

Trafficking of Women and Children through the Abandonment of Human Rights in Bangladesh

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Abstract

The study explores that Govt. and NGOs are directly involved in prevention activities. They do conduct prevention activities like mass-awareness raising, capacity building and income generating activities and so on. These activities definitely have impact on the society which is reflected in people's growing concern about trafficking and in number of trafficking which if not reduced has not increased noticeably; though the impact is very low in comparison to urgency. Besides, it cannot be said that whatever achieved is possible only because of Govt. NGO and International Organization activities. They have to be appreciated for their pioneer role in anti-trafficking issue but the study reveals that effectiveness of their prevention activities is hampered by acute presence of push factors of trafficking, lack of collaboration, weak policy and legal framework and their own inefficiency. If comprehensive work plan and policy is taken Women and Children may get rid of the nightmare of trafficking.

Keyword: Trafficking; Process; Cause; Law; Convention; Punishment.

1. Introduction

Trafficking is a violation of human rights and a threat to human security. UNICEF has described human trafficking as the “largest slave trade in history.” UNICEF also reported, “The trafficking of human beings has burgeoned into a multi-billion industry that is so widespread and damaging to its victims that it has become a cause of human insecurity.” According to US State department human trafficking is the third largest criminal enterprise worldwide. A study by ILO has calculated that the potential annual profit from human trafficking is \$31 billion and it is among the top three sources of illegal income worldwide. Women and children are most vulnerable to trafficking and people living below subsistence level, especially women and minorities need to be made secure. Trafficking, especially of women and children is a global concern now and Bangladesh cannot deny the fact. To combat trafficking in an international and regional level fair amount of initiatives are taken. Bangladesh is a signatory to following important conventions among many: UN Convention for the suppression of the traffic in person and of the exploitation of the Prostitutes and others, 1949; Convention on the elimination of all forms Discrimination against Women, 1979; Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989; Slavery convention 1956; CEDAW; ILO Convention 182 on the worst forms of Child labor, SAARC convention on preventing and combating trafficking in women and children For prostitution, 2002. At national level government has enacted the Women and Children Repression Prevention act, 2000; National Action Plan for children. Beside government, lots of NGOs are working in combating trafficking. Still, the increase in W&C trafficking is an undeniable fact. Prevention, Protection, Rehabilitation, and Repatriation – are tools to combat trafficking. Prevention is considered the most long-term avenue for reducing or eliminating human trafficking. NGOs are the main actors in this arena. This study is nothing but a sincere effort to focus on NGO activities.

2. Process and Causes of Trafficking

The purposes for which women and children are trafficked do not always match the method used to recruit them. For example, women and children are recruited through marriage could be trafficked for the purposes of prostitution and might eventually end up in a Bombay brothel. Similarly, those recruited through the promise of employment as a gardener’s assistant in India could wind up forced to race camels in Dubai. As well, those who are recruited with the promise of work in a Bangladesh city could end up in another country. It is also true however that in some cases recruitment practices employed matches what the child and women are eventually trafficked to do. So for example, a women’s and child’s parents may be told that their son or daughter will be taken to Dubai to work as a camel jockey and that may be precisely what happens to the child and women. In such cases, and as was already noted, it may be inappropriate to label the situation “trafficking” but rather is should be considerable a situation in which “Forced labour and slavery like practices” came into play. For this report, BNWLA has chosen to focus on two distinct purposes for which children and women are most commonly

trafficked, camel racing and prostitution. It should be noted, that, these are the most common purposes for which children and women are regularly trafficked.

2.1 Kidnapping

Kidnapping, one of the methods for trafficking, is normally done by deception and by force. After kidnapping the kidnapers sell the trafficked victim to the traffickers. They maximum time crippled the victims and takes them in the profession 'Begging' This belief is supported by the fact that during field research, BNWLA encountered only 16 cases of children who had been kidnapping out of a total of 106 cases involving children. When adjusting and when reports from the media during the same time period are included, this number rises 59 cases involving child kidnapping out of total 187 cases. BNWLA has encountered rumors that some privately run orphanages and school or orphans or homeless children are being used as recruitment and collection sites for children who are then trafficked. These rumors are very difficult to prove given the risk involved and the fact that such institutions are guarded and difficult to monitor.

