

# Causes of human trafficking



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

An examination of the issues and challenges of trafficking bring us face to face with the stark reality of the situation. Hordes of women and children are victims of grave human rights violation having been trafficked by vested interests using lure, deceit, compulsion, threat and coercion before being pushed into the gory world of CSE or other forms of bondage. They are subjected to physical and mental trauma, economic deprivation and violations of their dignity. The post trafficking scenario finds the victim at the end of the tunnel with almost no hope of survival. Vulnerability situations and gender discrimination have been facilitating and perpetuating trafficking.

A few alarming trends that have emerged in recent years are sexual exploitation through sex tourism, paedophilia, prostitution in pilgrim towns and other tourist destinations and cross-border trafficking.

Trafficking of women and children is definitely not a localised issue. There may be a few instances of trafficking within the community but it is largely a borderless crime transgressing the boundaries of police stations, districts, states, countries and regions. Over the years various countries in the South Asian region have emerged as sources, destinations and/or transit points. More so India has emerged as a source, destination and transit for trafficking for varied purposes such as for commercial sexual exploitation and labour. While intra-country trafficking forms the bulk of the trafficked victims, cross-border trafficking also takes place, especially from Nepal and Bangladesh. Women and children are also trafficked to the Middle Eastern countries and other parts of the world for purposes of cheap labour and commercial sexual exploitation.

Trafficking though not reported from many places happens everywhere. The situation is worse in underdeveloped regions. Here come into play the push and pull factors of trafficking and its interplay with the forces of demand and supply. For instance trafficking of women and children from the North-Eastern states of India and bordering countries, in both directions, is a serious issue. The long drawn extremist activities as well as the ethnic clashes and conflicts between several groups in this region have made women and children in the entire region highly vulnerable. Lack of infrastructural development and livelihood options have exacerbated the situation[1]. Since trafficking in this area cuts across different states and countries, it needs to be studied in detail and dealt with appropriately by the agencies of the Government of India, along with the state governments and appropriate NGOs working in this field.

While the pull factors appear to be the dominant cause of trafficking, the push factors not only contribute to but exacerbate the situation. It is the economically backward and socially discriminated and deprived sections of society, who are the most vulnerable. Even among them the girl child is the worst hit as she is regarded as a liability. The gender discrimination prevalent in the social milieu and different forms of violence against women like infanticide, female foeticide adds to the vulnerability. This is further accentuated during periods of acute economic distress like drought, flood, food shortage, etc. The debt crisis due to economic deprivation as well as the collapse of social security systems has spurred migration, which has also eventually contributed to trafficking.

That trafficking is a low-risk and high-profit venture is not doubted. A well established trafficker with many links may easily have an extremely profitable and safe business of trading in women and children, with an income running into several lakhs a year[2]. In comparison the earnings of the trafficked persons are a pittance. There appears to be no instance where illegal wealth amassed by the trafficker has been forfeited. Action on this front by all the governments is essential as a deterrent also since it is a source of black money in the economy.

While exploring the links between migration and trafficking, it emerged that restrictions on women's migration, coupled with lack of protective measures increases their vulnerability to trafficking. Therefore, migration has to be understood and addressed from a developmental perspective; if trafficking is to be prevented. There is a strong linkage between migration with gender, development and good governance. A holistic approach, addressing all these dimensions, is called for. Safe migration, prevention of trafficking and containment of HIV/AIDS are central to the development the south Asian region. These are parameters having a direct bearing on public safety and, therefore, on national security. Anti trafficking strategies need to recognise people's rights to move with informed choice.

With the surge in tourism in several countries of South Asia, sex tourism and related trafficking has also gone up. The governments of many developing countries with a view to encouraging tourism and consequent economic development turn a blind eye to these problems. Undoubtedly, economic development cannot be at the cost of exploitation and trafficking. On the

whole there is hardly any awareness or any conscious effort to address the issues concerned.

The rehabilitative scenario presents a very dismal picture. More often than not, the efforts are disjointed and ad-hoc. There are no institutionalised mechanisms in most of the countries and states of India. The counselling and vocational training imparted in the rehabilitation homes are usually dictated by the availability of facilities and resources and not by the best interests of the victims. The needs of the rescued person need to be considered in a comprehensive manner. Along with psycho-social intervention, medical care, vocational training etc also have to be taken into account. Livelihood options have to be provided to the victims. Micro-credit and such other facilities need to be extended. Once rehabilitated a follow up mechanism needs to be in place to see that there is no re-trafficking. There is a need to provide them access and awareness to such facilities through help lines, help kiosks, public awareness campaigns, etc.

