

Trafficking among women, children high in metros

By Rakesh Bhatnagar
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Human Trafficking
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New Delhi: It is official now: only 60% cases of total missing persons, particularly women and children, are reported to the police. It is also confirmed that a majority of such cases are not registered by an "insensitive" police.

None other than the first intensive study conducted by a team of experts under the aegis of the National Human Rights Commission headed by former Chief Justice of India A S Anand also reveals that at least 15,407 children from the country's six metropolitan cities go missing every year. And over 3,200 women remain untraced every year from these cities.

The report is based on a mammoth exercise. It offers startling facts about trafficking of women and children in India. Though unconcerned with the plight of the increasing number of missing people, all the state governments and Union Territories will now have to study the report, ascertain facts from their own territories and inform the supreme court why various legal and constitutional provisions meant to safeguard the interest of children and women have been violated with impunity.

Shakti Vahini, an NGO, had moved the apex court seeking immediate prevention of rampant human trafficking that was subject-

ing young women and children to exploitation by different agencies.

As has become customary, the authorities concerned kept asking for adjournments, for the issue raised by Vahini's counsel Colin Gonsalves were too "trivial" to be looked into at all.

Now, the apex court has directed that all the authorities concerned study the NHRC report before it passes final directions to prevent the human problem and how to punish the offenders.

The report says that 40% of the police officers contacted to ascertain the status of trafficking in their areas did not have any knowledge of various preventive laws. Others treated the victims of trafficking as accused. The women were charged and tried for seducing "clients" and children accused of being a troubled lot.

The study says that 45.5% of married men visit various brothels. As many as 72.9% of them were living with their spouses. "It is a borderless crime," says the report as it warns against "sex tourism". Only Goa has so far ini-

tiated measures to enact a specific law to protect children from exploitation.

Invariably, children kidnapped from different cities and even villages end up with begging bowls. They are maimed, disfigured and made a mental wreck so much so that they don't remember their real identity

LAW VS JUSTICE



- ▶ Only 60% cases of missing persons reported
- ▶ Cops don't register majority of these cases
- ▶ 15,407 children go missing every year in the six metros; over 3,200 women remain untraced annually from these cities
- ▶ 45.5% married men visit brothels
- ▶ 40% of the cops contacted to ascertain status of trafficking in their areas had no knowledge of preventive laws

N-E transit for drug traffic

Bijay Sankar Bora in Guwahati

Sept. 19. — Drug lords of the infamous 'Golden Triangle', the virtually unadministered region at the tri-junction of Myanmar, Thailand and Laos, have shown an increasing tendency to smuggle brown sugar and heroin through north-east India to the rest of the country as well as to the outside world via Indian and Bangladeshi ports and airports.

The absence of an institutionalised intelligence framework to tackle the well-coordinated narcotics trafficking into the region from the Golden Triangle within police forces of vulnerable states such as Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur has been a boon for the thriving racket.

Inspector-general (CID) of Assam Police, Mr SP Kar, said: "Narcotics, particularly heroin and brown sugar, manufactured by drug lords in the Golden Triangle, where high-grade poppy seeds are produced in plenty, find their way out through Tamu (Myanmar)-Moreh (Manipur)-Naga-



land-Assam, Myanmar-Mizoram-Assam, Mizoram-Barak Valley (Assam)-Bangladesh routes. In the process, Guwahati, the gateway to the north-east, has become the primary transit point for drug trafficking."

In the last month, police seized a total of 1.5 kg of super-refined heroin worth Rs 1.5 crore in the international market in two hauls in the heart of

Guwahati. Four couriers, all young men from Manipur, were arrested.

Mr Kar said that young unemployed boys and girls from north-eastern states, particularly from Manipur and Mizoram bordering Myanmar, are lured into the drug trafficking racket in lieu of hefty sums of money and "drugs for free". "The younger generation in those two states are paying the price, in the form of high incidence of AIDS and deaths through drug abuse," he said. While Manipur has been marked as a high-incidence zone for AIDS in the country, Mizoram has lost over 800 young lives to drug abuse in the last decade.