2.2 Child Labor

At this time, although Bangladesh has in place labor laws restricting the employment of children, it is estimated that there are 6.3 million children working in Bangladesh and that 32 percent of those are prostitutes (UNICEF). These children are the least skilled, least valued and most vulnerable members of the work force. Survival demands that the work, yet rarely does employment provide them with skills that would enable them to move beyond the extreme poverty into which they were is born. Training is rare, illiteracy very high and those that are working have no time, energy or opportunity to gain the most basic of educations. Without viable skills, they are forced to take on the lowest paying and most unskilled tasks ranging from factory work to selling flowers on the street. It is a common sight, for example, to see children as young as seven years chipping bricks and halving dirt on construction sites working up to 12 hours a day. They have no protections against job site abuse, injury or loss of employment. In most cases, their families depend on their wages for survival.

2.3 Labor Migration

It is a fact that the villages and rural areas of Bangladesh cannot maintain the growing population. Migration out rural areas in heavy and children and women are regularly sent from rural villages to possible or real jobs in other parts of the country or, progressively more beyond its borders. For example, a village landowner might move to Dhaka for work and being or send for a village child and women to work in his her or her house as a domestic helper. A friend of a relative might be working in Dhaka in a garment factory and offer to take village

child and women back to the city to work in the same garment factory. Child and women migration is not restricted to Bangladesh.

2.4 Prostitution

Children and women are taken to be used as 'prostitute'. After being trafficked utmost time they have to show and sell their body. Have to lose their fidelity. In 2010, 63% of trafficked women are involved in prostitution. The rate of this profession is huge in the border of Bangladesh. This parentage is increasing gradually. When a woman is trafficked she has to leave her society. Though she can relive from the traffickers, she is not recognized as a normal woman in the society. She is thought of as an unchaste. No one give her respect. She cannot find any shelter for her. Losing all she felt vulnerable. So finding no way she involved in the profession of a sex worker.

3. Minor Causes behind Trafficking

Most reports emphasize that, in recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number of women being trafficked from Bangladesh into India and other countries. The causes of trafficking and the factors leading to this evident increases in recent years are numerous and convoluted. The main cause is identified below,

- a) Physical and mental illness of women
- b) Socialization which devalues female children
- c) Religious fundamentalism
- d) Polygamy and child marriage
- e) Negligible decision-making status of women in financial matters
- f) Frustration in love
- g) Globalization and export-oriented growth model and consumerism
- h) Natural disasters making families homeless and disintegrated
- i) Non-registration of female domestic help
- j) Misinterpretation of religion regarding women
- k) Enticements for a better life, e.g. job and prospect of marriage
- l) Increased dependency of guardians on the income of their female children
- m) Inadequate government policies in favor of women
- n) Inadequate rural development projects for women and unemployed.

From my analysis, I would like to say the main reason liable for trafficking is our spiteful social structure where here women are seen as a feminine, not as a human being. They are just like a showpiece of the drawing room. And treated as a thing. Not as a human. That's why in all walk of their life they are avoided, exploited and oppressed. And these subordinate women are the victim of trafficking.

4. Improvement of socio-economic condition

For sustainable achievement in anti-trafficking activities, improvement of socio economic condition meaning eradication of poverty, illiteracy, gender discrimination and vulnerability (push factors of trafficking) is the first requirement. Poverty and lack of economic opportunity make W&C potential victims of trafficking. The problem is deeply rooted in the riddle of poverty and culture. So, alternative livelihood options are to be created. Self-employment through credit program is to be taken as a part of prevention. Vocational and technical training along with scope of using that training is to be prioritized.

Government's Social Safety Net programs have to be strengthened. Traffic prone areas should be identified and covered by these programs. Help of NGOs can be taken to identify vulnerable population and covered by safety net programs leaving political influence and corruption.

4.1 Empowerment of Women

Women empowerment is a worthy strategy to eradicate not only threats of trafficking but also all type of violence against women. Women will never get rid of violence as long as they are financially dependent on male and are driven by male. Women empowerment tools include elimination of gender discriminating laws, access to education, scope of income generation, power to take own decision. Government took initiatives like education to girl child for free, vocational training and so on.

4.2 Strengthen Legal Framework

The main hindrance in prevention of trafficking is weak legal framework and weaker utilization. An exclusive law on human trafficking is the demand of all concerned. Specific definition of human trafficking, rigorous punishment, witness protection and role of different agencies should be incorporated clearly.

