

**TRAFFICKING OF WOMEN IN DARJEELING HILLS:  
A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY**

**THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (ARTS)  
IN SOCIOLOGY UNDER CENTRE FOR HIMALAYAN STUDIES**

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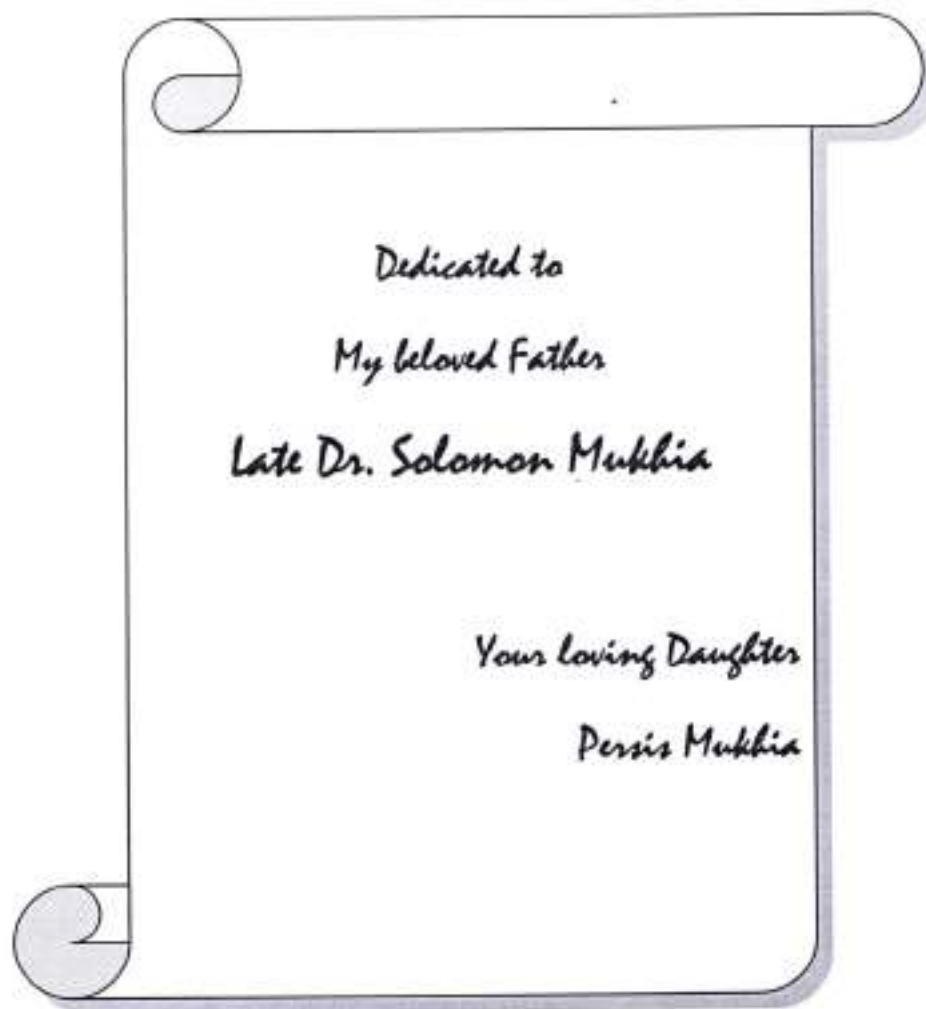
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## DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled “**Trafficking of Women in Darjeeling Hills: A Sociological Study**” submitted by me for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of University of North Bengal is my original work. The thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other University.

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*Dedicated to  
My beloved Father  
Late Dr. Solomon Mukhia*

*Your loving Daughter  
Persis Mukhia*

## **TRAFFICKING OF WOMEN IN DARJEELING HILLS: A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY**

### **Abstract**

Human Trafficking involves the transportation of people from one place to another, within or outside the national boundary, with successive exploitation of these individuals in forced labour, sexual affairs, and domestic servitude. As a violation of fundamental human rights, human trafficking denounces for being a serious crime. Some countries, in particular, have drawn the attention of sociology experts and policy makers for having higher rates of human trafficking victims as compared to others. The primary reason for this scenario can be traced to the problem of inequality. Some countries have areas with higher rates of poverty as well as the greatest degrees of socio-economic deprivation. The lifelong absence of prospects and the scarcity of resources are the chief factors that drive men, women, and children to follow the deceptive promises of traffickers pertaining to a better life. The structural issues remaining behind human trafficking indicate that sufferers of this highly condemnable practice are not merely random victims of crime. Myriad factors have a role to play in leading them to fall into the trap set by the deceivers.

Among the different countries of the developing world, India is one that has garnered negative attention for having a considerably high rate of human trafficking victims. Women trafficking has become a substantial sociological issue in recent times in India, entailing effective actions to be taken at the earliest. It has become necessary to curb the burden of women trafficking in Indian society. Primary research has always been a promising tool for coming up with diverse yet deep insights into a subject matter, thereafter guiding policy decisions. Based on this background information about human trafficking and the importance of conducting further research on the subject, a sociological study has been conducted on women trafficking in Darjeeling Hills in West Bengal. Darjeeling, on the northern part of West Bengal, having national and international boundaries with other states like Sikkim, Bihar, and other nations like Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, has a population vulnerable to human trafficking. While Darjeeling



is famous for tourism, social and economic issues have increased cases of women trafficking in this region to a substantial extent.

The present research study has multiple research objectives, each attempting to bring in diverse perspectives on the chosen topic of study. While the nature and cause leading to women trafficking, and the major social implications of women trafficking form the primary focus of the study, other avenues are also explored. The economic factors leading to women trafficking in Darjeeling Hills, the level of education driving the victim's viewpoints, and the extent of discrimination and gender bias promoting women trafficking are also part of the study. Further, it is thought important to explore the mechanisms holding the potential to check and prevent women trafficking, the attitude of the society towards human trafficking, provision of social aid given to human trafficking victims, and the role played by the policymakers and the NGOs.

The findings of the study are shocking, as it is learnt that women trafficking in Darjeeling, West Bengal, demands immediate strategies to be implemented for curtailing the increasing social burden. Women and girls are trafficked from Darjeeling on an annual basis, and this is quite alarming. Factors such as poor education, minimal financial resources, parental pressure, the quest for a better lifestyle, among others, drive women towards being deceived by traffickers. The role played by the NGOs and the law enforcement system in preventing human trafficking has not been up to the mark till now, and there is room for major improvements in how the issue is being handled. Further, society commonly has a negative attitude towards rescued human trafficking victims, making it extremely challenging for them to lead a normal life. In short, the physical and psychological trauma that these victims endure is concerning.

It is advisable that society shows a more sensible attitude towards women trafficking and also accepts the victims of women trafficking in society. It is further recommended that collaborative efforts are enabled by the concerned authorities for the accomplishment of essential objectives for improving the situation of women trafficking in Darjeeling. It is expected that with the collaborative efforts from various associated spheres of the Indian society the existing burden of women trafficking can be reduced.

