

CHILD TRAFFICKING- AS AN ECONOMIC ASPIRATION OF CITY LIFE (A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY IN GUWAHATI CITY OF ASSAM)

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Abstract: Indian society has been bogged down by many social evils and one of them is the child trafficking. Child trafficking including commercial sexual exploitation is one of the fastest growing and most lucrative criminal activities in the world. Child trafficking is one of the destructive offences of violation of child rights in our present society. Child trafficking is a global economic crisis that is inextricably linked with the sex industries involving women and children. The universal enslavement of children affects countless numbers of victims who are trafficked within their homes and treated as commodities to be bought, sold, and resold for labour or sexual exploitation. 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. In this present study affords have been made to discuss the causes of social evils against child trafficking in North-eastern region (Guwahati) and to try to find out solutions or any other remedy to stop this black side of our society like proper education to the girl child, giving good job opportunities, empowerment of women, mental stability to the children who are trafficked, etc.

Keywords: Bogged, Exploitation, Inextricably, Trafficking, Empowerment.

Introduction: For ages the Indian society has been bogged down by many social evils and many of them were pertaining to women and children. Even as India completed 63 years of independence, we are not in a position to call our country a superpower country. It is not hard to believe this because in an independent country like ours, still horrific acts like merciless killing of the girl child and forcing them to work as sex workers. A lot of social evils which have disgraced our history are still very much prevalent. 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.

Child trafficking is one of the destructive offences of violation of child rights in our present society. Child trafficking is a global economic crisis that is inextricably linked with the sex industries involving women and children. Globalisation contributes to a wide diffusion of ideas and values mobilising international attention to universal issues and challenges. The international Labour organisation estimates that 1.2 million children are trafficked each year. The main international documents dealing with the trafficking of children are the 1989 U.N Convention on the Rights of the Child, the 1999 I.L.O. Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention and the 2000 U.N. Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children. The first UN document specially focused on child rights was the Declaration on the Rights of the Child, but instead a legally binding document. It was more like a moral guide community adopted the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child making it the first international legally binding document concerning child rights. The convention consists of 54 articles covering all four major categories of child rights: Right to life, Right to development, Right to protection and Right to participation. It came into force on the 2nd September 1990.

Human trafficking has recently emerged in North Eastern region of India because of the diminishing traditional social values 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.

Background of Child Trafficking: Child Trafficking is a form of human trafficking. Trafficking in human beings, especially children, is a form of modern day slavery and requires a holistic, multi- sector approach to address the complex dimension of the problem. It is a problem that violates the rights and dignity of the victims and therefore requires essentially a child rights perspective while working on its eradication. Trafficking is the trade of humans for the purpose of forced labour, sexual slavery or commercial sexual exploitation for the trafficker or others. Trafficking in persons is a serious crime and a grave violation of human rights.

Article 3 :

- a) Trafficking in persons shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the 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 of receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs; 3
- b) The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in sub paragraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used;
- c) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered 'trafficking in persons' even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in sub paragraph (a) of the article;
- d) Child shall mean any person under the age of eighteen years.

What for Children are Trafficked ?

- **Labour:** Bonded labour, Domestic-work, Agricultural labour, Construction work, Carpet industry, garment industry, fish / shrimp export as well as other sites of work in the formal and informal economy.
- **Illegal Activities:** Begging, Organ trade, Drug peddling smuggling
- **Sexual Exploitation:** Forced prostitution, Socially and religiously sanctified forms of prostitutions, Sex tourism, Pornography
- **Entertainment and Sports:** Circus, dance troupes, beer bars etc. As child soldiers or combatants in armed conflicts

Review of Literature: Review of related literature as an important aspect helps the researchers to acquaint and conduct research. It provides the researchers with the aspiration for the investigation and provides data which helps the researches to evaluate and interpret the significance of one's findings. Thus, it becomes important for a researcher to review literature related to the research to help gain insight knowledge.

According to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (2000) Child Trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation.

Kevin Bales (2004) Professor of contemporary slavery as "Social and Economic relationship in which person is controlled through violence or paid nothing, economically exploited".