5. Basic Law

The Constitution of Bangladesh is the supreme law of the country.

5.1 Legislation

The principal source of the country's domestic legislation is Parliament, and legislation is drafted and enacted by or under the authority of the majority/ruling party. Bangladesh's anti-trafficking legal framework consists of

constitutional, substantive and procedural laws enacted by legislative or executive authorities, as well as international treaties, covenants, conventions, and declarations signed and/or ratified by the state. Cases related to trafficking in persons are prosecuted under several national laws and constitutional provisions.

Specific and general laws related to human trafficking are both substantive and procedural. The Laws that fall within Bangladesh's anti-trafficking legal framework consisting of:

A specific law against human trafficking

- a) Laws that can address human trafficking and related criminal acts (i.e. kidnapping, wrongful
- b) Confinement, slavery/forced labor, rape or sexual assault, etc.);
- c) Migration laws, regulations, and policies;
- d) Other complementary laws (i.e. extradition, prohibition of child marriage and dowry, birth and death registration); and
- e) International instruments to which Bangladesh is a party.

In Bangladesh, trafficking in persons and related activities can theoretically (and actually) be prosecuted under the following pieces of legislation

- a) The Constitution of Bangladesh
- b) The Women and Children Repression Prevention Act, 2000 (amended 2003)
- c) The Penal Code, 1860
- d) The Suppression of Immoral Traffic Act, 1933 (repealed after enactment of The Women and Children Repression Prevention Act, 2000)
- e) The Children Act, 1974
- f) The Bangladesh Labor Code, 2006

5.2 The Constitution of Bangladesh

Respect for human rights and human dignity pervades Bangladesh's Constitution. While provisions of this nature do not address human trafficking directly, an apt interpretation would recognize trafficking as being in violation of both tenets. The Constitution also serves as a strong anti-trafficking tool through its definition of prostitution – often a consequence of trafficking – as an anti-social act. **Article 18(2)** states that the state shall adopt effective measures to prevent prostitution and gambling. Other supportive provisions include **Article 27** (fundamental rights of equality and equal protection), **Article 28** (right to be free from discrimination), **Article 31** (right to protection of the law), and **Article 32** (protection of rights to life and personal liberty). **Article 34(1)** states: “All forms of forced labor are prohibited and any contravention of this provision shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law.” This Article can be used as a safeguard against trafficking for labor exploitation. Articles

35 and 36 are also illustrative. Article 35 asserts that no person shall be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Article 36 states that every citizen shall have the right to move freely throughout Bangladesh, to reside and settle in any place within the country, and to leave and re-enter the country. These sections can also be interpreted to criminalize human trafficking. The Constitution also has a provision concerning the establishment of special laws in favor of women and children.

5.3 The Women and Children Repression Prevention Act, 2000 (amended 2003)

Enacted in 2000, this act serves as the principal legislation for punishing trafficking in women and children in Bangladesh. **Sections 5 and 6** of the Act provide rigorous penal measures for trafficking in women and children for prostitution and other illegal and harmful purposes. The Act also establishes a special tribunal, the ***Nari-o-Shishu Nirjaton Doman***(Women and Children Repression Prevention Act) Tribunal, for prosecuting specific offenses against women and children (i.e. trafficking, kidnapping, demand for ransom, rape, death for dowry, sexual harassment, assault using inflammable substances, etc.). The Act was amended in 2003 to incorporate provisions that ensure accountability for investigating officers who fail to complete investigations within the stipulated time period. The Amendment also includes provisions for ‘camera trial’ to protect the confidentiality of survivors/witnesses and thereby guard against victimization.

6. Punishment for trafficking in women and children under the Act

6.1 Punishment for trafficking in women

Those who traffic women into or out of Bangladesh for prostitution or other unlawful or immoral purposes or buy, sell, or facilitate the hiring or hand-over for any kind of torture or for similar purposes keep a woman in their possession, care or custody, shall be sentenced to death or life in prison or imprisonment for not more than 20 years and not less than 10 years with a cash fine.

6.2 Punishment of trafficking in children, up to and including age 16

Those who traffic children into or out of Bangladesh for prostitution or other unlawful or immoral purposes or buy, sell, or facilitate the hiring or hand-over for any kind of torture or for similar purposes keep a child in their possession, care or custody, shall be sentenced to death or life in prison.