## Preface

Human trafficking, condemned to be a major violation of human rights by international conventions, is one of the largest crime activities in the world. As a fast-growing activity of trans-national criminal organizations, human trafficking has drawn the attention of researchers as well as policy makers in recent times. Traffickers deceive children, women and men primarily from low socio-economic sections of the society, forcing them into exploitative situations from time to time. As victims of human trafficking are robbed of their dignity, they find it immensely challenging to get back into the mainstream life after being rescued. Discrimination and prejudice faced on a regular basis make it difficult for these victims to get acceptance in their societies. India has garnered world attention for having high rates of human trafficking over the years. Against this backdrop, it seemed pragmatic to conduct research as a sociological study on human trafficking, precisely women trafficking in Darjeeling hills of West Bengal.

The study intends to broaden the scope of human trafficking research undertaken in India, particularly in West Bengal. The primary focus of the study has been on the myriad factors driving women trafficking in Darjeeling Hills, the diverse social and economic backgrounds of the victims, and the association to a heightened risk of being trafficked. The different chapters of the report emphasize the multiple layers of human trafficking in India, exploring evidence of the same in Darjeeling Hills, with a particular focus on vulnerabilities and public discourse associated with sociological perspective. It is expected that the complexity of human trafficking would be well understood from the presentation of findings of the research, laying the foundation for a shift in policies associated with this pressing concern. It is further expected that experts from multi-disciplinary fields would come forward with their perspectives for discussing how a positive change can be brought about in the society pertaining to human trafficking at the earliest.



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## Abbreviations

ACJM	Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate
AHTU	Anti-Human Trafficking Unit
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AJWS	American Jewish World Service
ASI	Assistant Sub- Inspector
ATC	Ant Trafficking Cell
ATN	Anti-Trafficking Network
BDO	Block Development Office
BDT	Bangladesh Taka
BPL	Below Poverty Level
BSA	Bal Suraksha Abhiyan
CASA	Current Account and Savings Account
CI	Circle Inspector
CID	Crime Investigation Department
CINI	Child in Need Institute
CSE	Commercial Sexual Exploitation
CSW	Commercial Sex Worker
CWC	Child Welfare Committee
DAPCU	District Aids Prevention and Control Unit.
DAT	Drivers Against Trafficking
DCRB	District Crime Record Bureau
DIC	Drop -in-Centre
DM	District Magistrate
DMWSC	Darjeeling Mary Ward Social Centre
FC	Female Condom

FCRA	Foreign Centre Regulation Act
F.I.R	First Information Report
FSW	Flying Sex Workers
GAATW	Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women
GDNS	Gorkha Dukh Niwarak Samelan
GFF	Glenn Family Foundation
GJM	Gorkha Janmukti Morcha
GNLF	Gorkha National Liberation Front
GRP	Government Railway Police
GRPF	Government Railway Protection Force
GTA	Gorkha Territorial Administration
HIR	Home Investigation Report
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HSWS	Hill Social Welfare Society
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Services
ICIC	Impulse Case Info Centre
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IJM	International Justice Mission
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPC	Indian Penal Code
IR	Indian Railways
ITPA	Immoral Traffic Prevention Act
KUKWS	Kanchanjunga Udhar Kendra Welfare Society
KNFD	Katihar North Front Division.
LPG	Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization



LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MARG	Mankind in Action for Rural Growth
MCA	Missing Child Alert
MED	Ministry of Economic Development
MHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MoLHR	Ministry of Labour and Human Resources
MWCSW	Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare
NABARD	National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development
NBU	North Bengal University
NCRB	National Crime Records Bureau
NEAC	National Environment Awareness Campaign
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NLEP	National Leprosy Eradication Programme
NPO	Non-Profit Organization
OBC	Other Backward Classes
POCSO	Protection of Children against Sexual Offence Act
PSHTA	Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act
RCH	Reproductive and Child Health
RPF	Railway Protection Force
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SATC	Students Against Trafficking Club
SC	Schedule Caste
SHG	Self Help Group
SP	Superintendent of Police
SSB	Seema Sashastra Bal
ST	Schedule Tribe

STD	Sexually Transmitted Disease
SUMI	Scottish Universities' Mission Institution
TA	Travel Allowances
TI	Target Intervention
UGMOR	Union Government Ministry of Railways
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAT	Villagers Against Trafficking
WBCPCR	West Bengal Commission for Protection of Child Rights
WBSACS	West Bengal State Aids Prevention and Control Society
WBSC	West Bengal Swarojgar Corporation Ltd.
YATC	Youth Against Trafficking Club

## GLOSSARY

Babu	Client
Bacha bazi	A practice of exploiting young boys for social and sexual entertainment.
Bakshis	Tips
Bhabi	Sister-in-law (In Hindi)
Bhowju	Sister-in-law (In Nepali)
Breaking period	Where a victim is tortured physically and mentally so that finally she gives up.
Chachee	Uncle's wife (In Hindi)
Chachu	Uncle (In Hindi)
Chema	Mother's younger sister (In Nepali)
Chor ko Shor	A practice where a girl is returned home after three days after her elopement
Dal	Pulses
Dalal	Agent or broker of corruption. (In Hindi)
Daju	Elder brother (In Nepali)
Dhara	A small flowing stream
Drayangs	Bhutanese karaoke bars.
Dakshina	Sacrificial fees
Dorji	Thunderbolt
Jalee	Fake/illegal
Kalee	Virgin
Khajur	Jaggery
Kothi	Brothel
Ling	Place
Maiti Ghar	Mother's home
Majburee	Out of compulsion
Pukka	Concrete

