



AN INSIGHT INTO THE CAUSES OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN NAGALAND

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ABSTRACT

KEYWORDS:

Human trafficking, causes, poverty, lack of awareness, and globalization

There is a much bigger and sinister underworld racket when it comes to human trafficking and its tentacles are spread worldwide. The truth is Nagaland is only now becoming aware of this social menace through reports and articles that appear sporadically in local dailies. But the truth of the problem lies in the fact that many more cases go unreported or unregistered. However, an insight into the registered cases from 2010 to 2014 reveals that there have been 46 arrests and 184 victims that have been rescued. There are several reasons for trade in human beings especially when it comes to women and children. Causes of human trafficking may vary from country to country or from state to state. However, when we analyze the various reasons, it more often than not boils down to two main factors i.e., the push factor and the pull factor. As such the present paper is an attempt to explain the major causes of human trafficking in the state of Nagaland.

INTRODUCTION

The issue and prediction of human trafficking becoming a lucrative and flourishing underground industry has all but become a ground reality. With lax, undefined and un-segregated international and local laws to deal with this social menace (until only recently), and the advancement in networking opportunities brought about by the advancement in technology and globalization, human trafficking has today become one of the most profitable illegal and inhumane markets the world over. It is just another form that has replaced the age old ugly face of slavery that was thought to have been removed after numerous wars, protests and legislations in the history of mankind. In this modern age of science, technology, information and globalization, it is hard to fathom that thing like forced labor and sex slavery still exist. Nagaland, a small state in the north eastern region of India has also slowly but surely seen an increase in human trafficking incidences over the years and shows all the signs of spiraling out of control if the issue is not addressed promptly.

For quite some time in Nagaland, there was a feeling that human trafficking was an alien term and an issue only for other places. And that being a closely woven landlocked area, such a menace could never permeate the Naga society. But if we have learnt anything from the global experience of the past decades it is that no place is remote from contact with the rest of the world and that no place is immune from the

issues that confront modern society. Slowly anecdotal evidences started beginning to grow, the media started paying attention and today human trafficking in Nagaland has become a real problem. It is a fundamental denial of any principle of equality and a fundamental assault on any concept of the human rights of individuals. It is organised crime with vulnerable people - almost always women and children - as its raw material and as its victims. And therefore, finding out root causes of the problem becomes imperative for any formal acknowledgement or institutional response in the state. Vulnerability arises due to poor economic conditions, existence of gender-based discrimination, political instability (wars, internal disturbances, et al.)¹, geographical location and lack of awareness. Nagaland is a hot bed for all of these.

OBJECTIVE

- To identify the causes of human trafficking in Nagaland

AREA OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted on the prevalent situation of human trafficking in the state of Nagaland. Out of 11 districts of the state, 5 sample districts were chosen, keeping in mind its proximity to other states and international boundaries. The districts chosen were Dimapur district as it borders the state of Assam, Tuensang district for its proximity to Myanmar, Mon district as it shares its boundary with Myanmar and the state of Arunachal Pradesh, Peren district

which also shares its borders with the states of Assam and Manipur and finally Mokokchung district because of its proximity to the state of Assam and as it serves as a link to many other districts in the state.

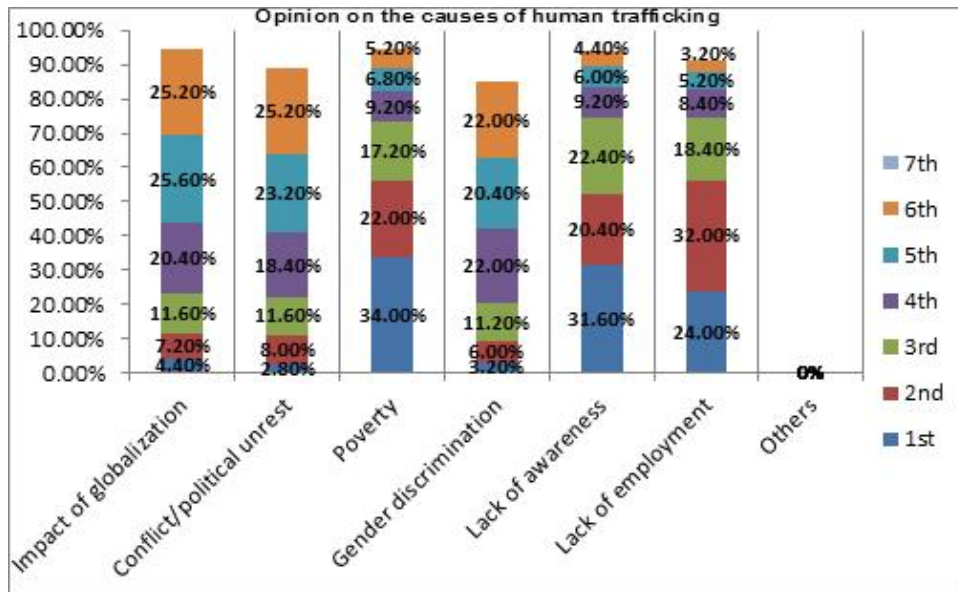
POVERTY: A CHRONIC CAUSE OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Poverty is the primary cause of human trafficking in the state of Nagaland. Nagaland is endowed with huge untapped natural resources and has the potential to transform itself into a commercial hub of India. However with rampant corruption at all levels, gross unemployment and the absence of any major factories, this looks a distant dream and the state remains decades behind mainstream India. Again, employment, vocational training and economic opportunities are in chronic shortage. As a result, unemployed youths and school dropouts are reduced to vulnerability. More vulnerable are those who migrate from rural areas, where