6.3 Punishment for the abduction of women and children

Those who abduct women and children for a purpose not mentioned in Section 5 shall be sentenced to life in prison or a minimum of 14 years imprisonment with a cash fine. Other relevant sections include 9 (rape), 10 (sexual harassment), 18 (investigation of offense), and 20 (trial procedure).

6.4 Limitations of the Act

The Women and Children Repression Prevention Act, 2000 (amended 2003) does not incorporate any provisions for:-

- a) Security and protection of victims/witnesses in litigation involving trafficking
- b) Punishment for the trafficking of adult males and/or labor forms of trafficking and/or
- c) Trafficking in human organs;
- d) Prosecution for all forms of trafficking in women/children other than for sexual
- e) Exploitation; and
- f) Punishment of sex industry clients and not just pimps, dalals and brothel owners.

6.5 The Penal Code, 1860

This Code specifically defines offenses related to several forms of abuse. There have been several amendments to the Code over the years. The Penal Code does not directly recognize human trafficking as a punishable offense, but it includes related offenses such as:

- a) Kidnapping and abduction (Sections 360-369)
- b) Procurement of female minors (Sections 366A, 366B)
- c) Slavery (Sections 370, 371)
- d) Sale or purchase of minors for an immoral purpose (Sections 372, 373)
- e) Forced labor (Section 374)
- f) Rape (Section 375-376)
- g) Mock or invalid marriage (Sections 493, 496)
- h) Wrongful confinement and wrongful restraint (Sections 342-346)

Punishment of offenses under the Penal Code

6.5.1 Kidnapping and abduction

Persons accused of kidnapping and abducting another from Bangladesh are to be punished for a prison term that may extend to seven years.

Any person who kidnaps or abducts a child under the age of 10 in order to subjugate such child shall be sentenced to death or life in prison or imprisonment for up to 14 years. Kidnapping or abduction with intent to secretly and wrongfully confine is punishable with imprisonment that may extend to seven years plus a fine. Kidnapping or abduction of a woman with intent to forcibly marry, seduce, or elicit sexual intercourse is punishable with imprisonment for up to 10 years plus a cash fine.

6.5.2 Procurement of female minors

Procurement of female minors under the age of 18, the import of girls under the age of 21 from a foreign country, and habitual dealing in slavery and sex are all offenses punishable by 10 years of prison and a cash fine.

Slavery:-Procurement of any person for selling or buying as a slave is punishable by imprisonment for up to seven years and a cash fine.

Sale or purchase of minors for immoral purpose Buying and selling of minors under the age of 18 years for the purpose of prostitution, illicit intercourse or any other unlawful or immoral purpose is punishable by 10 years of prison plus a cash fine.

6.5.3 Forced labor

The punishment for unlawful compulsory labor is imprisonment for up to one year, or a cash fine, or both. [This punishment is especially weak.]

6.5.4 Limitations of the Penal Code

The Penal Code, 1860, addresses some of the crimes which may link with trafficking but does not have specific provisions for:

- a. Child pornography
- b. Incest
- c. Sex tourism
- d. Organ trade

Though the Penal Code vaguely defines forced labor, slavery, and other crimes, the penalties are insufficient to the severity of the crime.

6.6 The Suppression of Immoral Traffic Act, 1933

This is legislation on commercial sexual exploitation. The law does not prohibit prostitution per se, but it forbids commercialized vice and solicitation. It was enacted to suppress brothels and trafficking in women and girls for ‘immoral’ purposes. It was repealed after enactment of the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act, 2000 (amended 2003). Again, the penalties are insufficient, however, since the Act was repealed, amending it is not an issue.

6.6.1 Punishment under the Act

- a) If any person detains a female under the age of 18 years against her will, he shall be sentenced up to three years in prison, or a fine of 1,000 takas, or both.

- b) If any person having the custody, charge or care of any girl under the age of 18 causes or encourages or abets the seduction or prostitution of that girl, he shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to two years, or a fine of up to 1,000 takas, or both.

6.6.2 Limitations of the Act

- a) The Act does not apply to women (above 18 years and does not apply to males; and)
- b) The Act only pertains to brothels and trafficking in women and girls for ‘immoral’

Purposes; it does not cover labor trafficking (though it could cover internal trafficking - within the parameters of its scope – for women and girls for commercial sex).