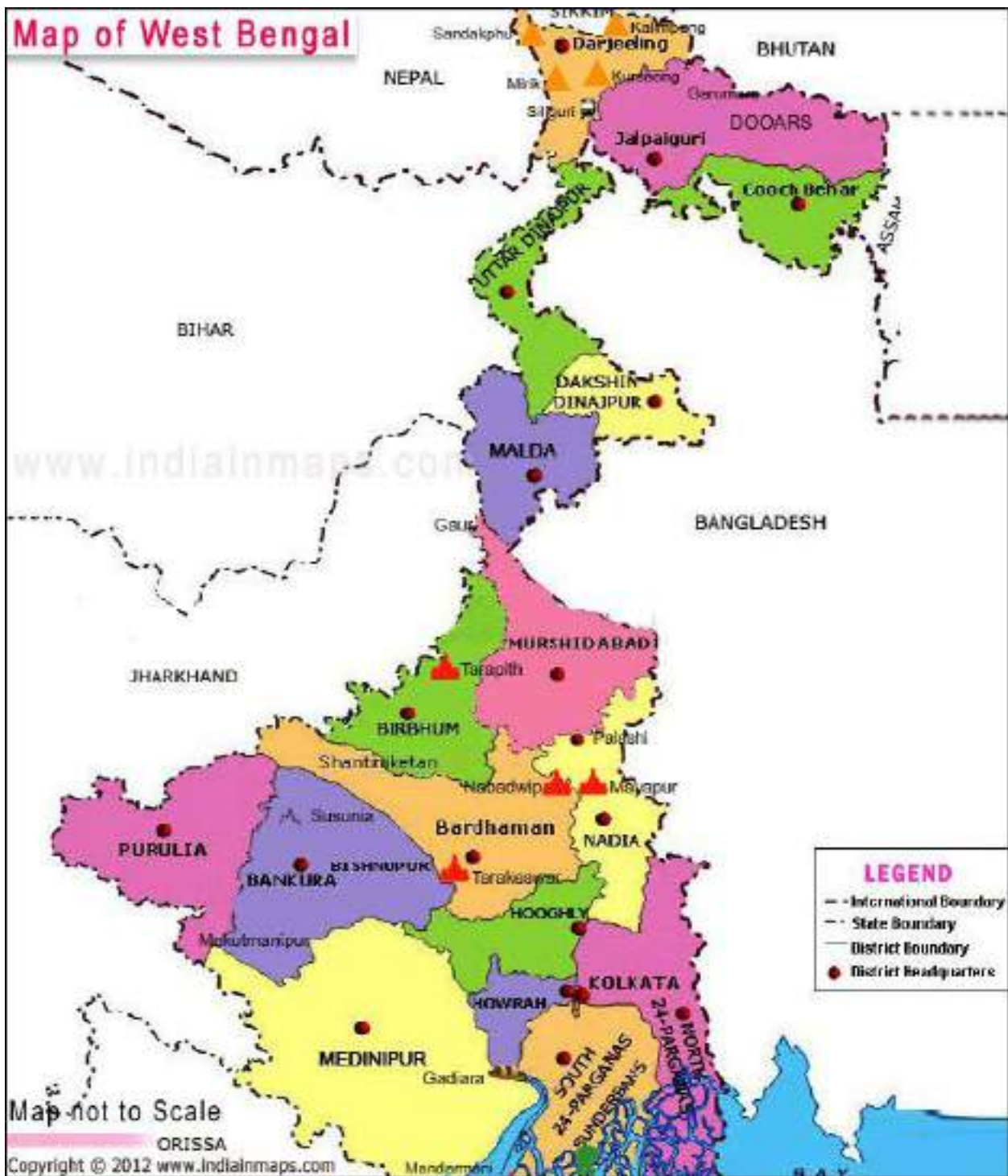
Ranna	To cook
Rongs	Lepchas
Sabji	Vegetables
Sasural	In-laws home
Sindoor	Vermillion

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# Map of West Bengal





a darjeelingpolice.com map

# KALIMPONG DISTRICT , WEST BENGAL

Prepared By : Geoinformatics & Remote Sensing Cell, Department of Science and Technology and Biotechnology, Government of West Bengal



DISTRICT DARJEELING

### Legend

- State Boundary
- District Boundary
- Block Boundary
- Block Name
- Water
- Forest
- Barren Land
- Water Body
- Water

STATE SIKKIM

BHUTAN



DISTRICT JALPAIGURI

# **CHAPTER -1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Human Trafficking is a crime against humanity which involves an act of recruiting, transporting, transferring, harbouring or receiving a person through a use of force, coercion or other means for the purpose of exploiting them. It is a lucrative and fastest growing criminal industry in the world (Perera 2011:1). The concept of trafficking in people refers to the criminal practice of exploitation of human beings where they are treated as commodities for profit and after being trafficked are subjected to long term exploitation (Doshi, 2012:3). According to the Oxford Dictionary, the word 'traffic' means 'barter', 'illegal trade' and 'traffickers' means the 'illegal traders'. It is an illegal commercial trade of human beings, where they are exploited and treated like commodities for profit. Both men and women may be victims of trafficking but the primary victims worldwide are mostly women and girls who are trafficked for sexual exploitation. Trafficking can occur anywhere, an urban area or a rural area, within a country or outside, where there is illegal migration. Trafficking is directly related to migration issues, and migration whether legal or illegal is driven by "push" and "pull" factors. The reasons why people leave their country of origin (push factors) either through legitimate or illicit channels are the same. Migration takes place from rural to municipal areas, from poorer to wealthier nations. The push factors are inadequate employment opportunities, poor living conditions, lack of basic education, poor health, political and economic insecurity, ethnic, caste and gender discrimination, dissolution of family, death of one or both parents. The pull factors are increased ease of travel,

higher salaries and standard of living in large cities, established migration routes, active demand for migrant workers in destination countries (Aronowitz, 2009: 11-12). As compared to men, women are more vulnerable to trafficking for several reasons. Traffickers can easily intimidate women into obedience. Another factor that puts women at risk for trafficking is gender discrimination. In many parts of the world, women are traditionally taught to respect and obey men due to patriarchal societies. Traffickers particularly prize submissive women from male-dominated societies. Traffickers want compliant workers, not rebels who constantly fight back (Farrell, 2011: 39).

Trafficking in women is the trading of women for the purpose of sexual exploitation or forced labour. Most of the women are from the disadvantaged social strata, including poor backgrounds, broken families, some are illiterates and unemployed. They are lured by the traffickers with false promises of better jobs and livelihood. Women and girls are subjected to physical and sexual abuses and forced into prostitution. Traffickers also take undue advantages of regions which are affected by war, natural disasters, poverty, high rate of unemployment, political instability and so on. Traffickers lure vulnerable women and girls from villages to towns, cities and also abroad. The exploitation of women and children takes place not only before trafficking, but also during and after trafficking. Trafficking affects all regions and majority of the countries in the world. Trafficking in human beings takes place mainly for the purpose of exploitation. There are certain indicators of human trafficking which are categorised under the sex-based and non-sex based. Sex-based includes trafficking for prostitution, commercial sexual abuse, paedophilia, pornography, cyber-sex, and different types of disguised sexual exploitation that takes place in some of the massage parlours, beauty parlours, bars and other manifestations like call girls racket, friends clubs etc. Non sex based trafficking could be for different types of servitude like

domestic labour, industrial labour, adoption, organ transplant, camel racing, marriage related rackets etc. The growing traffic in women is principally for the purpose of prostitution is an international problem which can be found in both developing and industrialized nations (Roy, 2010: 2).

Indicators (sex based and the non sex based) of human trafficking are of utmost importance in understanding the dimensions, extent and ramifications of human trafficking. It helps to understand the measure of harm done to the victims as well as the gains to the exploiter. The indicators can be listed under the generic and the specific type. The generic indicators of human trafficking commonly seen in the Asian context include: commercial exploitation of a person where the exploiter, who could be one or more persons located at different places, gain monetarily out of the exploitation of the person. The gain may be in the form of cash or kind or even services. In generic, there is money transaction benefitting one or more persons and the detriment of at least one person. There is a lot of exploitation on the trafficked person involving several crimes and violations. The exploiter continues carrying out the business without much challenge. The exploiter acquires huge assets by exploiting the victims. The exploiter establishes adequate safety valves to ward off any onslaught by law enforcement agencies or other exploiters or a media. There is a strong nexus of the exploiters with other exploiters and even responder/s which may appear to be of friendship but could be deep rooted and conspiratorial. Such responders include corrupt officials in the law enforcement machinery or a corrupt media person, a corrupt social activist or a corrupt political personality etc whereas corruption remains the common denominator, the responder could be anyone who can wield or influence clout and has capability to manoeuvre the situations.