Trafficking of women and children has to be addressed in the specific context of the push factors in the concerned community. Since the exploiters take advantage of the helplessness of poor rural families, preventive action must necessarily involve empowering the powerless, especially in rural areas. Concerted efforts by the government, in cooperation with credible NGOs and PRIs can be helpful in achieving this.

Thus an integrated approach involving the three components of prevention, protection and prosecution in effectively addressing trafficking is needed. Since trafficking is an organised crime, involving a

multiplicity of actors linked together in a chain, professional methods of dealing with them are called for. Certainty and stringency of punishment of the exploiters, without any delay whatsoever, is the essential requirement for preventing trafficking. Simultaneously, the victims need to be rescued and rehabilitated in a sustainable manner. As lack of priority, time and sensitivity as well as ignorance of the issues concerned are commonly seen as the factors responsible for the present day dismal picture in enforcement, an effective networking of the law enforcement agencies with NGOs can make adequate dent in the given situation.

The response scenario with respect to trans-border trafficking is fraught with innumerable challenges and problems. The nationality of the trafficked person often becomes a serious issue. Another issue with respect to trans-border trafficking is that of the procedures of repatriation. In fact, many rescued victims are confined to rescue homes for more than a decade despite the fact that they had to suffer exploitation in brothels for only a few months. The post-rescue non-rehabilitative scenario is not only traumatic but also violative of human rights. The problems are aggravated because the host country usually refuses to acknowledge the nationality of the person. In many instances, the victims are unable to recollect the details of their parentage and original village, causing difficulties in verification and authentication. Appropriate governmental systems are yet to take shape and become functional. This is an area that needs immediate attention. There is limited bilateral and regional cooperation espically in relation to law enforcement, border interdiction, victim repatriation and prevention. There is a deficiency in collection, analysis and dissemination of trafficking data and

information sharing. Trans-border bilateral arrangements are immediately called for to address these issues. It is high time that the concerned government agencies took initiative in this regard. For South Asia regional criminal justice cooperation is particularly important as much of the cross border trafficking that takes place is intra regional and currently there is no formal regional police arrangement (SAARCPOL) to combat such transnational crimes.

The situation in the country presents a picture of lack of cohesion and coordination. Whether it is intra-state trafficking, inter-state trafficking or trans-border trafficking, the agencies involved in rescue do not seem to have any coordination with the agencies concerned with rehabilitation. The issue of missing women and children has been seen in isolation and was never seen in correlation with trafficking. There is no common platform linking up prevention strategies between source and destination areas. The absence of a national coordinating/monitoring agency has been a serious impediment in justice delivery and protection of human rights. Therefore, in order to ensure the best interests of the victims, to bring about effective coordination at the national level and to coordinate preventive strategies, programmes and policies, there is also a need for a national nodal agency to combat trafficking.

The number of non-governmental organisations working in the field has increased enormously during the last few years. However, the vast majority of them are located in urban centres and very few have grassroots connections. There is a dire need for genuine and concerned NGOs to work on anti-trafficking in the rural areas, especially in the source and transit

areas. Their synergy with the PRIs, can yield good dividends. Moreover the NGOs are mostly working on rescue and post-rescue activities, including protection and prosecution. There are very few NGOs which are focussed on prevention of trafficking. This area also craves for attention by the civil society.

Trafficking of women and children is the ultimate violation of human rights, but on the other hand, the response of the government and non-governmental sector is more or less ad hoc and individual-oriented, and seldom institutionalised. The extent and depth of exploitation of the trafficked victims have never been fathomed by the agencies concerned and, therefore, the response scenario has been dismal. The study also shows that post-rescue programmes lack the essence of empowerment. The welfare approach, which is commonplace, has to be replaced by a rights-based approach, where the survivors, the victims as well as prospective victims (the vulnerable ones) should be involved not only in developing strategies but also in implementing them. A participatory and holistic approach can be in the best interests of the victim, survivor and all concerned.

As is seen poverty and illiteracy are the main elements constituting the substratum for trafficking. Herein operates the demand factor. This demand is fuelled by several other factors like the impunity with which the traffickers can operate, thanks to the distortions in law enforcement. The low risk enjoyed by the exploiters, coupled with the high profit in this world of crass commercialisation, ensures perpetuation of trafficking. Whereas the traffickers have no restriction on court jurisdictions or the boundaries between police stations, districts, states, and even nations in carrying out

<https://assignbuster.com/causes-of-human-trafficking/>



their 'trade', the enforcement agencies are bogged down by restrictions and limitations of all sorts, which are effectively capitalised by the traffickers. The response by the government agencies and even civil society has established that they have been able to address only the tip of the iceberg. The trends and dimensions of the problem of trafficking has exposed how it is the ultimate human rights violation and how holistic developmental issues are deeply linked to it and which needed to be addressed for successfully combating the menace.