

RESEARCH PAPER

CROSS BORDER TRAFFICKING OF CHILDREN IN TRIPURA

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ABSTRACT

Cross border trafficking is becoming one of the most economical international trades, earning billions of money at the expense of millions of victims. Most of them are young girls and children, who are robbed of their dignity and freedom. This crime is happening every day all around the world. Trafficking in persons is the third largest form of organised crime after trafficking in arms and drugs globally. Tripura, a small north eastern state is also the victim of this heinous crime. As almost three sides of Tripura are surrounded by Bangladesh, traffickers find it easy to take or transport or kidnap the girls and women through the Indo-Bangla borders. Although trafficking is largely a borderless structured offence, but Tripura is becoming a source, transit point as well as one of the destinations for the traffickers. The core problem is that human trafficking, being a highly private and concealed trade, remains mostly under-reported and unguided in spite of the fact that numerous international initiatives have been taken to drive governments into action. On the other hand, the increasing volume of human trafficking is also a reflection of the lack of political will on the part of the states. Impoverished children and women are the major victims of the lucrative trafficking industry, which turned out as a stumbling block for women empowerment also. This paper intends to put forward the problems of cross border trafficking in Tripura, which is considered to be a black spot on the face of development of the state. As poverty, illiteracy, lack of awareness lies in this small state, such type of crimes is also prevalent to a great extent.

Keywords: Human Trafficking, Organised Crime, Cross Border, Child Prostitution.

1. INTRODUCTION

In India amongst the eight north Eastern contiguous states, Tripura is one of them. Other seven states are Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Sikkim and Nagaland in North-Eastern India. It is the third smallest state in the country. Tripura covers an area of 10491 sq. km and is bordered by Bangladesh to the north, south and west and by Assam and Mizoram to the East.

The location of Tripura as it shares its almost three borders with Bangladesh is open to risks of several cross border crimes. Before independence Tripura was under the rule of Tripura kingdoms for centuries. Later after independence in the 1971, the Indo-Pakistan war for Bangladesh Liberation led to the influx of various Bengalee Hindu refugees in Tripura from East Pakistan. During that time the migration increased the number of the Bengalee Hindus in Tripura, leading to the Tripura Tribes becoming a minority.

The small state Tripura is not debarred from various heinous crimes both within its border and also across the borders. One of those crimes is the trafficking of minor girls in Tripura. As said earlier, Tripura as surrounded by Bangladesh in its three sides, the Prevalence of cross border trafficking is comparatively easier.

2. MEANING OF TRAFFICKING

Trafficking in persons is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons by means of 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 going or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over other person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a unionism, the exploitation of the prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or service, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

Trafficking of minors or child trafficking thus, means procuring, transporting, recruiting, transferring or taking away a child within or across borders by applying force, threatening, fraud, coercion etc or by going or receiving money for taking the child for monetary gain or otherwise.

And the purpose of the trafficking of those innocent fellows to other country includes exploiting the children for sexual abuse, to make them involved in child prostitution, slavery, forced labour and are also trafficked within or across the borders for removing their organs and to sell them at high price. Some organized crime groups both at national and international levels are prevalent in the involvement of the crime.

3. INCIDENTS OF CHILD TRAFFICKING THROUGH INDO-BANGLA BORDER, TRIPURA

- A news as published in Agartala News Express on 04.03.2015 states that a strong racket is in operation for human trafficking along Indo-Bangla International boundary at Jaipur areas Tripura, despite of the presence of Jawans of security forces people can cross into Bangladesh boarder very easily. And on that


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very date 5 people reportedly entered into Tripura from Bangladesh without sufficient valid documents, through Indo-Bangla border, Jaipur, These types of illegal entries gradually posing threat to Tripura and thus increasing the number of cross border trafficking of human, drugs, smuggling of cattle's etc.