The specific indicators of human trafficking involve transportation from the source area to the destination area, from the original community to the exploited community. Trafficked person is a victim who is vulnerable and easily exploited. They lack awareness of rights, education, support from parents and community. Economic disparities and uneven levels of income also cause deprivation and make the person vulnerable. Poor response systems and law enforcement systems facilitates the acts of offenders and violators as they get or feel a sense of impunity and immunity. The high demand for sex in hotels, massage parlours and in place of sex tourism is a clear indicator that trafficking of women, girls and boys for sexual exploitation does take place in these spots. Therefore, the levels of demand are a clear indicator of human trafficking. Trafficking has been taking place in all sectors but it is mostly found in sex trade especially concerning women and girls (Nair, 2011: 16-18).

### **1.1.1 Trafficking of Women on Global Level**

The trafficking of human beings, particularly women and children, is significantly evident in every continent. According to the Report on the State of World Population 1997, commercial sex is increasing in the third world countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America and in Eastern Europe because of high unemployment, rural poverty, growing inequalities of wealth. It mostly targets refugees, victims of natural disaster, from conflict zones and individuals from poor countries. The United Nations estimates that trafficking in person generated approximately \$7 billion in 2002 and the amount has risen to about \$32 billion in 2010 (Bright, 2011: 3). The United Nation Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (also referred to as the *Palermo Protocol on Trafficking*), which entered into force in 2002 (the Protocol supplements the United Nations Conviction against Transnational Organized Crime) defines Trafficking in Persons as the recruitment,



transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of the abuse of power or of the 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 purposes of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs (Nair, 2011: 11).

The International Labour Organization (ILO) also estimates that between two hundred thousand to three hundred thousand children are trafficked each year for forced labour and sexual exploitation in West and Central Africa. UNICEF estimates that between ten thousand to fifteen thousand West African children work on cocoa plantations in Cote d'Ivoire, having been sold by middlemen to farm owners for up to \$340 each. International Organization for Migration (IOM) says that in 2002, thousands of Ethiopian girls are trafficked to the Middle East, particularly Lebanon to work as domestic servant. Once they arrive, their employers seize their travel documents and the girls are subjected to physical and sexual abuse, and approximately two hundred and fifty Somali teenagers and children, some as young as two or three years old, have been found after they were abandoned by traffickers who took money from their parents to place them. The International Labour Organization (ILO), UNICEF, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and USAID (The United States Agency for International Development) have developed strategies to prevent the exploitation and abuse of trafficked victims (Bright, 2011: 12-13).

The Global Alliance against Trafficking in Women (GAATW), a coalition of non-governmental organisations working towards the elimination of trafficking in women has introduced a new definition that is used by many other Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). They distinguish between trafficking and forced labour/slavery-like practices. The GAATW defines trafficking as: all acts involved in the recruitment and/or transportation of a person within and across national borders for work or services by means of violence or threat of violence, abuse of authority or dominant position, debt bondage, deception or other forms of coercion. Their definition of 'forced labour and slavery-like practices' is the extraction of work or services from any person or the appropriation of the legal identity and/or physical person of any person by means of violence or threat of violence, abuse of authority or dominant position, debt bondage, deception or other forms of coercion (Rijken, 2003: 59). The Global Alliance against Trafficking defines 'Women Trafficking' as all acts involved in the recruitment and/or transportation of a woman within and across national border for work or services by means of violence or threat of violence, abuse of authority or dominant position, debt bondage, deception or other forms of coercion. Every minute of a day, the most vulnerable women and children are raped for profit and pushed into the flesh trade.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has the mission of contributing to global peace and security, human rights and development by making the world safer from drugs, crime and corruption. The organization's protocol defines three basic elements of trafficking, and these are the process, the means and the purpose. UNODC explains that "the crime of trafficking be defined through a combination of the three constituent elements and not the individual components, though in some cases three individual elements will constitute criminal offences independently" (Ariyapala, 2011: 3).

**Table 1: Basic Elements of Trafficking as designed by UNODC**

<b>Process</b>	<p>Recruitment Transportation</p> <p>Exploitation</p> <p>Transfer</p> <p>Harbouring</p> <p>Receipt of persons</p>
<b>Means</b>	<p>Threat</p> <p>Force</p> <p>Coercion</p> <p>Abduction</p> <p>Fraud</p> <p>Deception</p> <p>Abuse of Power</p> <p>Abuse of Vulnerability</p> <p>Giving and receiving of payments</p>
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>Exploitation which includes:</p> <p>a) Prostitution and other forms of Sexual exploitation</p> <p>b) Forced labour and services.</p> <p>c) slavery and similar practices</p> <p>d) involuntary servitude</p> <p>e) Removal of organs</p>

### 1.1.2 Scenario of Women Trafficking in SAARC Countries

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is the regional intergovernmental organization and geopolitical union of nations in South Asia. Its member states include Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, the Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. SAARC comprises 3.0% of the world's area, 21.0% of the world's population and 3.8% (US\$ 2.9 trillion) of the global economy, as of 2015. According to the SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution, 2002, 'trafficking' means moving, selling or buying women and children for Prostitution within and outside a country for monetary or other considerations with or without the consent of the person subjected to trafficking (Nair, 2011: 11). In Afghanistan women and girls are trafficked within the country and to Pakistan and Iran for commercial sexual exploitation and temporary marriages. Women and girls are kidnapped, lured by fraudulent marriage proposals or sold for forced marriage and prostitution in Pakistan. Women and girls are also trafficked internally as a part of the settlement of disputes or debts as well as for forced marriage and labour and sexual exploitation (Perera, 2011 p.53).

According to the Trafficking in Persons Report - Afghanistan, 2018, Afghan women and girls are subjected to sex trafficking and domestic servitude primarily in Pakistan, Iran and India. Afghan boys and men are subjected to forced labour and debt bondage in agriculture and construction, primarily in Iran, Pakistan, Greece, Turkey and the Gulf states. The government demonstrated increasing efforts by enacting a new law on human trafficking in January 2017 that attempts to reduce conflation of smuggling and trafficking, and criminalize *bacha bazi*, a practice in which men including some government officials and security forces exploit boys for social and sexual entertainment. The government investigated, prosecuted and convicted traffickers, including

through the arrest and punishment. The Government of Afghanistan does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. With funding and staff from an international organization, the government reopened a short-term shelter in Kabul for trafficking victims. The government has opened 15 child protection units that prevented the recruitment of more than 300 children into the security forces in 2016. However, the government did not meet the minimum standards in several key areas. Official complicity remained a serious problem, especially in the sexual exploitation and recruitment of children by Afghan security forces. Victim protection efforts remained inadequate; the government did not develop or employ standard operating procedures for victim identification or for referral of victims to rehabilitation services, which at times resulted in the government's arrest and prosecution of trafficking victims as criminals. The government increased its law enforcement efforts. In January 2017, the government enacted the Law to Combat Crimes of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants, which prohibits all forms of human trafficking. It has continued to raise trafficking awareness through radio, television, and print media and also encouraged *Mullahs* to raise awareness through their weekly sermons.