6.7 The Children Act, 1974

This Act pertains to the custody, protection, and treatment of children, and the trial and punishment of youthful offenders (underage persons who commit crimes). A few sections are directed towards punishment of those offenses which relate to sex and labor trafficking. Part VI of the Act addresses special offences potentially related to human trafficking of children, including provisions to prevent luring a child into a brothel, carrying out or encouraging seduction, or exploiting a child.

Punishment under the Act

6.7.1 The penalty for allowing children to be in brothels

Whoever allows or permits a child over the age of four years to reside in or frequently go to a brothel shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to two years or with a fine of up to 1,000 takas.

6.7.2 The penalty for causing or encouraging seduction and girls exposed to the risk of seduction

Whoever is a guardian of a girl under the age of 16 and encourages any person other than her husband to have sexual intercourse with her shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend up to two years, or with a fine of up to 1,000 takas, or both.

6.7.3 The penalty for the exploitation of child employees

- a) Whoever secures a child ostensibly for the purpose of menial employment or for labor in a factory or other establishment, but in fact exploits the child for his own end, withholds or lives off his earnings, shall be punished with a fine of up to 1,000 takas.

- b) Whoever secures a child ostensibly for the purposes mentioned in Subsection 1, but exposes such child to the risk of seduction, sodomy, prostitution or other immoral conditions shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to two years, or with a fine of up to 2,000 takas, or both.
- c) Any person who avails himself of the labor of a child exploited in the manner referred to in Subsection 2, or for whose immoral gratification such child is used, shall be liable as an abettor.

6.7.4 The penalty for publication of reports or pictures relating to children

This section addresses penalties for violation of Section 17 which prohibits the publication of identities of children involved in criminal cases. Punishment is up to two months and/or 200 Taka.

6.7.5 The penalty for cruelty to children

This section addresses exploitation (neglect, assault, abandonment or exposure to same) of children through 16 by adults (over 16) and provides penalties up to imprisonment of two years and/or fine of 1,000 Taka.

7. Limitations of the Act

- a) The Act is not in compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is ratified by the Government of Bangladesh;
- b) The Act is inconsistent in the age that defines a child (16, as per this Act) and not in line with international standard.
- c) The Act does not directly address child trafficking in any form, including for forced or bonded or slave-like labor, and does not directly address related punishments; and
- d) Maximum penalties are so dramatically inadequate, especially for ‘exploitation’ (both labor and sexual), that they undermine the intent of the law.

8. The Bangladesh Labor Code, 2006

The Bangladesh Labor Code, 2006 which comprehensively covers most aspects of labor law, prohibits employment of children and young persons.

- a) No child (under 14) shall be required or allowed to work in any profession or establishment. Whoever employs any child or adolescent or permits any child or adolescent to work in contravention of any provision of this Act; shall be punishable with fine which may extend to 5,000 Taka.
- b) No person is the parent or guardian of a child shall make an agreement to allow the service of the child to be utilized in any employment. The penalty for violation is up to 1,000 Taka.

8.1 Limitations of the Code

Maximum punishments under the Act are insufficient to deter serious crime; in fact, they are so weak that it calls into question the sincerity of the law. This law does not recognize as ‘work’ or include house-hold and domestic work or working at an agricultural farm (where not more than 10 people are engaged).

9. Other Complementary Laws

The following laws are not directly involved in prosecuting the offense of human trafficking, but they target offenses often linked with the crime.

- a) The Extradition Act, 1974
- b) The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1980
- c) The Birth Registration Act, 2004
- d) The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929
- e) Metropolitan Police Ordinance (soliciting/inducing persons for prostitution)

10. The Extradition Act, 1974

This Act deals with some specific crimes not limited to the trafficking of women and children for an illegal purpose. It also addresses forced labor, slavery and other offenses linked to human trafficking. It contains provisions for the extradition of fugitive offenders for committing the trafficking-related offenses below:

- a) Rape;
- b) Procuring or trafficking women or young persons for immoral purposes;
- c) Kidnapping, abduction or dealing in slaves;
- d) Stealing, abandoning, exposing or unlawfully detaining a child; and
- e) Aiding and abetting any person in committing the abovementioned offenses.