However trafficking report 2003 worldwide children are trafficked for the purpose of performing forced labour of all fields including agriculture, domestic service, construction work, etc in addition to trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation.

Bachpan Bachao Andolan – Nobel peace prize winner Kailash Satyarthi has been at the forefront of the global movement to end child slavery and exploitative child labour since 1980. Child labour is a human rights issue that has staggering effects on poverty, illiteracy and humanity. Mr. Satyarthi's main grassroots movement on "Bachpan Bac hao Andolan," right on issue of saving the childhood and develop a successful model for the education and rehabilitation. Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation main vision is "Children can live freely with

dignity and have the fundamental right to be free, safe, healthy and educated." Mr. Kailash Satyarthi's "Bharat yatra" campaign against the child sexual abuse, ensuring protection for victims and exploitative child labour. For 30 years now, Hasina Kharbhih has been working to provide sustainable livelihood in a safe environment for children. What started out as a mission in her home state of Meghalaya, has today evolved into a global program that aims to put an end to human trafficking and exploitation worldwide.

Her work stands on two pillars: the first is Impulse NGO Network which was conceptualised in 1987 and is a significant force against human trafficking today; the second pillar is Impulse Social Enterprises which aims to promote local artisans and create sustainable livelihood that helps prevent unsafe migration, which often leads to human trafficking.

Trafficker does not have any religion or any race. They are only concerned with money, which they gain from the act.

Objectives of the Study:

- 1) To understand socio- economic status of the families of trafficked children.
- 2) To explore the census that lead to trafficking of children in day to day life.
- 3) To understand the problems of children faced by them in everyday life
- 4) To understand the state of mind of the trafficked victims with regard to the process of trafficking of post trafficking phase.
- 5) To know the available social supports to rescue the victims and the post help in their rehabilitation.

Methodology: The study has been to obtain the qualification research method in order to search out to learn to know thoroughly, reasons and motivation behind the problem of child trafficking in the state. It tries to take measures, observation into the problem and help to develop ideas on finding a way for the solution of the problem. Overall study will be mainly explorative but will also be analytical whenever it seems to be necessary to investigate the lead to trafficking of children in a sample in Guwahati City of Assam.

The universe of the study will be under the selection of the trafficked children of Guwahati City in Kamrup District. Data will be collected from both primary and secondary sources. Secondary sources like web search, media, books and journals.

Findings: According to the National Crime Records Bureau and the National Family Health Survey-3, child marriages are a concern in Assam with 1,28,554 girls and 1,34,214 boys being married off before the legal age. Addressing the rampant problems of child abuse and trafficking, Hasina Kharbhih, founder of Impulse, an NGO, expressed regret at the many cases that have come to light recently about the rape of minors by family members or close friends.

Kharbhih said the north-eastern states remain vulnerable to child trafficking and exploitation. "Surakshit Bachpan-Surakshit Bharat is the need of the hour to sensitize the people of our country about the magnitude of the crime. Our children are our future and we must do everything to protect them," she added.

Bharat Yatra- Nobel laureate Kailash Satyarthi on September 22 2017 launched the North East leg of his Bharat yatra march against child sexual abuse and trafficking in Guwahati.

Addressing the students of Guwahati University where the march began, Satyarthi said the Yatra is aimed at initiating a mass movement calling upon each citizen to take urgent action to break the unacceptable silence about sexual abuse, exploitation and trafficking of children every day.

Giving statistics about the dismal scenario of child safety in the country, the founder of Kailash Satyarthi Children's foundation said that every hour, two children are reported to be raped and six go missing, while 4.5 lakh children have been victims of trafficking, bought and sold for commercial and sexual exploitation. Stating that children are not safe even in their own homes, Satyarthi said, "even two-month old babies are raped. Many go unreported. This epidemic is kept hidden under social taboo, family and the children's honour".