The Trafficking in Person Report – Bangladesh, 2018, reports that Bangladesh is a source, transit and destination country for men, women and children subjected to forced labour and sex trafficking. Migration is the main factor where both men and women migrate willingly to work in the Middle East, Southern and East Africa, South and South East Asia, Europe and the United States. Before their departure, many migrant workers assume debt to pay high recruitment fees, imposed legally by recruitment agencies. Some agencies also commit recruitment fraud, including contract switching in which they promise one type of job and conditions but then

change the job, employer, conditions or salary after arrival. Women and girls who migrate for domestic work are particularly vulnerable to abuse.

Women and children from rural areas in Bangladesh are trafficked to urban centres for commercial sexual exploitation and domestic work. Bangladeshi women and children are trafficked to India or passed through India to Pakistan and the Middle East for sexual exploitation, domestic servitude and forced labour (Perera, 2011 p.54). Some are forced to work in brick kilns while some kiln owners sell bonded females into prostitution purportedly to recoup the families' debts. NGOs allege some officials allow human traffickers to operate at brothels, at India-Bangladesh border crossings and at maritime embarkation points. With nearly 700,000 Rohingyas fleeing Burma for Bangladesh since August 2017, Bangladesh is host to 1 million undocumented Rohingyas. Rohingyas women and girls are recruited from refugee camps for domestic work in private homes, guest houses or hotels and are instead subjected to sex trafficking. They are transported within Bangladesh to Chittagong and Dhaka and transnationally to Kathmandu and Kolkata and are subjected to sex trafficking. The government maintained anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts. The 2012 Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act (PSHTA) criminalized sex and labour trafficking and prescribed penalties of five years to life imprisonment and a fine of not less than 50,000 Bangladesh Taka (BDT) (\$610). These penalties were sufficiently stringent and with regard to sex trafficking, commensurate with those prescribed for other serious crimes, such as rape. The government began the process of biometric registration for Rohingya refugees and allowed the UN, international organizations and foreign governments to provide assistance and protection to the refugees. The government trained military personnel to recognize and prevent trafficking in persons prior to their

deployment abroad on international peacekeeping missions and provided anti-trafficking training for its diplomatic personnel.

According to the Trafficking in Person Report – Bhutan, 2018, the Bhutanese who migrate overseas for work are vulnerable to human trafficking by unlicensed or unscrupulous recruitment agents. Bhutanese girls- working as domestic servants and entertainers in *drayang*s or Bhutanese karaoke bars - may be subject to sex trafficking and labour trafficking coerced by debt and threats of physical abuse. Rural Bhutanese are transported to urban areas, generally by relatives, for employment purpose and are victims of sex trafficking. The government maintained efforts to prevent human trafficking. The government did not have a national action plan to combat trafficking. In partnership with Bhutan InfoComm and Media Authority, NGOs and UNICEF, the Ministry of Labour and Human Resources (MoLHR), conducted an awareness event for 200 *drayang* (Karoke bar) dancers and their employers to provide information on human trafficking legal provisions, reporting mechanisms and protection services.

According to the Trafficking in Persons Report – Sri Lanka, 2018, Sri Lankan men and women migrate willingly to Kuwait, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Lebanon, United Arab Emirates, Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia and South Korea to work as construction workers, domestic servants or garment factory workers. However, some find themselves in situations of involuntary servitude when faced with restrictions on movement, withholding of passports, threats, physical or sexual abuse, debt bondage, in some instances facilitated by large pre-departure fees imposed by recruitment agents. Children are trafficked internally for commercial sexual exploitation and less frequently for forced labour. The designated Foreign Terrorist Organization Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) continued to recruit, sometimes forcibly, children for use as soldiers in areas outside the Sri Lankan government's control. The government's efforts to

provide protection for trafficking victims improved nominally but remained limited. The government did not provide foreign trafficking victims with legal alternatives to their removal to countries where they would suffer retribution or hardship. The government prohibits all forms of trafficking through an April 2006 amendment to its penal code. Trafficking offenses are punishable up to 20 years' imprisonment; these penalties are commensurate with those assigned for other grave crimes.

According to the Trafficking in Person Report – Maldives, 2018, *Maldives* is a country for a large number of men, women and children to become subjected to forced labour and sex trafficking, making it a chief source country from human trafficking. Recruitment agents in source countries collude with employers and agents in Maldives to facilitate fraudulent recruitment and forced labour of migrant workers. Women from Africa, Asia, Central Asia, Eastern Europe as well as girls from Bangladesh and Maldives are subjected to sex trafficking in Maldives. Some women from South Asia are forced into prostitution after entering the country with their trafficker under the guise of tourism. The government has demonstrated mixed efforts to prevent human trafficking. The Ministry of Economic Development (MED) has responsibility of coordinating government and NGO anti-trafficking efforts through the Anti-Trafficking National Steering Committee.

According to the Trafficking in Persons Report – Nepal, 2018, Nepali women and girls are subjected to sex trafficking in Nepal, India, the Middle East, Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Nepali men, women and children are subjected to forced labour in Nepal, India, the Middle East, and the United States in construction sites, factories, mines, domestic work, begging and the adult entertainment industry. Unregistered migrants, including the large number of Nepalis who travel through India or rely on unregistered recruiting agents, are particularly vulnerable to



forced labour and sex trafficking. Many Nepalis living in areas affected by an earthquake that struck Nepal in April 2015 are vulnerable to trafficking. Traffickers utilize social media and mobile technologies to exploit their victims. Some government officials are reportedly bribed to include false information in genuine Nepali passports, including of age documents for child sex trafficking victims, or to provide fraudulent documents to prospective labour migrants. This is a tactic used by unscrupulous recruiters to evade recruitment regulations. The government demonstrated increased efforts to prevent human trafficking. Following the April 2015 earthquake, the Nepal Police Women's cell ran awareness programs in eight districts on the increased risks of trafficking. The Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare (MWCSW) began developing a mechanism to record the number of victims identified. It also maintained partial funding of eight rehabilitation homes and emergency shelters for female victims of gender based violence including trafficking.

The Trafficking in Persons Report – Pakistan, 2018, reports that in Pakistan the country's largest human trafficking problem is bonded labour in which an initial debt assumed by a worker as part of the terms of employment is exploited, ultimately entrapping other family members, sometimes for generations. Children are bought, sold, rented, or kidnapped and placed in organized begging rings, domestic servitude, small shops, brick kilns and sex trafficking. NGOs report boys are subjected to sex trafficking around hotels, truck stops, bus stations, shrines. Illegal labour agents charge high recruitment fees to parents in return for employing their children, some of whom are subjected to forced labour and sex trafficking. Women and girls are sold into forced marriages. In some cases, their new 'husbands' force them into prostitution in Iran or Afghanistan. In other cases, including some organized by extra-judicial courts, girls are used as chattel to settle debts

or disputes. The government reported its continued implementation of the 2015-2020 national strategic frameworks against trafficking in persons and migrant smuggling.

