their vulnerability – their age and gender, the regions from which they are trafficked. Social, economic or political compulsions including local customs which make these victims vulnerable to traffickers and the impact of national calamities on vulnerability. *It is, therefore, necessary to keep the focus on the victim, the need for preventive measures, for early rescue operations, proper law enforcement, measures for rehabilitation of the rescued and the fixing of responsibility for rehabilitation and reintegration.* The trafficking in person’s report, 2002, released by the US State Department (Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons) indicated India of not doing enough curb to trafficking.

### **Objective of the study**

The broad objective of the study is to examine the process of trafficking of women in to sex work and to explore the problems and prospects in rehabilitating and reintegrating.

### **Data and study design**

The predominant state, Andhra Pradesh has been selected for study purpose. The **mapping** of the catchment (source) areas in Andhra Pradesh was carried out and found that the drought prone areas in few districts are more vulnerable.

To assess the problems and prospects in rehabilitating and reintegrating the trafficked women, the stakeholders like NGO's involving in the trafficking issue in Andhra Pradesh (*source area*) were interviewed. The government officials of various departments at source areas interviewed. To understand the process of trafficking as well as the problems in reintegration the in depth interviews carried out with the women who reintegrated into the society. In addition to the trafficked women the interviews with the agents, brokers, mediators and others such persons who are involving in trafficking of women at catchment source area, like pimps, brokers, agents etc to understand the dynamics of the trafficking in women into sex work.

### **Summary of findings**

There is a link between gender discrimination, poverty, deprivation and trafficking. Discrimination also means for the girl child, deprivation of education, lack of economic opportunities, an early marriage, early child bearing and risks to health and well being. Many tribal customs also do not permit women to own land, which is the main source of income in a rural community, thus making women far more vulnerable than men. "The victims not only face the danger of being psychologically abused, but also the reality of being infected with HIV/AIDS. It is also likely that they will become procurers after a few years of victimisation,". The existing discrimination and stigmatization by the own family members in addition to the community people while reintegrating in the society making women further vulnerable for trafficking.