Some of the Reasons behind Child Trafficking:

- That environmental protection policies of the Indian government had impacted rural communities dependent on forest resources, creating lack of employment for young people

- That due to unemployment, the village youths were migrating to cities and towns with seemingly better opportunities and getting duped and/or trafficked into different destinations
- That children were trafficked more, because they came cheap and either pushed into domestic forced labour or flesh trade
- That there was no system to track their whereabouts and bring them back
- That until we took the matter into our hands, this might continue endangering lives

Flood: More tragically children and young women fall victim to the source of human trafficking. Assam's perennial flood problem has made the state a source state for child trafficking. Nobel laureate and child rights crusader Kailash Satyarthi pointed out that Assam has been a major source for child trafficking owing to the state's huge flood displaced population. These children, the Nobel laureate lamented, finally disappear in big cities as workers in small-scale garment industries or hired as domestic workers. The crime investigation branch of Assam police records list Lakhimpur and Dhemaji districts among the most vulnerable districts to the growing menace of trafficking. With no adaptive mechanisms in place, the impact of climate change compounds disaster upon disaster for the people of Assam.

Organisations Working On It: Impulse Ngo Network (INGON) was started with the purpose of addressing trafficking of women and children of northeast India for sexual exploitation and forced labour, but given the enormity and spread of the problem, their work in this area soon extended to other parts of the country, and around the world as well.

Over the years, INGON has been involved in the rescue and rehabilitation of thousands of women and children, with its globally acknowledged "Impulse Model". The organisation continues to expand by empowering individuals, educating stakeholders, and building capacity across borders, with passion and professionalism – all adding up to reduce the demand and supply of humans for trafficking, and put an end to sexual exploitation and forced labour worldwide. Approximately 77442 numbers of women and children are rescued by the Impulse NGO Network over the years.

Some of the cases from Guwahati of trafficking solved by Bachpan Bachao Andolan team-

Guwahati: Bachpan Bachao Andolan, rescued a 14-year-old girl from Assam from a house in a posh locality of Faridabad, Haryana. The girl is a resident of Satgaon in Karbi Anglong district. The girl was rescued following a tip-off. She is now lodged in a government home in Faridabad. An FIR has been registered at Faridabad Sector 6 police station.

Assam: New Born Baby Allegedly Trafficked: It is alleged that the minor was lured to New Delhi last year with the promise of a job by a man, whom the girl has identified as Som and as a resident of her village. In Delhi, he sold her to an illegal placement company which first sent her to work as a domestic help in a house in the national capital. She worked there for a year. Three months ago, she was sent to work at Faridabad where she has been working as a domestic help for the past 13 months with no payment, no rest, no permission to step out of the house or to speak to her parents.

According to the minor, the trafficker would often speak to her on her way to and from school in her native village and lure her with the promise of a job. One day he hatched the plan to take her and four other girls to Delhi. He asked her to leave with him after school. On the way to the station when she told him that she must inform her parents before leaving he lied saying that she need not worry as he had obtained her father's consent.

It is now believed that this man has trafficked around 10 to 15 girls from Assam to Delhi in the past few months.

The NGO now hopes to facilitate the girl's interim rehabilitation, help her procure her due wages and get justice and ensure punishment of the people she worked for.

Bachpan Bachao Andolan has rescued four to five girls hailing from Assam from Delhi and Haryana in the past few months. recently they also stopped 15 to 20 girls, allegedly being trafficked, at Dhekiajuli in Sonitpur district.

A Case Study: A day with the Sex Worker of Guwahati: Story of one of the sex worker of Guwahati Reshma (name changed). There is no red light area in Guwahati. It's just an interview with one of the sex worker about her life and struggles of being in this field.

She is from Diphu and she was in this field for last almost 17 years. She is 28 now. Her parents sold her to two people. She was eleven years old then. They were six siblings so her parents told her that they were sending her to work. Her parents sold her for a good amount. They bought her to this place and took her to a small stinky room. Till then she got the idea what was happening to her. They whispered something and locked the room. They started looking at her from head to toe. They undressed her and raped her until she bled. Her experience was very painful. They cleaned her up, she was weeping. Then they took her to their boss who is now her boss also. This is where she entered her puberty, her teenage and now she is to be thirty soon. They gave me medicines to get her periods fast and to make her look more mature. She had aborted three children since then.