The Trafficking in Person Report – India, 2018, states that forced labour constitutes India’s largest trafficking problem. Men, women and children in debt bondage, sometimes inherited from previous generations, are forced to work in brick kilns, rice mills, agriculture, and embroidery factories. The majority of India’s trafficking problem is internal and those from the most disadvantaged social strata that is the lowest caste Dalits, members of tribal communities, religious minorities, and women and girls from excluded groups, are most vulnerable. Within India, some are subjected to forced labour in sectors such as construction, steel and textiles industries, wire manufacturing for underground cables, biscuits factories, pickling; floriculture, fish farms and ship breaking. Thousands of unregulated work placement agencies reportedly lure adults and children under false promises of employment for sex trafficking or forced labour, including domestic servitude. Traffickers increasingly use websites, mobile applications and online money transfers to facilitate commercial sex. Children continue to be subjected to sex trafficking in religious pilgrimage centres and tourist destinations. Some NGOs and media report that girls are sold and forced to conceive and deliver babies for sale. In India, prime destinations for both Indian and foreign female trafficking victims include Kolkata, Mumbai, Delhi, Gujarat, Hyderabad and along the India – Nepal border; Nepali women and girls are increasingly subjected to sex trafficking in Assam and other cities such as Nagpur and Pune. Some corrupt law enforcement officers protect suspected traffickers and brothel owners from law enforcement efforts, taking bribes from sex trafficking establishments and sexual services from victims and tipping off sex and labour traffickers to impede rescue efforts. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) revised its strategy guiding Anti Human Trafficking Units (AHTU’s) to ensure more

effective identification and investigation of trafficking cases, and to allow coordination with other agencies to refer victims of rehabilitation services. The government frequently used the Immoral Traffic Prevention Act (ITPA) and various provisions of the IPC, which have sufficiently stringent penalties, to prosecute sex trafficking. Article 23 of the Constitution of India, guarantees right against exploitation, prohibits trafficking in human beings and forced labour, and makes their practice punishable under the law. The Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, 1986, renamed after amending the Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act, 1956, this special legislation deals with trafficking. The Act defines the terms “child”, “prostitution”, “public place”, “special police officer”, and “trafficking officer”. The objective of the Act is to inhibit/abolish traffic in women and girls for the purpose of prostitution as an organized means of living. Offences specified under this Act are punishment for keeping a brothel or allowing the premises to be used as a brothel. These include punishment for living on the earnings of prostitution, procuring, inducing or taking persons for the sake of prostitution, detaining a person in premises where prostitution is carried on, prostitution in or the vicinity of public places, seducing or soliciting for the purpose of prostitution, and seduction of a person in custody.

The law confers wide powers on the concerned authorities in matters of rescue and rehabilitation of victims and survivors and provides for stringent action against the exploiters including closure of brothels, surveillance, internment, as well as aggravated punishment when the offences are committed on children (Sen and Ahuja, 2009:61-62).

### **1.1.3 Women Trafficking in India: Some Observations**

As it is known women trafficking has been a contemporary alarming issue in India which has been neglected for a long time. The exploitation of women and children for trade dates long back to human history. While the issue has been existing since a long time the same has not been taken seriously. As people did not want cases of human trafficking to be brought into the limelight, even if a woman or a girl was trafficked or raped it never got reported for the fear of the society. As a result, the victims and their family were ostracized from every possible means.

Some believe that the practice of human trafficking started in the 1700's when small children were made to work for long hours at a stretch. Since their parents could not pay back loans to the employers it resulted in bonded labour where children could not leave even when they became adults. In India, human trafficking can be traced back to the later Vedic age that is the 7<sup>th</sup> or the 8<sup>th</sup> century. During this time, forced prostitution started when certain sections of women could not find suitable husbands or early widowhood. Other causes of forced prostitution were unsatisfactory married life or other social pressures, especially if women had been abducted or forcibly enjoyed thereafter being denied an honourable status in society. Further, when women had been given as gifts in religious or secular events forced prostitution was common. Such women were frequently forced to take up prostitution as a profession. There was the practice of the 'Devdasi system' which refers to a form of 'Dakshina' or sacrificial fees offered to the temple priests. Young virgin girls from socially disadvantaged communities were moved to the temples during special occasions to live as temple dancers. Priests could marry, enjoy, or abandon them. In other cases, they would be employed as maid servants and later many would find their way to the brothels or to slave markets. Yet another source of supply was the royal palace. A king could summon pretty maids to his palace, sexually exploit them for some days

and then send them away. In the Vatsagulma region, the minister's wives had to oblige the king by paying visits, on being summoned to the palace. In Vidarbha, pretty maids were sexually exploited by the king for a month and then sent away. When such women came out of the palace, one obvious solution for their future life was prostitution. Couriers would at times marry some of them while others had very few alternative courses open to them. Kautilya says that prostitutes were recruited from four sources: either they were born as prostitutes' daughters, or were women who had been punished for adultery or purchased, or captured in war. A totally abhorrent manner of procuring women for temple prostitution was buying women and giving them to the temples as they felt that they would grow rich in their lives and live in heaven for a long time. Though, later this system was banned by the Prohibition of Dedication Act of 1982, it still prevails in some parts of India (Chattopadhyay and Roy, 2005: 196-200).

Historically sex trade was not a tradition and people cohabited as a way of living. After the transformation of the society into a 'reformed' one in the last century, multi partner sexual activity prevailed as 'hidden' and is considered as 'immoral'. The conceptualization of prostitution as universal goes hand in hand with other important notions. One of the core notions behind the discourse of prostitution is its inevitable, first, because it is a universal phenomenon and second, because of its intrinsic relation to what has been called the necessity to satisfy human needs or we can say to satisfy the male sexual desire. Male sexuality is portrayed as insatiable, instinctual and uncontrollable, reducing to an essentialist universal notion. Because of this, society is forced with the moral dilemma; how can male sexual desire be soothed without disheveling society's moral fabric? Approached as a moral problem, it was condoned for the sake of the society's wellbeing. It was only when the relationship between the prostitution and venereal disease was discovered, that it began to be regarded as a full-fledged problem in need of

a solution. Solution to the prostitution problems were borrowed from previous European attempts, which had been confined to declining whether it would be wiser to regulate or abolish it. The regulationist discourse departed from the afore mentioned notions, claiming that this alleged social disease must be controlled and sought to introduce legislation to implement a regime of control. Their abolitionist adversaries, however, rejected all arguments derived from the regulationist discourse, and replaced them with others, calling prostitution an ‘illicit act’, a sign of society’s injustice, and calling for its total disappearance. Each discourse produced unyielding and narrow concepts which have continually been reproduced throughout the history (Nencel, 2001).

India has also been a transit point for the neighbouring countries like Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan where girls and women are trafficked into India as well as other nations where they are physically sexually abused, exploited, some are taken as maids and exploited due to their vulnerability. A government report produced by the Innovative Financial Advisors Pvt. Ltd suggests that almost 20,000 women and children were trafficked in India in 2016. Trafficking of child and women is a serious concern prevalent in India. The statistics of the Ministry of Women and Child Development states that 19,223 women and children were trafficked in 2016 against 15,448 in 2015, with the highest number of victims being recorded in the eastern state of West Bengal. People from the lower caste or the tribal communities and the women and children from the excluded groups of the society are generally lured of a better lifestyle and employment opportunity and sold by the agents.([www.fiinnovation.co.in](http://www.fiinnovation.co.in)).

