

Gender Based Approach Towards Prevention of Human Trafficking

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Abstract

Practice of prostitution is touching the issue of gender currently where women are under exploitative situation. So the need for preventive intervention arises by fulfilling focusing men, as the act includes equal participation from them which is neglected completely. Literature reviews communicates more interventions focusing women and not much interventions for men sex buyers. This condition offers scope for an in-depth research. Opinion of the practitioners working for anti trafficking issue highlights the need for trained and developed human resources, tailor made projects which targets male sex buyer towards preventive intervention such as awareness creation. Techniques such as brainstorming, public speaking, group discussions with NGOs working for anti sex trafficking issues is advocated to come out with proper module of intervention along with educative and developmental programmes in the forms of seminar/workshop/conference involving victims of sex trafficking, medical practitioners, social workers, academicians etc.

Key Words: *Sex Trafficking, Male Sex Buyers, Gender Issue, Interventions*

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Prostitution is an oldest practice in India although it has never been recognized by society as an institution. The practice is more sanctified with the regulation and control of sexual relationships through institutions like marriage and family. Infact, the sex motive, although not as essential for an individual's survival as food and water, needs to be considered seriously because of the consequences. The fulfillment of such need constitutes a highly powerful psycho-social motive by resulting in the feeling of immense happiness and well-being of the individual. This motive is purely physical in non-human beings where as it both physiological and psychological in human beings. Therefore, sex in human beings has to be a proper blend of innate as well as acquired tendencies. The biological motive acts as an innate factor here and the very process of socialization helps in acquiring social tendencies, thus, having sex is not a sinful act, but a biological urge, one of man's fundamental dispositions, requiring fulfillment. Unfulfilled, sexual urges could trigger a spate of crimes.

Practice of prostitution has also touched the issue of gender as it is an act involved by both men and women. In Indian society, since the practice of prostitution is grounded in deep patriarchal values, it involves moral, religious, social and health issues focusing on women. It is the worst form of exploitation against women where they are looked upon solely as an object and as an outlet for man's basic instincts. Infact, based on the sensitivity of the practice, society has not recognized prostitution as an institution as it does not only causes the personal disorganization of the women involved but also affects the organization of institutions like family, marriage and community life at large. Prostitution clearly violates fundamental rights/ human rights like the right to a life of dignity, the right to health and health care, to the liberty and security of a person and the right to freedom from torture, violence, cruelty or degrading treatment, the right to a home and family, the right to education and proper employment and everything that makes for a life with dignity of the women. In the case of minors in prostitution, it violates their rights to education, employment and self determination.

In such situation, when the biological needs turn into the business known as prostitution and take the shape of violence, known as commercial sexual exploitation in the mode human trafficking for sexual exploitation, the need arises for intervention to protect human beings from such violent situation. Towards fulfilling such identified needs, many NGOs are intervening with good lot of programme for women such as rescue, rehabilitation, reintegration/ repatriation, prosecution, follow up, prevention, developmental, research, advocacy etc. All these interventions concentrate on women as she identified as needy in the exploitative situation. But such intervention does not fulfill the prevention requirements as the act does not include only women but men also.

But patriarchal society like India, it always fails to recognize the involvement of men in any anti social conducts. It stands true with the practice of prostitution also. Prostitution is not the act that takes place with women only nor will she be the sole responsible factor in such practice. Infact, involvement of men in sex trafficking can be witnessed in large manner where he will be one of the beneficiaries in all manners such as customer to buy sex, traffickers, pimps, goond etc. But the whole involvement of men has been neglected by the society which is reflecting in NGO adopted interventions and can be witnessed through the increased rate of demand for trafficking for sex trade. In NGO interventions, majority of the interventions are focused on women and nowhere the proper focus has been given on men's involvement. According to Achchi Kumudini (2010) in her thesis titled "A study on the role of NGOs in mainstreaming commercially sexually exploited women in South India", highlights that only 2% of the NGOs among those which were considered for the study across South India, adopting basic awareness programme for sex buyers. Otherwise no other programmes have been offered to express the involvement of men in the process. She states in her study that 'In the experience of NGOs, through the interventions of the organisations many sex buyers and perpetuators have adopted rehabilitated life and have worked for mainstremaing commercially sexually exploited women honestly'. This is a major achievement the NGOs have made in the field though the frequency is very low. The reason behind low rate of intervention and its consequences are patriarchal nature of the society where changed pattern of behaviours of men is not acceptable.

In such situation, male sex buyers are the safest components of sex trafficking. In India, they are not even traced under legal legislature. As such, their involvement in the process of prevention of female victims of sex trafficking is neglected or not considered. As a result, demand factor in the field is increasing which motivates the supply factors. Consequently, increased trafficking for sexual exploitation and also violence against women can be observed.

In this area, the efforts of literature review suffers because majority of the studies on sex trafficking focuses on women victims and hardly touched men sex buyers. To the maximum, literatures which have perceived the issues based on gender have always mentioned that women are exploited and their rights are violated. They reveal the negative effects of prostitution and condemn such practice. While condemning prostitution, one also has to fix responsibility squarely on the male sex buyers who exploits her and treats her flesh as an object of purchase and enjoyment.

