



Personal Experience Working with the Police to Rescue Girls from Brothels in India

Nilinuri Toppo

Siliguri College of Commerce, Siliguri, Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri District, West Bengal, India

Young People Against Prostitution and Human Trafficking:

The Greatest Violence Against Human Beings

Casina Pio IV

Vatican City, 15-16 November 2014

“The Spirit of the Lord has anointed me to give good news to the poor...” *Lk 4:16-19*

A human body can bear only up to 45 Del of unit of pain but at the time of giving birth to a baby a woman has to feels up to 57 Del of pain. This is similar to twenty bones fractured at a time.

Do we really respect a woman's worth in the society?

God created such a wonderful person in His own image and likeness. The Bible teaches us, *Genesis 1: 26* says ‘God said “Let us make man in our image, to our likeness. Let them rule over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, over the cattle, over the wild animals, and over all creeping things that crawl along the ground”... then why is his precious person being destroyed?’

Trafficking in human being is one of the largest organized crimes across the world national and international; along with trafficking in drugs and arms. Undoubtedly, it is as much a commercial activity as an organized crime. It is multi dimensional in nature, because it is extending beyond boundaries.

India is a

- source,
- destination,
- transit country for human trafficking of men, women, and children trafficked for the purposes of
 - forced labour
 - commercial sexual exploitation
 - internal forced labour
 - debt bondage
 - removal of organs
 - forced labour working in brick kilns, rice mills, agriculture, embroidery factories, prostitution, waitressing, field work, dancing entertainment, factory work, and domestic work, by offering of false promises of marriage, employment, education economic incentives offered to parents to part with their children, fake jobs or marriage promises, and so on...
- There are about 1,000 red-light areas all over India, a quarter of the total number of prostitutes are minors. Cage prostitutes are often minors, often from Nepal and Bangladesh. An estimated number about 2.3 million prostitutes are there.

I myself am the only sister of a brother who was trafficked on the way to his hostel. He was JUST 11 then, on his way he met an unknown person who slowly approached him and said, “COME WITH ME YOU WILL GET LOTS OF MONEY, DON'T HAVE TO STUDY HARD AND ON THE OTHER HAND U CAN LIVE THE WAY YOU LIKE AND ALSO YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR FAMILY.” These words made my brother think over again and again, he thought of helping mother financially because as our family was facing acute financial problems. He was compelled and forcefully taken to Delhi, the capital of India, as a child labourer, he was not employed at one place, he was transferred from place to place without a penny. We were frantically searching out for

him, filed a missing complaint in the Police station. After a year and a half, my broken-hearted mother received a phone call from my beloved brother who was then employed as a child labourer to plough the barren land, to look after the cattle, prepare food for cattle, besides being employed as a domestic worker in the state of UP India. He was kept so busy there that he even didn't get time to cut his hair or nails. It was one year and a half months of his missing, we found him with the help of Sister Seli who is a member of Sisters of Mary Immaculate who is active in the field of anti-human trafficking, was very kind to our family, and showed her effectiveness in rescuing my brother. I heartily thank her for her kindness.

I have had personal conversations with the girls who have escaped from the world of prostitution. They have gone through wretched condition, lots of suffering and hardship, which is beyond our thought and expectation and is, above all, dehumanization of the person. We can't measure their GRIEF AND PAIN. In one day at least they needed to please **18 customers**: it was on them how they managed their time **within 24 hours**. It was something like a **DO OR DIE SITUATION**.

It is said that everyday about 200 girls and women in India enter prostitution and 80% of them against their will. Every hour, four women and girls in India enter prostitution, three of them against their will.

It is so pathetic to see the girls in those brothel houses. Girls are forced to do the work which exploits them completely, leaving behind their future and hope because once they get into this trap it is very difficult for them to come out of the situation. It is similar to a person who is addicted to drugs.