Assam police believes that there is no market for costly heroin and brown sugar in the region, where few people can afford these, but smugglers are bent upon converting the region into a major route for trafficking, cashing in on the lack of constant coordination among police forces. "Assam Police feels there is an urgent need to set up a well-coordinated inter-state police intelligence network in the region to tackle the menace," the IGP said.

Women, child trafficking: call for community policing

By Our Staff Correspondent

NEW DELHI, AUG. 24. A National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) report on 'Trafficking in Women and Children in India' has said that the existing system in the spheres of prevention, protection and prosecution was not adequate to tackle the complex problem in a holistic and right manner.

The report, prepared by the Institute of Social Sciences with the financial support of UNIFEM, recommends that all anti-trafficking interventions should adhere to the human rights paradigm to ensure that the rights of the trafficked persons are protected.

It is imperative to understand that this gross violation of human rights occurs due to many socio-economic factors that add to the vulnerability of the victims.

Some of the main causes of vulnerability are economic and gender disparity, which limit women's access to developmental processes, the report points out.

Nodal agency

Suggesting the setting up of a nodal agency, the report says that there was a need to build up coordination among the non-governmental agencies at the national level. This was

stressed by the NHRC chairperson, Justice A.S. Anand, while releasing the report here today.

To prevent trafficking, micro-studies should be carried out for vulnerability mapping of the source areas, as well as demand areas and the community should be sensitised to issues of gender, women's rights and child rights, the report points out while recommending the need for community policing. The study has also underlined the need for minimum standards of care and attention in rescue and post-rescue activities.

On the prosecution side, it stressed the need for ensuring that all crimes are reported and registered so that legal action is taken.

Lack of training

The study shows that lack of training was a serious impediment to effective law enforcement and justice delivery. "Justice delivery mechanism is another area that is in need of change and improvement besides the proceedings of the court and its ambience need to be made more victim-friendly and less intimidating for women," it says while asking the panchayati raj institutions to play an active role in anti-trafficking.

The research was carried out

in 13 States and Union Territories.

The primary data was collected by interviewing 4006 people falling under seven categories, including victims, survivors, brothel owners, clients and children. Of the people spoken to, 29.5 per cent were from Andhra Pradesh, 15 per cent from Karnataka, 12.5 per cent from West Bengal and 12.3 per cent from Tamil Nadu.

Strong link

The study suggests a strong link between trafficking and migration with an added dimension in trafficking because of unconventional means of commercial sex exploitation like sex tourism and exploitation in massage parlours and beer bars that has created a great demand for children. Similarly, there is a clear link between trafficking and those reported missing.

The legal regime, no matter how well meaning, has little relevance unless the laws are properly implemented.

A study of the law enforcement scenario shows that the various provisions of ITPA are underutilised or not utilised at all.

Law enforcement is also hampered by serious limitations, as trafficking is a very serious crime, extending beyond the jurisdictional boundaries.

‘মানুষ পাচার’ নিয়ে মার্কিন নিষেধাজ্ঞা

নিজস্ব সংবাদদাতা, ঢাকা ১২

অগস্ট: ‘মানুষ পাচার’ নিয়ে বাংলাদেশকে ১৪ অগস্ট পর্যন্ত চরমসীমা দিয়েছে মার্কিন প্রশাসন। এই বিষয়ে বাংলাদেশের ভূমিকায় আমেরিকা এতটাই ক্ষুব্ধ যে, বাংলাদেশের কাছে ইতিবাচক সাড়া না পেলে ঢাকার বিরুদ্ধে বিভিন্ন বিষয়ে নিষেধাজ্ঞা জারি করার কথাও ভাবছে আমেরিকা। গত মে মাসে মার্কিন বিদেশমন্ত্রক জানিয়েছিল, প্রতি বছর বাংলাদেশ থেকে অথবা বাংলাদেশের মধ্যে দিয়ে ১০ থেকে ২০ হাজার মহিলা ও শিশু ভারত, পাকিস্তান, বাহরিন, কুয়েত এবং সংযুক্ত আরব আমিরশাহিতে পাচার হয়। এর পরেই মার্কিন প্রশাসন বাংলাদেশকে ১৪ অগস্ট পর্যন্ত সময় দিয়েছিল। এই অভিযোগ অস্বীকার করে বাংলাদেশের বিদেশমন্ত্রী এম মোরশেদ খান বলেন, “আমরা আমাদের সীমিত ক্ষমতার মধ্যে যথাসাধ্য চেষ্টা করেছি।”