But the efforts in this regard found very vague and ineffective. This condition

supported by two authors namely Mathur and Gupta with their statement that reads 'the prostitute is a scapegoat'. Man visits her and satisfies his lust and after her flesh ceases to give him pleasure, she is thrown on the street, uncared for and unprotected. If society has to succeed in suppressing prostitution, its attention will have to be devoted both to woman, the seller and to man, the buyer. Flood & Pease in 2009 and Koss & Cleveland in 1997 mentions that violence against women has been associated with attitudes that promote men's beliefs that they are entitled to sexual access to women, are superior to women, and are entitled to be sexual aggressors. Further, evidence for a connection between sexual aggression and prostitution has also been analyzed in many studies. Decker et al., in 2009 and Raj et al., in 2008 states that 'buying sex has been associated with men's perpetration of gender-based violence, including perpetration of physical and sexual violence against intimate partners'. According to Schmidt (2003) 'college-aged men who used women in prostitution reported having committed more sexually coercive behaviors than men who had not used women in prostitution'. Malamuth et al., 1995; Malamuth, Hald, & Koss, 2012 presents two relatively independent components of the Confluence Model, hostile masculinity and impersonal sex, are hypothesized to be the strongest predictors of sexual aggression. In the studies of Heilman, Herbert, & Paul-Gera in 2014, samples of more than 1000 men each in Chile, Croatia, India, Mexico, and Rwanda, men who had ever paid for sex were more likely to perpetrate rape. With the outcome of all these studies, some organisation in American content have started helping prevention of sex trafficking by teaching women and young girls economic skills and skill to achieve financial independent (Schroeder, 2010)

All these reviews communicates that majority of the studies as well as the interventions are related to sex trafficking dealing with women, their conditions and empowerment but none or very less studies looks and speaks about the programmes related to men sex buyers towards preventing sex trafficking throughout the globe.

This condition offers the scope for an in-depth research which looks into the remedial factors that needs to be adopted and practiced so that the prevention of women being in sexual exploitation reduces. One such preventive factor which is not been focused seriously in the light of prevention of sex trafficking is the men sex buyers who are not been touched seriously by the anti trafficking workers. The men sex buyers are targeted to prevent HIV/AIDS through condom promotion which may not be interconnected with the issue of prevention of human trafficking for sex trade. With the opinion of experienced practitioners who are working for anti-trafficking purpose, current basic need of the field is to train and develop the human resources to work on the issue professionally.

When the issue of professionalism appears, it is expressed that the tailor made projects have to be driven which targets male sex buyers towards preventive intervention. In this dimension developing a module for addressing the issues of sex trafficking in men sex buyers' perspectives and to develop a module which assist the practitioners to frame effective and appropriate programmes to intervene for prevention of sex trafficking through sex buyers at grassroot level becomes essential. Such projects should involve programmes such as creation of awareness to male sex buyers about psycho-social, cultural, legal consequences of sex trafficking on individual including both the gender, on the society etc., from which the male sex buyers will come to an understand about the actual nature of problems that have occurring at individual, family and society level. In Indian context, majority of the sex buyers, who generally are the men folk are least informed about the attitudes of sex buyers, legal rights of women, kinds of exploitation the women in prostitution under goes, causative factors responsible for women in prostitution and the consequences of whole act. Through such programmes, the male sex buyers need to be sensitized about the social responsibility of each individual towards enhancing and protecting the level of social justice. Techniques such as brainstorming, public speaking, group discussions with NGOs working for anti sex trafficking issues without advocating legalization need to be initiated.

Further, to communicate the need for prevention of trafficking for sexual exploitation focusing male sex buyers and their involvement in the process, an educative and developmental programme in the form of seminars/workshops/conferences are required where the NGO personnel and the victims of sex trafficking has to share their thoughts and experiences along with other professionals who have involved in rehabilitation and prevention activities such as medical practitioners, social workers and academicians. This intervention helps in compiling the thoughts of practitioners based on their experience at grassroot level, understanding the psychological perspectives of male sex buyers and their behaviour patterns so that a proper module can be developed for effective prevention of human trafficking for sex trade.

Hurdles are always in the path of success. Interventions to address sensitive issues in the societies like India definitely encounters various predicaments from socio-cultural dimension which may discourage the practitioners in implementation. Major issue which can act as a challenge in the process is tracing out the men customers and preparing them to attend such programme in the name of a customer.

Consenting for attending such programme or volunteering from their side may be a hard action to expect. These hurdles needs to be addressed in a sensitive

manner and the experienced practitioners with greater dedication can achieve the task.

In sum, though prostitution is an age old practice, not been identified as an institution. Since the practice is not accepted by the society openly, it carries stigma and exploitation. The Indian society is so much stigmatized, that it is not ready to talk about the prostitution, where thinking about the exploitative situation the victims and discussing about the consequences of the same on the society is a matter too far to discuss. With the influence of such great level of social stigma and the effects of globalization the practice has turned into commercial form and women is focused more for rehabilitation and empowerment. Though socio-cultural hurdles can exist in the process in a large manner, needs to be addressed sensitively by the practitioners for the better result. Fact fully, the role of men in the practice of prostitution is quite neglected which need to be considered seriously for the prevention of sexual exploitation against women and in this regard, interventions of NGOs and involvement of other practitioners, utilizing their experience to the optimum becomes essential.

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