ABSTRACT

Human trafficking, the greatest crime against humanity and the beast of the modern society have engulfed the entire world. It has affected each and every country as countries of origin, transit or destination or even as a combination of all. India occupying the central place in the South Asian economy is the eye for the traffickers. With the seventh largest area and second highest population in the world, the underground crime of human trafficking has been able to exploit more underprivileged section of the population and drag them into this hell of human trafficking. As land bounded by other developing countries of Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Pakistan, China and Afghanistan, India possess natural advantage for the exploiters. The liberal bilateral policy with some of its neighbors like Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan adds to the benefit of beasts. We all know about the network of human trafficking, their inhumane exploitations for profit and may have experiences with the victims also, however, our objective of presenting this paper is to highlight on the causes of growing number of human trafficking through borders of Nepal and Bangladesh and reflect on the internal and external consequences it brings on the host country i.e. India.

Group discussions, interviews with anti-trafficking NGOs mostly dealing with trafficking in Nepal and Bangladesh, government officials and victims have been taken into consideration to draw the conclusion that, the liberal foreign policy with Nepal and Bangladesh and no strict checks during incoming and outgoing transit of population is one of the main reasons of growing number of innocent victims of human trafficking. The second being, the corruption during the issuance of identity cards, voters cards, ration cards etc, it is very sad to notice that unreported number of people in India possess more than two nationality and almost 20% of the genuine population do not have voters’ identity card either. Even if reported of being trafficked, the anti-trafficking officials will have tough time identifying the victim, as they do not possess a single document to prove their nationality or identification. Underprivileged and abandoned children both inside and outside India, are more vulnerable to fall prey for human exploiters. Hence for a country like India, the effect of human trafficking is not less
than a virus TROZAN, killing the entire system slowly, from degrading the society to crumbling the political system as a whole.

**KEYWORDS:** Human Trafficking, Identity, Nationality, Border, Underprivileged.

**INTRODUCTION**

Human trafficking, the greatest crime against humanity and the beast of the modern society have engulfed the entire world. It has affected each and every country as countries of origin, transit or destination or even as a combination of all. India occupying the central place in the South Asian economy, is the eye for the traffickers. With the seventh largest area and second highest population in the world, the underground crime of human trafficking has been able to exploit more underprivileged section of the population and drag them into this hell of human trafficking. As land bounded by other developing countries of Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Pakistan and Afghanistan, India possess natural advantage for the exploiters. The liberal bilateral policy with some of its neighbors like Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan adds to the benefit of beasts.

Trafficking refers to the ‘recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraught, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose exploitation’ (UN 2003). The UN Protocol further identifies the main forms of exploitation as prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude, or the removal of organs.

**OBJECTIVE:**

We all know about the network of human trafficking, their inhumane exploitations for profit and may have experiences with the victims also, however, the main objective this paper is to highlight on the causes of growing number of human trafficking through borders of Nepal and Bangladesh and reflect on the internal and external consequences it brings to India.

**METHODOLOGY:**

Group discussions, interviews with Anti trafficking NGOs, government officials and testimonies of victims are studied to find out the Causes and consequences of growing number of human trafficking cases through these borderlands. Review of all the related
issues on human trafficking were studied specially on Indian borderland from different journals, reports, articles etc.

CAUSES OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING ALONG INDO-NEPAL BORDER:

Nepal is a small land locked country in the cradle of the Himalayas. It shares about 1690 km of land boundary with India along its eastern, southern and western parts covering West Bengal, Sikkim, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Human trafficking between Nepal and India has been easy due to porous and open border and strong kinship links like geographical similarity, socio-cultural and historical reasons. It is ranked the 4th poorest country in the world, giving opportunities for traffickers to exploit. According to one survey nearly 1200 children are trafficked across India and Nepal border every year and this number is increasing rapidly. India ranks 9th in terms of international migrants in 2010 (5436012 persons), by United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. These numbers are recorded, however there are thousands of unrecorded illegal migrants along these friendly countries who are vulnerable to fall prey for human trafficking industry.

Victims are sometimes tricked and lured by false promises or physically forced. Some traffickers use coercive and manipulative tactics including deception, intimidation, feigned love, isolation, threat and use of physical force, debt bondage, other abuse, or even force-feeding with drugs to control their victims. People who are seeking entry to other countries may be picked up by traffickers, and misled into thinking that they will be free after being smuggled across the border. In some cases, they are captured through slave raiding, although this is increasingly rare.