Then she was use to put lots of makeup and stand with other girls in a row to be chosen by the clients. As she was the youngest among the others she was chosen and her boss use to get a handsome amount for her. She also tried to elope once but she was caught and was beaten up.

According to her unlike other places Guwahati don't have any red light area. But many prostitutes of Guwahati live here so sometimes those who know about this place come here. But this isn't a prostitution area.

She don't get many clients now as she is ageing and there are new girls entering into this field. But it depends. She was taken for a night varying in an amount between 500/- to 1000/-. During festivals, the demand is usually high leading the prices up to 1500/- per night sometimes.

“ It's funny how we are considered as the dirtiest people of the society yet every pure and clean man comes to us. Relatives of well-known politicians came twice a week and provided with me, his personal favourite. Once he took me in his car, went on to drive past police check post, with nothing but salutes, and picking up all his fellow friends. I cried all night in pain of what they did to me, treated me like an animal and threw me at the streets of Maligaon so that no one notices them with me. I had to come all way back, I could barely walk, but I had to get ready for next night and after it too, still, he came and treated me like anything in exchange of money, the money I deserved for all that was too few.”

Will you Ever Leave This Place If You Ever Get A Chance?

She laughed and answered that her boss will never allow her to go. Even if she tries to elope they will bring her back anyhow. There was a man who used to be her client. He promised her that he will take her from this place. He said he loved her. He used to come almost every day. Sometimes he will just sit near her and they use to talk for hours. She was ready to elope with him. Then one day she saw him with another girl (that girl was new into the business). She was shattered. She realised what was her value. Since then she have accepted this as her destiny.

According to her they were treated like an animal back then, they are treated like an animal even today. This society will never accept them. They are dirty but those who come to them are clean. They are characterless but those who sleep with them are the most decent people of this state. And to be honest they don't even care about a double faced society like this.

Suggestions: Foster the Spread of Education: India has the world's biggest education system, yet sees low literacy due to poor enrolment and high dropout rates - resulting in people having low self-esteem and lack of opportunities. Uneducated parents are easily convinced by conmen to give them a better life in the city (a very common ruse for trafficking). Educated children and their families are much more aware, alert and mature, and they can comprehend the risks of child trafficking quite well. Compassionate and understanding teachers guide children and parents to find opportunities for higher growth and employment, creating a community driven by ambition where traffickers cannot thrive.

Spread awareness among parents and communities -Lack of awareness can create situations that traffickers can exploit. A lot of India's poor children find themselves trapped in substance abuse which can further lead to them getting trafficked. Educated communities are capable of understanding, and effectively responding to the various ways traffickers source children.

Strict Laws to Prevent Child Trafficking: Effective policymaking is critical to reform. NGOs like Save the Children constantly research, document, and showcase findings of the need for reforms and engage with various government agencies, urging them to have better legislation in place for tackling child trafficking.

Encouraging Business to Not Use Child Labour: The ecosystem for child trafficking gets silent approval when demand for child labour is commonly used in businesses like retail, hospitality, etc.

Child Safety: The NGO regularly creates safe spaces and provisions education supplies to enable children to continue with their schooling after disasters, and stay safe from traffickers who prey on their vulnerability.

Conclusion: Child trafficking is one of the worst division of our society. It has spoiled the atmosphere of the country and the lives of the children. Every child has the right to live freely in the world. There should be awareness campaign in the society to aware the parents and the children about the danger from child trafficking. Foster the spread of education so that they can be aware of the trap made by the traffickers. Many organisations and NGO's are working in this concern but still there are long way to go to solve the problem from the society.

Government should take steps to promote free education for the backward class of the society in government schools.

Government should also look at the matter that people get fair payment for their work. Appropriate steps should be taken to create more employment opportunities for adults, so that they can educate their children by sending them to school and the people who are in the line of trafficking because of unemployment would be reduced.

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