opportunities are even rarer, to urban areas in search of employment and other opportunities. This has created a congenial atmosphere for human trafficking activities to thrive in. Promises of better livelihood, employment, education and so on are tools used by traffickers to lure economically frustrated inhabitants of the state into their trap. There are many instances of poverty as a cause that has led to human trafficking. Here is such one instance that was documented in a local daily (Nagaland Post 29th of May 2008) : *Eight youths from Wokha district were cheated of their money and later abandoned in Chennai by two frauds... who lured and brought the 8 youths to Chennai on May 19 after promising them lucrative jobs and free food and lodging in Chennai... But after reaching Chennai, four of the youths were put in a security camp... while the other four were abandoned in a lodge... this is the second incident in recent times in Chennai after one Keduwalhi Krome of Lasumi village cheated 32 Naga youths promising them better salary, free food and lodging.*²

Figure-1
Opinion on the Causes of Human Trafficking

N=250



The study indicates that the main cause for human trafficking in the state is due to poverty (34%), lack of awareness (31.60%), and lack of employment (24%). A majority of the trafficking cases occur to victims from poor economic and educational backgrounds. Traffickers are also able to entice victims with promises of employment and better living. However, conflict/political unrest, is the least chosen factor (2.80%). This is because of major insurgent outfits being brought to the table by the central government.

LACK OF AWARENESS: A GATEWAY TO TRAFFICKING

Another major cause in the lack of awareness of the people on the issue of human trafficking. In recent years, media efforts have been key in raising awareness about human trafficking, prompting many to become more educated. However, these efforts by and large associate sexual exploitation with human trafficking, neglecting many other types of modern slavery. Human trafficking involves more than just sexual exploitation, often including the trade of humans for the purpose of forced labour, marriage, or the extraction of organs and tissues. Human trafficking and its

consequences are not only far away and other peoples' problem. It is a problem that is taking place right in our doorsteps. In, Nagaland, many people including young children and women fall victim to human trafficking through different methods used by traffickers. A lot of these cases are linked directly to the lack of awareness on the part of the parents, society and the victim themselves. They are ignorant on the very concept of human trafficking and the methods used by traffickers.

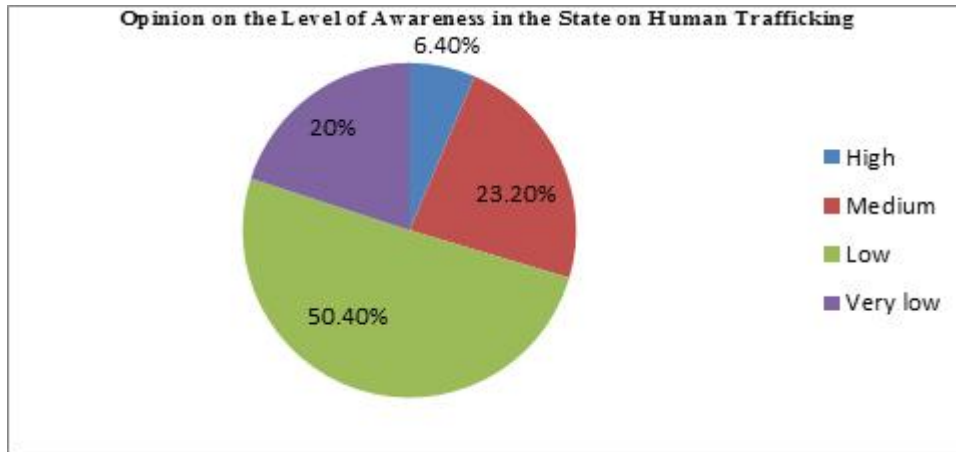
Traffickers no longer employ methods of snatch and grab. They have evolved with the times. And as mentioned earlier, to entice victims they promise high paying jobs, educational opportunities, loving relationships, a better future and so on. Most of the victims of trafficking in Nagaland have inadvertently fallen into one of these traps employed by the traffickers. And this has been attributed primarily to the people's lack of awareness and ignorance to this problem. An article that appear on Nagaland Page (24/05/07), another local daily, highlights this: *To Delhi they went with great hopes... after paying a Naga gentleman around Rs 12000 to Rs 15000 each, but they ended up working as cheap labourers*