With respect to random survey done of 50 individuals in Darjeeling Town ranging from 15 years to 40 years of age, 79% opines that poverty, unemployment and the human desire for better futures are the main reason for the growing number of people falling prey. About 16% says that it is the ignorance of the victims and the rest 5% point’s fingers to the technologies like cell phones, internet and videos to bring victims into their radar. After interviewing few individuals, Government officials and persons involving in anti-trafficking, we have tried to categories the causes of growing number of human trafficking cases in the Nepal-India border along Darjeeling hills as follows:
The factors affecting the rise of trafficking over the past 15 years include globalisation (including network effects/scale economies associated with illicit trade; the demand for goods and services); the social and political environment (including the degree of law enforcement in both origin and destination countries; community vulnerability factors: perceived poverty; access to financial, social, human and economic capital; unemployment; gender discrimination; inequality; and aspirations with incomplete/inaccurate information).

Some of the important causes are discussed below:

(i) Cultural similarity:

The inhabitants of the Darjeeling hills (Indian Territory) and Nepal share the same ethnicity, culture, language and nationality (Nepalese). The cordial relations and kinship provides the easy passage of goods and people along the borders. The family ceremonies, rituals and marriages are often attended on both the sides. Hence it becomes very difficult to track the immigrant and emigrants. This advantage is misused by the traffickers. There are hardly any identification checks at these porous borders. If there are any enquiries also, traffickers easily escape by giving false information. Here, social inter-relationship is the major reason for migration. People move back and forth easily for marriage, rituals, family ceremonies, educational purposes and work. Elam, Jhapa, Panchthar, Fikkal, Dharan bordering Darjeeling and Sikkim are among such areas. Hence, the boundary between two countries exist only in papers, the cross-border migration is unchecked and unrecorded.

The rise in illegal migration has been matched by an unprecedented rise in human trafficking over the last decade, and it cannot be separated from the larger dynamics of the global economy, nor the policies pursued by governments, including ‘migration regimes that restrict the ability of individuals to secure legal access to preferred destinations. Many developed nations have enforced strict immigration laws over the years. Despite this, the human traffickers devises new escapes routes and more inhumane forms of exploitation for profits. If
even the strictest borders can be passed by traffickers then we can imagine the volume of people being trafficked through porous and unchecked borders like India and Nepal.

(ii) **Poverty:**

The hills along the borders are economically backward. On Nepal’s side agriculture is the main occupation and on Indian side, it is the tea and tourism industry. Darjeeling’s history of agitation for the statehood has crippled its economy in the past four decades. The standard of living in both the sides is low. Hence, the people are more vulnerable and an easy eye for the traffickers. Their poverty and economic dependence compels them to trust the shallow promises of traffickers despite several awareness programmes as their only alternative. About 80% of the victims of human trafficking traces their cause at poverty. Nepal is one of the major source country of human labour in the world. It can be estimated that the quarter of Nepal’s GDP is from the money sent home by the workers working in the different countries including India. After a repeated report of violence and abuses on Nepali women working in Gulf countries, Nepal had put a ban on women to work in those countries. However, prospects for better life and more income drive the young Nepalis men and women equally to seek employment in other countries. Nepal lifted this ban in 2010.

Unlike Gulf countries, the transit of women and children to India through Darjeeling and Sikkim to the metros of India is unchecked and easy. People are regarded as commodities and are sold and exploited for profit. It is estimated that human trafficking is the third largest organized criminal industry. Trafficked people are often in demand in the recipient country, primarily to fill gaps in the employment structure that needs cheap, irregular labour. It is an attractive business for criminal groups as it has low start-up costs, minimal risks, high profits and large demand.

(iii) **Self-oriented society:**

Our self oriented society is the another reason. Unless it matters one’s own family or self, they think it is other’s issues. Still the people are very much hesitate to report any criminal offence to the authority nor they want to get involved. Awareness programmes have helped a lot to create self less society however, it will take time for the societal revival.

(iv) **Political relations and law and order:**

The bilateral liberal policies provide easy access to these countries. There are check points but as we mentioned earlier that both sides people share same ethnicity and language, there are nominal checks only. Children and women can be easily trafficked through these routes. The Indo-Nepal Peace and Friendship Treaty of 1950 allow Nepalis to freely reside,
own property, find employment and carry on business in India. Article VI of the 1950 treaty states: “Each Government undertakes, in token of the neighborly friendship between India and Nepal, to give to the nationals of the other, in its territory, national treatment with regard to participation in industrial and economic development of such territory and to the grant of concessions and contracts relating to such development.” Article VII further adds: “The Governments of India and Nepal agree to grant, on a reciprocal basis, to the nationals of one country in the territories of the other the same privileges in the matter of residence, ownership of property, participation in trade and commerce, movement and other privileges of a similar nature.”

