

Trafficking of women and children

RU Correspondent

TRAFFICKING of women and children is a common problem of South Asia and South East Asia. This problem is becoming complex day by day. Every year a large number of women, girl, children and minor boys are forcibly taken across the border of Bangladesh to India, Nepal, Pakistan, Vietnam and other South East Asian countries. Central Asian countries and a large majority of them end up either as prostitutes in various countries or as camel jockeys in the Middle Eastern countries.

According to the Global Alliance against Traffic in Women, "Transporting of person from one place to another through means of deception threatened or implied violence is called Trafficking".

The United Nations General Assembly defined "Trafficking as the illicit and clandestine movements of persons across national borders with the end goal of forcing women and girl children into sexually or oppressive and exploitative situations for profit of recruiters, traffickers and crime syndicate, as well as other illegal activities related to trafficking such as forced domestic labour, false marriage, clandestine employment and false adoption.

Trafficking of women for sexual exploitation has a long history in Asia. During the Second World War poor Korean women served Japanese soldiers in China in what was called comfort homes, Philippines soon become the centre for trafficking in Asia and when the state took strong measures to curb and regulate it, the base shifted to Thailand, which is now both a receiver (from Cambodia, Vietnam and Myanmar) and given (to Korea, Japan and Europe) of women for sexual exploitation.

The Convention On the Rights of the Child (CRC) provides in its Article 35 that, "State parties shall take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral

measures to prevent the abduction, the sale or traffic in children for any purpose or in any form." Trafficking in the recent SAARC Summit in Male (May 12, 14, 1997).

Yet, here and now in 1998, in Bangladesh it is estimated that an average of 4500 women and children are smuggled to Pakistan every year and an estimated 5000-7000 are trafficked from Nepal to India every year. According to estimates by human rights activists, 200 to 400 young women and children are smuggled every month from Bangladesh to Pakistan.

Most of them end up in prostitution. According to another report, there were 165000 Bangladeshi women in prostitution in Pakistan in 1992. The figure is expected to have crossed 200000 by now. In addition a large number of Bangladeshi women are engaged in the flesh trade in India—mostly in the brothels of Calcutta, Mumbai and Delhi.

According to Central Social Welfare Board of India the percentage of

Bangladeshi prostitutes serving in India is 2.7. UNICEF and SAARC reports say that on average 4500 women and children from Bangladesh are being

violence and poverty are the main cause of trafficking. The victims themselves or their parents trust the agents of the traffickers, accept the offers of a 'bright

future' and ultimately end up either as prostitutes in cheap bonded household or serve in informal sector as labourers in India or Pakistan or as camel jockeys in the Middle Eastern countries.

Now a days, trafficking has become a profitable business. It is an easy way to make money. Young women and children are sold as commodities at rates high as US\$2000. In Pakistan, the Bangladeshi women and children rate higher than of the other country for the purpose of prostitution and sexual slavery.

Previously, Nepal was the major supplier of girls in the brothels of India but now Bangladesh has occupied the number one position. Usually, border areas of Khulna, Jessore, Satkhira, Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Rangpur, Mymensingh, Comilla, Brahmanbaria and Sylhet are the land routes of trafficking. The trafficker's have strong network including good

link with the administration, police and also political leaders.

Some countries of the world like Nepal, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, South China and other Central Asian countries are the home ground for traffickers. Some other countries like Japan, Hong Kong, UAE and other gulf countries are the users of trafficked person.

Still some other like Thailand, Philippines, India and Pakistan are both sources as well as users of trafficked persons.

The issue of trafficking of women and children is a highly complex socio-economic problem. For preventing trafficking of women and children effectively support from all corners of the society, both government and non-government is required urgently. At this stage, we would like to recommend the following strategies to raise public awareness for the prevention of trafficking in child and women.

- * Publication and distribution of documents presenting facts, figure and analysis concerning the problem of trafficking to enhance the understanding of the problem by the general public.

- * Undertaking Radio and TV programmes on trafficking.

- * Undertaking publicity programmes in national/regional/local newspapers involving journalists.

- * The problem of trafficking should be included in text books up to the higher secondary level to raise awareness among students.

- * NGO's should take initiative step for awareness of the problem of trafficking.

- * Creation of alternative income opportunities and alleviation of poverty through income generation activities.

- * After taking the above mentioned programme the women and child traf-

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deported to Pakistan in a year.

The problem of unemployment, under employment, lack of alternative income opportunities, divorce, abuse,

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