I have personally interviewed the girls who have been rescued by the NGOs with the help of police force, CIDs etc. they have not yet come out of their trauma. I went to interview a girl who was from Kolkata, she was unable to speak of anything, she didn't share her story. I could understand it's only because she has not yet come out of the trauma, torture and drugs that she was injected with. It was so painful to hear their extreme unthinkable stories. It was all beyond my thoughts and expectations. One of the girls whom I came across after the rescue shared her typical story with me. She was not given any food to eat for 1 year. Just to keep them alive they were given some puffed rice with water once a day. Once they become weak their organs, kidneys and other parts of the body, as per demand, are sold and ultimately it results in their death. She escaped from those inhuman traffickers by God's grace and now she is recovering. It works like a well-planned network for demand and supply of commodities...

One of the traffickers who was arrested boldly said, "The girls are meant to be sold". What an inhuman mentality! This calls for to reinforce attitudes of Christ in employing just and workable measures against human trafficking.

I also interviewed girls who were able to escape from the brothel house. They too had their own stories to share but they didn't reveal them because of what happened to them, they wanted it to be confidential.

I would like to share my experience with the police in rescuing girls. I was part of the rescue operation in October last month. We went for a raid at a well-known Resort. I used to think that the work of prostitution took place only in Brothels but it was not so, it takes place anywhere, be it a congested room or a five-star restaurant with A/C rooms, be it well-furnished with lights or poorly furnished with no lights, it does not matter, the work of prostitution is going on every now and then here and there. We were able to rescue four minor girls and arrested nine accusers. Pimps were not at all open but the investigation officers found out everything and put them behind the bar. This work is really risky, challenging and you need to prepare mentally, physically and spiritually too.

The Constitution of India prohibits human trafficking and child labour under these provisions:

Article 23(1)

Prohibits trafficking in human beings and other similar forms of forced labour. Any contravention of this provision shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law.

Article 39(e)

To protect health and strength of workers and tender age of children and to ensure that they are not forced by economic necessity to enter a vocation unsuited to their age or strength.

Article 24

Prohibits employment of children below 14 years of age in factories, mines or other hazardous employment.

Article 39(f)

That children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity and that childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment.

There are laws for on Anti trafficking in India – ITPA Act Immoral Trafficking Prevention Act, Juvenile, Bonded Labour Act, These are not enforced effectively by the law enforcement

Recommendations:

- The person who is at the forefront must be **spiritually empowered by Jesus Christ's** attitudes of kindness, courage and compassion.
- Prevention of human trafficking requires several types of interventions.

Prevention as a strategy to combat trafficking has to **focus on areas of sensitization and awareness among the public**, especially those vulnerable pockets of trafficking at source areas as well as convergence of a development services to forestall conditions responsible for it.

AGG (**Adolescent Girls Group**) – a need of the time:

- Adolescents share their secrets with their friends only...
- Capacitate a few adolescent to work as "Peer Educators" (PE)
- Spread the information through the Peer Educator
- Peer Educator will keep an eye on potential traffickers as well as on the target
- Motivate the young generation to look for locally available jobs and to save life and much more money

When I interviewed the girls I realised their deplorable experiences and I was able to learn many things from them. I would like to list a few points:

- **We should not easily trust strangers.** It's not only strangers but now in today's world we can't EVEN trust our close relatives, close friends or our own kin! I m saying this because I met a girl who was taken for work under the promise of earning more money by her brother-in-law, but that girl was sold to a man and as a result we got her dead body back **BECAUSE THE PAIN WHICH SHE BORE WAS NOT BEARABLE.** Her parents are still not aware of it. - Parents also need to be very careful while entrusting their children to anyone. They should be fully cross-checked.

- We ourselves need to be careful at every point of time wherever we travel making sure that we are not alone.

I would like to conclude by saying that this work needs lots of prayerful support, unselfish enthusiasm and financial help as the rescued girls live in their own homes where they need to be well protected under the care and supervision to make sure they are not re-trafficked again.

While we are concerned with rescuing girls who are trafficked, we must also make a great effort to change the attitudes of traffickers. "It's good to have money and things that money can buy, but it's good to check once in a while and make sure that you haven't lost the thing that money cannot buy", for example the love of our Heavenly Father or the Kingdom of Heaven cannot be purchased with money. We need money to live in this world; but let us remember we are sojourners on this earth as the Bible teaches us and those who believe it. I don't say money is not essential, it is! "But love of money is the root of all kinds of evil" 1st *Timothy* 6:10. So let us join our hands together and work against the crime of prostitution thus making a difference!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!