#### 1.1.4 Women Trafficking in West Bengal: Present Scenario

West Bengal is a state in eastern India, between the Himalayas and the Bay of Bengal with over 91 million inhabitants (Census of India 2011). It is India's fourth most populous state. Apart from the ethno-linguistic it shares its borders with Bangladesh in the east, Nepal and Bhutan in the north. It also borders the Indian states of Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar, Sikkim and Assam. Bengal has been marked as the state with the highest number of victims of Human Trafficking. The Union Government has presented a report on Human Trafficking in India at the Rajya Sabha and West Bengal tops the list. A steep rise of more than 70% is observed in the data of the number of women and children trafficked from Bengal in the last couple of years. The data showed that 3,856 women and children have been trafficked from West Bengal in 2015 and the number has increased to 6,672 in 2016. The National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) of India, reports that 78 percent of trafficking of girls in India happened in West Bengal and 74 percent of those cases remain untraced (The Telegraph metro, Siliguri, July 2014: 8). However, the actual members of trafficking cases might be higher than the NCRB figures as several incidents go unreported.

**Table 2: Number of Women and Children missing (State wise)**

Year	Category	States				
		West Bengal	Rajasthan	Maharashtra	Tamil Nadu	Karnataka
2015	Women	2,064	909	1,379	761	643
	Children	1,792	2,387	295	143	178
2016	Women	3,559	975	1066	1064	786
	Children	3,113	2,519	172	317	332

*Source:* Press Information Bureau, Government of India (The Telegraph, March 10, 2017)

### **1.1.5 Trafficking in Women in Darjeeling Hills: Statement of the Problem**

The research area for the present study is Darjeeling Hills, West Bengal, India. Darjeeling Hills includes Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Kurseong, Mirik and few other hill towns. Darjeeling district is the northernmost district of state of West Bengal situated in the eastern India. It is located in the Eastern Himalayas. Previously, Darjeeling was the district headquarters for Darjeeling Sadar, Kalimpong, Kurseong and Siliguri subdivisions ([wbnorthbengaldev.gov.in](http://wbnorthbengaldev.gov.in)). Recently, Kalimpong has been declared as the 21<sup>st</sup> district of West Bengal on 14<sup>th</sup> of February 2017 by the West Bengal government and Mirik has been made a sub-division. Darjeeling town is the capital of the Darjeeling district. The district is situated in the northern part of West Bengal state and northern side of Eastern India. Darjeeling is also known as the Queen of the Hills due to its inexplicable beauty. It is a hill station with a blend of diversity of nature, culture, wildlife and adventure as well. As per the Bengal District Gazetteers, Darjeeling lies between 26°31' and 27°13' north latitude and between 87°59' and 88°53' east longitude and its total area is about 1,200 square miles. The principal town and administrative headquarters of the district is Darjeeling town situated at 27°3' north latitude and 88°16' east longitudes; in shape it is an irregular triangle. Its neighbours are Bhutan in the east, Bangladesh, Jalpaiguri district, North Dinajpur district and Bihar in the south, Nepal in the west. The area of the district is 3149 sq.km and the present population exceeds 17lakh (Bengal District Gazetteers, 2011).

The climate of Darjeeling is extremely variable with nearly tropical climate prevailing in the foothills and Terai region and subalpine condition in the areas above 3000m. 'Darjeeling' was known as 'Dorjeling' in the past, which was actually a monastery built by the local tribal's (Denzongpas) in 1765 on behalf of the Chogyal of Sikkim. Darjeeling had been a part of the



kingdom of Sikkim which was inhabited by the Lepchas or the Rongs. 'Dorje' meant 'thunderbolt' and 'ling' meant 'place'. Most of Darjeeling formed a part of dominions of the Chogyal of Sikkim, who had been engaged in an unsuccessful warfare against the Gorkhas of Nepal. Kalimpong another sub division of Darjeeling was under Bhutan but again after the British defeated and annexed Kalimpong as well as the Dooars in the Anglo-Bhutan war (Treaty of Sinchula - 11<sup>th</sup> November,1865). After Independence of India in 1947, Darjeeling was merged with the state of West Bengal and a separate district was established consisting of the hilly towns of Darjeeling, Kurseong, Kalimpong and the Terai areas of Siliguri (<https://en.m.wikipedia.org>).

Darjeeling district has both hills and plains. The northern part of the district is hilly whereas the southern part is plain. Administratively it has four sub-divisions - Darjeeling Sadar, Kurseong, and Kalimpong are in the hilly region and the Siliguri subdivision is in plains, and this region is popularly known as Terai. Darjeeling-Pulbazar,Rangli-Rangliot, Jorebungalow and Sukhiapokhri are the Community Development Blocks in Darjeeling subdivision; Kalimpong-I, Kalimpong-II and Gorubathan are the three blocks of Kalimpong sub-division; Kurseong sub-division has Kurseong and Mirik CD Blocks and Siliguri sub-division has Siliguri-Naxalbari and Kharibari-Phasidewa Community Development Blocks (Chaudhuri, Dasgupta, Roy 2014:pp.IV-V). It also is mentioned above that presently Kalimpong subdivision has become a separate district of West Bengal.

Darjeeling district has a diversity of people or ethno linguistic groups comprising of the Nepalis, Bhutias and the Lepchas in majority followed by the Biharis,Bengalis,Marwaris, Bhutanese and even Chinese. The traditional Darjeeling economy has been centred on three T's i.e. Tea, Timber and Tourism. But all three sectors have reached their maximum levels and find no place for improvement (Chaudhuri, Dasgupta, Roy 2014:p.IV). In spite of its popularity and demand of its

tea in the international market it still has low pace of development and economic growth paving the way for youngsters to seek employment opportunities elsewhere in other towns, cities and other countries.

The strategic location of Darjeeling Hills is supportive of the human trafficking trade. The location has provided ample opportunities for decades to the traffickers to consider an easy passage for migration of women and girls as the region is surrounded by many countries or international borders. Trafficking in women takes place mostly from the underprivileged sections of the society, from poor and simple backgrounds who can be lured easily, broken families, fake marriages, migration for better job opportunities, and impact of social media etc could push them into being easy targets for the traffickers.

Poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, and other factors have given advantage to the traffickers to lay their firm grip on the innocence and simple minded people from the hills. 'Siliguri' is one of the fastest developing cities within the North Bengal zone and has become an easy transit point or easy gateway for trafficking of women and girls from Darjeeling Hills as well as the nearby nations due to its porous nature that it shares its boundaries with Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and also the North Eastern Regions. Trafficking of women in Darjeeling Hills has been the prime focus of the present study. Darjeeling Hills have been mainly considered for recreational purpose and the rampant occurrence of the societal issue like trafficking of women and girls has not been focussed much. Many children, young men and women are found to be missing from Darjeeling and its surrounding sub-divisions, and there is no clear information about them. Further the victims of human trafficking do not have any knowledge about the identity of their abductors and the causes for their abduction. Cases of human trafficking have drawn attention of the authorities only for a limited period of time, and families that have suffered the loss of their members due to

trafficking have been left with pain and agony to be endured through their lifetime. Darjeeling has been deemed as the source area from where women and girls are lured with false promises to the transit zones like Siliguri or other border areas from where they are trafficked to the destination areas which are mostly the bigger towns, cities and also foreign countries.