13 AUG 2001

Daler breathes easy

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, Jan. 10. — Daler Mehndi got a major reprieve when Punjab Police gave a clean chit to him today in the human trafficking case, but said that investigations had pointed out the involvement of his brother, Shamsheer, in the case.

"From the record (including of embassies) it was not found true that Daler took a large number of people (abroad as part of his troupe)," Director-General of Punjab Police Mr AA Siddiqui said while talking to reporters today. However, he said investigations have so far pointed to the involvement of Daler's brother.

"There were allegations against Daler Mehndi, but during the investigations



Daler Mehndi: Clean chit from cops

many things came out, that is why he got reprieve," the DGP said when asked about the relief Daler received with the Punjab Police giving him a clean chit in the case.

Mr Siddiqui said Daler's allegation that officers of the Patiala police demanded Rs 1.50 crore to keep him out of the case during the tenure of former SSP Mr Paramraj Singh Umranangal was also being probed by the zonal IGP and action would be taken as per the findings of the probe.

Mr Umranangal gave details (of the alleged involvement of Daler) on the basis of details in the complaint, the DGP said.

Answering another question from the media, Mr Siddiqui said that the media had hyped the case as the person involved in the case was a celebrity.

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Avtar Singh, Jagvinder Singh and Balbir Singh at the Attari railway station

Trafficking victims return from Pakistan

By Yudhvir Rana
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Attari: For three Punjabi youths who arrived along with Sikh pilgrims from Pakistan on Thursday it was a very special homecoming. Avtar Singh, Jagvinder Singh and Balbir Singh who had gone to Lebanon to work in brick kilns fell victim to a human trafficking racket. Duped by agents who promised them lucrative jobs in western countries they were subsequently arrested and underwent nightmarish experiences in the jails of Turkey, Iran and Pakistan. Then for a year they lived under the shelter of the Gurdwara Dera Sahib in Lahore before being allowed to return home. The youths belong to Hoshiarpur and Kapurthala districts of Punjab.

Harpal Singh Bhullar, president of International Bhai Mardana Yadgari Kirtan Darbar Society (IBMYKDS), said that he had arranged for the youth to board the pilgrim special train at Wagah (Pakistan) when they had come to serve the langar (community kitchen) food to the Indian pilgrims. The youths' family members came to Attari railway station to receive the sons.

One of the youths, Avtar

Singh, said they sought shelter at the Gurdwara Dera Sahib, Lahore, during the Baisakhi of 2003. He said Bhullar, who was visiting Pakistan along with a jatha, took them to the Wagah border but they were not allowed to leave in the absence of proper travel documents. All three of them expressed gratitude towards the Pakistani authorities for not sending them to jail and allowing them to live in a room at the Gurdwara Dera Sahib complex.

However, restrictions were placed on their movements and they were told not to move out of the premises except to bring milk from a nearby market at a specified time. Sikh visitors from India gave them financial help and this enabled them to make phone calls back home to their parents and friends.

In Lebanon they had worked in factories and brick kilns and had paid \$500 each to travel agents to go to Istanbul but were caught by the Turkish authorities and deported to Iran where they spent three months in jail before being deported to Pakistan. Here too they spent three days in jail until fellow Pakistanis who had also been duped by the agents helped to secure their release.

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