11. Role of Government

11.1 Initiative and measures of government Ministries and departments to combat human trafficking

Bangladesh government has been continuously taking pro-active steps and measures to combatable forms of human trafficking, especially trafficking in women and children since 2004. It has initiated in the preparation and formulation of the new law on all forms of human trafficking and subsequently the Rules to implement the law in a concerted way with the concerned line Ministries, their respective departments, NGOs and INGOs.-

11.2 Ministry of home affairs

The Ministry of Home Affairs has been the lead Ministry to address the issues of human trafficking in a holistic way by coordinating the activities of the concerned Ministries and departments, INGOs and NGOs. The Ministry had been pro-active in formulating the new law on human trafficking and the National Plan of Action for Combating Human Trafficking, 2012-14. Under the leadership of the Home Ministry, National Plan of Action, 2012-14 was prepared with the active participation of all concerned Ministries, departments, agencies, and NGOs who were responsible for the implementation of the National Plan of Action to combat human trafficking. The present Plan of Action has outlined the responsibilities of concerned government agencies as well as development partners and NGOs. In this regard, a draft reporting format for the responsible organizations who will be implementers of the activities is underway, especially, for monitoring the Plan of Action. However, the lead Ministry shall be the Ministry of Home Affairs.

11.3 Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Trafficking in persons has been a long-standing concern of the international community and the United Nations. According to UN reports on the issue, trafficking, particularly in women and children, is one of the fastest growing areas of organized crimes. Women and girls have been increasingly sexual abuse and violence, in the course of trafficking, as well as other violations of their human rights. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs takes necessary measures, in coordination with the relevant Ministries/agencies of the Government, to fulfill Bangladesh's reporting and national compliance obligations pertaining to combating human trafficking. The Government of Bangladesh is currently reviewing the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons; Especially Women and Children, supplementing UNTOC, which calls for the prevention, suppression, and punishment for trafficking in people, for possible accession thereunto. Bangladesh co-sponsored the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 63/J 56 on

Trafficking in Women and children during the 67th UN General Assembly (as in the previous years).

11.4 Ministry of Primary and Mass Education

The Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME) has the mandate to ensure education for all in Bangladesh. The MoPME as an oversight agency concerned with children of Bangladesh is playing a vital role to support counter trafficking initiatives led by the government through motivation and awareness creation. Children are, especially, vulnerable to be trapped by the traffickers. Raising awareness among the school children at an early age has been considered as an essential part of fighting against human trafficking. In accordance with the national policy of the Ministry of Home Affairs, the issue of preserving women and child rights and protecting them from trafficking is discussed regularly in district primary education coordination meetings,

upazila/thana education committee meetings, sub-cluster training, teachers monthly coordination meetings, SMC meetings and parents-teachers association meetings.

Primary Teachers' Training Institutes (PTI) are playing a significant role during courses in education such as Certificate in Education and short courses training and workshops in Upazila Resource Centers. The main objectives of these efforts are to make aware all stakeholders, especially parents and local women against the detrimental effects of trafficking in women and children. The Divisional Deputy Directors offices under the MoPME collect reports of these activities which are sent to the MoHA every month.

School teachers can play an important role to motivate poor and disadvantaged people and enhancing government initiatives so that people's participations will be increased aiming at protecting women and children from trafficking. The MoPME is involving teachers for motivation and awareness creation on this issue among students at different levels. Bangladesh has achieved significant success in combating trafficking in women and children in recent years through different social mobilization.

The unlawful traffickers allure the women and children by offering them job opportunities with higher salaries abroad. The MoPME has introduced stipend programmes for the poor and disadvantaged children to enhance enrolment in the school with a view to attracting them to schools which is supposed to reduce exploitation by the traffickers.

11.5 Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives

The Local Government Division (LGD) under the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development, and Cooperatives (MoLGRD) is providing all out support and efforts in combating human trafficking with special attention to rural areas through Local Government Institutions (LGIs). Union Parishads (UPs) under LGD are the important LGIs working at the rural areas where unemployed, landless poor youths are the main targets of the traffickers. They are playing a vital role over the issue by using its members and village police. Village police are entrusted with the duties to gather information on human trafficking, a part of maintaining law and order in the respective areas and to inform police stations at their weekly meetings. Union Parishad Chairman is the Chairperson and Union Parishad members are the members of the Union Committees on Counter Human Trafficking, are organizing and attending meetings on regular basis to discuss the matter. They are also performing their duties and responsibilities as per ToR of the Committees. Other LGI representatives - Upazila Chairman and Vice- Chairman are the advisors, UP Chairmen and Mayors of local municipalities are the members to the Upazila Committees. These local government representatives are contributing at their best in combating human trafficking.