in factories and mines in Chhattisgarh, Gurgaon and parts of Orissa... This is the sad story of atleast six innocent Naga boys from Tuensang District whose poor parents paid their lifelong savings... after the culprit assured them of providing gainful employment to their wards in private companies at

Delhi. According to reports, the number of victims, in what is now suspected to be a human trafficking racket, could rise since it is still not known how many people the culprit had conned so far. The 6 boys could be just the tip of a huge racket.³

Figure-2
Opinion on the Level of Awareness in the State on Human Trafficking

N=250



One of the factors sought by this research was to find out the level of awareness on the issue of human trafficking in Nagaland. There was some disparity in the answers provided by the respondents, 50.40% said that the level of awareness in the state is low, 23.20% of the respondents were of the opinion that the level of awareness is of medium level, 20% in the very low category and 6.40% in the high level of awareness category. Therefore the above figure indicates that the people’s awareness about the problem of human trafficking in Nagaland is low.

THE IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION

Globalization according to many writers and researchers is a key element in human trafficking. Globalization is the development of an increasingly integrated global economy marked especially by free trade, free flow of capital, and the tapping of cheaper foreign labour markets that transcend nation-state boundaries. In part, globalization disseminates practices, values, technology, and other human

products throughout the globe. It must be acknowledged that forms of slavery and human trafficking are not just outcomes of globalization; they are part of the globalization process itself that involves a functional integration of dispersed economic activities. As the world “shrinks” and evolves toward a sort of global community, the transfer of people both voluntary and coerced is becoming more prevalent. It is in large part due to globalization that human trafficking has become such a lucrative and thus, fast-growing criminal activity⁴ and its impact are also felt in all far reaches of the globe, including Nagaland. Another reason, which has a more local perspective on why Nagaland has become a source, destination and transit region for human trafficking is because of its geographical location. There are cross-border trafficking, especially from Myanmar and Bangladesh, as well as interstate trafficking from Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and some from Meghalaya. This is as a result of the state’s close proximity to these human trafficking hotspots.

Table-1

Registered cases of human trafficking by AHTUs (Anti Human Trafficking Unit) from 2010-2014

Number of persons arrested	46
Number of victims rescued	184
Details of interstate cases of trafficking	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ten boys rescued from Pune, Maharashtra. One accused arrested. 2. Fourteen girls rescued from Mylapore, Chennai, Tamil Nadu. Three accused arrested. 3. Twenty nine children (all female) rescued from Andhra Pradesh. Three accused arrested. 4. Eight children (5 female, 3 male) rescued from Jaipur Rajasthan. Two accused arrested

Source: PHQ (Police Headquarters Kohima) Human Rights Cell

CONCLUSION

Human Trafficking has become a viral threat to people, irrespective of creed, age, sex or color, worldwide. Furthermore, it deprives people of their basic human rights and is an indignity that affects millions of people every year on every continent and at all socioeconomic levels. Nagaland is no different. This small state in India that is home to about

20 lakh proud ethnic Nagas, once felt that their land was landlocked and deemed issues like human trafficking, alien concepts and something that could never penetrate into their close knit society. The region has also been a hot bed for political instability over the years. The insurgency problem in this region is not new and has been in existence since the early years of Indian independence. Through the years, this

has left thousands homeless, orphaned many and caused destruction to established means of livelihood. Along with this, rampant corruption with no political settlement in sight (until only recently), have provided flourishing opportunities for the perpetrators of human trafficking.

The phenomenon of human trafficking has slowly but surely cast its web and today it has become a burning issue with potential to escalate even further if something drastic is not done to mitigate or stop it in its tracks. However, this can be achieved only if governmental and non-governmental organizations in the state, step up their efforts on a warpath like drive and awareness is spread to every nook and corner of the land especially to the identified vulnerable sections of the society who are at a higher risk to human traffickers.

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Endnotes

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