- According to a report published in The Times of India, May 19, 2015, three accused from a border village of Tripura named sobhapur, of sonamura subdivision were arrested for running a human trafficking racket. The accused namely, Delaware Hussein, kurban Ali and Rashid Dhar were found with 25 minor Myanmar nationals in kurban Ali's residence. According to the police, the detained victims were supposed to send to Bangladesh. The accused also confessed that they usually use to send the girls and women to brothels and the young boys are usually forced to join criminal gangs. Fake passports were also seized from the criminals.
- As reported in www.tripurainfo.com in 30th June 2015, on the date of 28th June 2015, a minor girl of 16 years named and identified as Anupama sukhl Das was trafficked by a women trafficker Lalita Nath who was rescued from Dharmanagar Bus Terminal. The victim was doubted by the police to be sent to Bangladesh through the Indo-Bangladesh border by the trafficker. As the highway networks in the region connect many National and International destinations, the traffickers find it easy to kidnap people and to send them to other nation.
- In various local newspapers of Tripura, it was published that on 24th October, 2015, five children from Gokulpur, under R.K Pur police station in Gomati District of Tripura were trafficked by a Bangladeshi women Rehna Begam. Due to her suspicious behaviour she was caught and detained by the police of Companiganj, Noakhali District of Bangladesh. After 23 days of their detention, on sufficient proof, Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) handed the children over to Border Security Force (BSF). And the children were thus rescued and given in return to their parents.

Further, Indo- Bangladesh Border is 4096 Km of which Tripura Shares 856 Km of it with Bangladesh. 90% of the said border is surrounded by Fencing. Thus through the Small unfenced Zone, all those smuggling, human trafficking and cross border crimes are frequent. This porous international Border is providing a safe corridor to traffickers. As a result of which in Tripura various minor and major girls are also trafficked to Bangladesh by the Promise of marriage, job, and good life or in exchange of some money to the victim's family. Illiterate and poor parents sometime handovers their children in belief of their better life promised by traffickers.

4. REASONS OF TRAFFICKING IN TRIPURA

The Condition or push factors prevalent in Tripura for such cross border child trafficking are like:

Poverty: Tripura is a small hilly state located in the

farthest north-east corner of India. Tripura as it is a land lock, the source of income of the people are also limited. Lack of large Industries, factories and private companies led to the increase in number of unemployment of people. Citizens of Tripura are mostly dependent on govt. jobs or agriculture and cottage industries. As a result of which poverty stricken people easily gives their children to the traffickers with the hope that their children would be engaged in any work for earning livelihood. Traffickers sometime in exchange of some amount of money take their children to other states or other Countries. In such case poor parent themselves finding it difficult to maintain their families, sells their children to the traffickers.

Illiteracy: As many villagers residing in the border areas of Tripura are illiterate, they mostly remain in dark about the guilty intention of the traffickers. Thus they usually hand over their family members on the hand of the guilty persons, believing on the assurance of giving a good and respectful life.

Similarity in languages: Guilty Persons crossing the borders from Bangladesh comes to Tripura and taking the advantage of same language and same culture of the Bangladesh citizens with that of the inhabitants of Tripura can influence the people of Tripura easily. In such a way they hand over their children to the Bangladesh traffickers out of trust.

Devaluation of Girls: The devaluation of human and girls in villages and backward areas of Tripura makes them disproportionately vulnerable to trafficking. Parents and family members who treats their daughters or other female members as burden are sometime selling them for a amount of money or allowed them to be trafficked.

Corrupt Practices: Some other factors are the issues of porous borders, involvement of International organized criminal rackets, networks and most importantly presence of corrupt officials in the border without whose dishonesty and corruption such trafficking is not so easy nut to crack. That corrupt official's failure to control Indo-Bangla borders are thus a great contributing factor.

Scheduled tribes, schedule castes, ethnic minorities, hill tribes, illiterate villagers residing in border areas of the state are the easiest victims to be trapped in any cross border crimes including trafficking of human being.

Women and girls, who are unmarried, widowed, separated or divorced and those young girls running away from home can be trapped easily by the traffickers. The children also from the disrupted family of the state having low level of education are always open to risk of traffickers.

To prevent every problem relating to trafficking of human being including women and children, various International and national Laws are available.

INTERNATIONAL LAWS

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Child (CRC), 1989, has been adopted by the General assembly of the United Nations on 20th November, 1989. It has been


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