11.6 Ministry of Information

The Ministry of Information as part of its mandated job publicizes the policies and program of the government including the issues of human trafficking with due importance. The present democratic government believes in the unrestrained freedom of mass media. The government has ensured free flow of information. At present, the journalists of all media are performing their professional duties with absolute freedom. Bangladesh has a very vibrant media with good number of television channels, radio stations and newspapers with online editions and online news agencies. The present government during its tenure has so far accorded permission to 14 private television channels. Currently, three state-owned and 21 private television channels have been putting up their programs. As a part of the implementation of the present government's manifesto the government has already given licenses for operating 14 community radio and the community radio stations have been airing their program based on different social issues including human trafficking. The government has also issued licenses to seven private organizations to run FM radio stations. Currently, six of the FM radio stations are airing their program. Bangladesh Betar, the state owned radio broadcasts program and news through 12 regional centers and six special units across the country. More than 300 media listed newspapers and another 800 newspapers are being published daily from different parts of the country. Bangladesh Television (BTV), the state owned television, has been dedicating about three fourths of its total broadcasting hours for creating awareness among the people, serving interest of the people and promoting national culture and heritage. Issue of combating human trafficking gets due importance in the program schedule of BTV. BTV has the network covering nearly 98 per cent territory of the country.

During the year 2012, BTV broadcasted one special programme of 25 minutes duration on World Human Rights Day and another special programme of similar duration on Anti-Human Trafficking. Besides, it aired five talk shows titled *Anushandhan* (Investigation) of ten minutes duration each and four other talk shows titled *Unnayane Bangladesh* (Bangladesh in Development Process) of 25 minutes duration each inscribing the messages of anti- human trafficking during the period. BTV also broadcasted six dramas on Women and Children Development of 25 minutes duration each and another five short dramas titled *Tabuo Sapno Dekhi*. Of similar duration each comprising the messages on anti-human trafficking to sensitize the people about the consequences of human trafficking during the year 2012.

These program on anti-human trafficking were also broadcasted on BTV World, another channel of the state owned television channel. It may be mentioned here that BTV World broadcasts its program through satellite. The private television channels are also very vigilant on the issue of human trafficking and broadcast news items and reports on human trafficking.

The state owned radio Bangladesh Betar broadcasts program on different social issues including anti-human trafficking issue through its 12 regional stations and six specialized units across the country as part of its assigned

job to motivate the people to curb human trafficking. Bangladesh Betar broadcasts program on anti-human trafficking in different formats like slogans, folk songs, motivational songs, spots, jingles, dramas, radio cartoons, documentaries, dialogues, discussions etc. During the year 2012, the cumulative number of such program stood at 4,884. One of the documentary program of Bangladesh Betar titled *Hanta Pather Kanta* (Thorns on the Way), a production for creating mass awareness on women and children trafficking, was adjudged Special Jury Award-2012 by the Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU). The Community Radio Stations as part of their pledge are playing significant roles by disseminating messages about human trafficking issues among the masses. The Department of Films and Publications under the Ministry of Information made three documentary films titled *Fera*, *Ondhokare Alor Disha* and *Becha-Kena* to disseminate message among the people on the severity and consequences of human trafficking through different TV channels, cinema halls and at the grassroots level.

The print media that includes, daily newspapers, weeklies, and magazines of the country are frequently publishing news items, investigative reports, articles, and editorials. On human trafficking issues to sensitize all concerned including the people and the government.

Besides, the present government has enacted Right to Information Act, 2009 paving the way of providing government information to the people and other stakeholders. With the enactment of the Human Trafficking Law, the people are entitled to get information from any office.

12. Conclusion

Although there are a number of laws in Bangladesh starting from the constitution to the 2000 Act to fight trafficking, these laws are not efficient enough to serve the purpose for a number of reasons. There are the legal challenge of prosecution, prevention, protection and return and reintegration in terms of trafficking in Bangladesh. The main problem with the existing anti trafficking legislations is relating to the enforcement. There is a big gap between the wordings of laws and the practice in reality. In one side, the rate of the crime of trafficking is on the rise, in other side, the number of trials and convictions of the traffickers are below minimum level. In Bangladesh, very small number of cases are reported to the law enforcement agencies and even fewer reach the trial stage. Hence more efficient legal regime alongside new law is an ardent necessity.

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