This friendly relationship is being misused and free passage of people only adds more number of victims of human trafficking. There are cases reported of India’s security forces on the borders involved in the crimes time to time.

(v) New technologies and media:

New opportunities provided by the Globalisation of technology have helped traffickers enormously. Increasingly, the business of human trafficking is conducted by the help of the internet, particularly for recruiting women for sex trafficking. The Internet introduces a new resource for sex traffickers to find vulnerable women, sell women for sexual exploitation, while concealing their own identities. Because of the highly unregulated nature of the Internet, those who purchase trafficked women and children can use the platform for criminal purposes without being caught. Available transportation infrastructure and reduced transportation costs have also facilitated large volume of human trafficking.

CONSEQUENCES:

The impacts of human trafficking are broad covering all aspects of human life from social to political and economic to spiritual. However, while trafficking is too covert to accurately measure, the numbers involved are significant. It is also clear that everywhere it occurs, the consequences are devastating for victims and the larger community – all society suffers, as well as principles of democratic freedom, principles of democratic society, rule of law and human rights. The scale of trafficking also deals a particular blow to gender equality and women’s rights, presents a strain on law enforcement, and affects security and health systems.
Regressive consequences on society as a whole:

The impacts on the victim’s family and the society as a whole cannot be measured in terms of money or loss but it cannot be ignored also. The absence of women in the family not only breaks the very basis of family system but also effects the development of her children. Children are deprived of their parent’s love and care and their further economic dependence will draw them to the clutches of human traffickers. Victims who return to communities often find themselves stigmatized and shunned, and are more likely to become involved in substance abuse and criminal activity Children trafficked into forced labour or sexual exploitation have their development as a person ‘irreparably damaged’ Survivors often suffer multiple traumas and psychological problems.

Impacts on health condition:

The victims face lot of health problems. Unhygienic work place, malnutrition, exploitation and lack of medical treatments leave them with poor health conditions. As the trafficked person is repeated exploited physically, sexually and emotionally at the hands of the traffickers and other employers, there are high risk of getting HIV and STDs, sexually transmitted disease. Frequently denied the choice to use condoms, sex trafficking victims can introduce HIV to the broader population. Health effects are not limited only to those trafficked for sexual exploitation. Trafficked workers live and work in overcrowded, unsanitary conditions, with no consideration of safety. These are problems not just for the individual, who may suffer from long-term adverse health, but as such conditions can harbour infectious diseases, wider populations may also be put at risk.

Questions on Gender equity and human rights:

Trafficked people are deprived of their basic rights. The human trafficking industry is the third largest billion dollar industry in the world and the larger volume of people being trafficked are women and children. The sexual exploitation of women and forced prostitution questions on the modern day concept of gender equity. Children are deprived of their free will and to grow in protective environment. The basic human rights of free will and right to live are stripped from the victims.

Security threat:

National security and rule of law organised criminal groups often combine human trafficking with other types of criminal activities, and its profits fuel other criminal activities, which present huge security threats to countries, such as the drug trade, particularly as some of the trade routes, which they control, are the same Human trafficking operations undermine
government efforts to exert authority over its territory, threatening the security of vulnerable populations. Many governments are unable to protect women and children who are kidnapped from their homes and schools or from refugee camps.

CONCLUSION

The liberal foreign policy with Nepal and Bangladesh and no strict checks during incoming and outgoing transit of population is one of the main reasons of growing numbers of innocent victims of human trafficking. The second being, the corruption during the issuance of identity cards, voters cards, ration cards etc. It is very sad to notice that unreported number of people in India possess more than two nationality and almost 20% of the genuine population do not have voters’ identity card either. Even if reported of being trafficked, the anti-trafficking officials will have tough time identifying the victim, as they do not possess a single document to prove their nationality or identification. Underprivileged and abandoned children both inside and outside India, are more vulnerable to fall prey for human exploiters. Hence for a country like India, the effect of human trafficking is not less than a virus TROZAN, killing the entire system slowly, from degrading the society to crumbling the political system as a whole.

Thus, measures the best solution is comprehensive, especially the involvement of government in formulating and drafting laws that can protect people from falling prey to problems. Moreover, the involvement of NGOs’ in helping the government solve this problem is appropriate and timely because the NGO’s can carry out the duties that cannot be carried out by Government. This issue will only be done if all the emphasis and direct assistance whether in terms of moral and financial, and suggestions with combating this commercial crimes.

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