While human trafficking in Darjeeling is a pressing concern, minimal research has been undertaken on this subject. Though it can be said that there are previous research works conducted on women trafficking on an international scale and in the Indian context, not much has been done on Darjeeling Hills irrespective of the fact that trafficking from Darjeeling Hills is alarming and it is on the rise. Keeping this in mind the present study has been organized and completed. 'Trafficking of Women in Darjeeling Hills' is the core topic of this study. As the issue of trafficking in Women in Darjeeling hills remains unnoticed in the field of social science research till now, the proposed research work intends to fill this vacuum. Local NGOs, Police administrations (both city and the Railway Police Force) from Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Kurseong, Mirik and Siliguri have been approached and interviewed on this subject. Official facts and figures have been collected for the study. This study has further explored the subject in-depth by compiling case studies of the victims of trafficking in this area.

It has been found by completing a related survey of literatures as well as by carrying out fieldwork for the present research study that there is a very unique cultural practice in Darjeeling hills which is termed as 'Chor ko Shor', a practice where after elopement the girl is returned back to her home after three days along with the tying of the knot. In the hills there is a wider practice of falling in love and getting married in this way. When girls go missing, hardly there is any complaint filed in the police station by the family members due to the fear of social disgrace and also with the hope that the girl would be returned after three days. But this time period which

is three days, proves to be pretty long, as within this time frame the girls are either taken to different cities, flown abroad or simply trafficked.

It is also found in the study that the traffickers who are also known by the term 'Dalals' or 'Dalalis' could be either neighbours, relatives, lovers, people who have been trafficked before or sometimes even the parents. The traffickers pick the victims from bus stops, railway stations, airports, streets, beauty parlours or even from their homes. The Dalals move to the potential sites for victims especially poverty stricken areas. The traffickers are very calculative as to from where and when they can pick their victims. They have a very large scale networking, spreading all across and are using modern methods to track their victims. Traffickers are constantly discovering new routes and entering new regions which are hit by earthquakes, floods, cyclones, drought or other natural calamity which are considered as their softer targets. The occurrence of natural disaster leaves millions displaced, homeless and impoverished. Traffickers indeed become successful with their smart moves especially during these times of crisis, by pretending to be a saviour, by offering a helping hand which in course of time, the same hand pushes the victims into the flesh trade. Poverty and hunger makes women and children belonging to the poorer sections of the society highly vulnerable to human trafficking.

Shri Rishi Kant, the Director of 'Shakti Vahini', NGO working against trafficking stated in a National Seminar on "Trafficking in Person: Prevention, Control and Rehabilitation in 2016, organized by the Department of Law, North Bengal University that many girls from Darjeeling Hills were trafficked to Kashmir, North India and many other places. He also has mentioned that North Bengal particularly Darjeeling Hilly region has been a very easy target for trafficking of women as it shares its porous boundaries with other nations. The nature of these international

boundaries has been making this area susceptible to trafficking, though it also has a prolonged history of movement of people, goods and commodities

## **1.2 Objectives of the Study**

1. To study the nature, socio-economic factors leading to trafficking of women in Darjeeling Hills.
2. To assess the social environment of women who are vulnerable to trafficking in terms of their status, sources of income and modes of expenses, and participation in their family's decision-making process.
3. To discuss various plans and legislative measures taken by the Government/s to combat women trafficking and their implementation particularly in Darjeeling Hills.
4. To analyse the role of the NGOs and the Police particularly the Railway Protection Force (RPF) in tackling the trafficking of women and in rescuing the victims of Darjeeling Hills and Siliguri.

## **1.3 Research Questions**

1. What are the causes of women trafficking in Darjeeling Hills?
2. What is the age group of women who fall as prey to trafficking?
3. What are the major social implications of women trafficking?
4. What are the economic factors leading to women trafficking in Darjeeling Hills?
5. Is lack of education responsible for women trafficking?
6. Does gender bias or discrimination promote women trafficking?
7. Are the schedule caste, tribal or minority groups the most targeted to trafficking?
8. What are the mechanisms that can check and prevent women trafficking?

9. What type of role does NGO's and Police play in rescuing victims?
10. After being rescued, how is the attitude of the society towards the victims?
11. What kind of rehabilitation is provided to the rescued victims?

#### **1.4 Research Hypothesis**

It is important to set a specific and clear proposition or predictive statement about the possible outcome of a scientific research. The research hypothesis set at the commencement of the present research study is that patriarchy impacts human trafficking in a distinct manner.

#### **1.5 Review of Literature**

Review of literature too has been done on international, national, state as well as on district level for the present study to gain a better understanding on the issue of trafficking of women particularly in Darjeeling Hills.

**Bales** (2000) has discussed how slavery is illegal trade prevalent throughout the world. According to him, the cost of engaging people into slavery is minimal, and as a result it is not worth the hassle of securing permanent legal ownership. The author has also pointed out that when the utility of these trafficked individuals is over, they are like livestock, requiring little care and vulnerable to be disposed away anytime. Speaking about different forms of slavery he has mentioned about Chattel slavery, where a person is captured and sold into permanent servitude and ownership is asserted. He has also written about debt bondage where a person pledges against loan, contract slavery, and so on. Further, the author has also discussed how modern labour relations are used to hide new slavery, war slavery, and how slavery is linked to politics. He then deliberates how to combat slavery.

**Miko and Park** (2002) in their article entitled '*Trafficking in Women and Children: The U.S. and International Response*' have defined trafficking in people especially women and children, for prostitution and forced labour as one of the fastest growing areas of international criminal activity and one that is of increasing concern to the U.S. Administration, and the international community. Trafficking has been affecting every country in the world due to the flow of trafficking from less developed countries to industrialized nations, including the United States, or toward neighbouring countries with marginally higher standards of living. Since trafficking is an underground criminal enterprise, there is no precise statistics on the extent of the problem and estimates are unreliable. But even with the use of conservative estimates, the scope of the problem and estimates are unreliable. The various causes of trafficking are dealt in this article along with the regional trends.

**Nair** (2002) in his book '*Human Trafficking Dimensions, Challenges & Responses*' has discussed the main concern of the National Human Rights Commission in controlling the alarming rise in trafficking. There was a strong indication from the available information that women and children were becoming vulnerable to trafficking as they were unable to survive with dignity because of lack of livelihood options, lack of awareness of human rights. They factors have led them to be trafficked. Both primary and secondary data was used for the study conducted by the author. Primary data was obtained through canvassing interview schedules, focus group discussions, case studies and non-participants observation. Secondary sources were provided by formal and voluntary institutions. The victim's age, marital status, first sexual encounter, attitude of the police along with the role of NGOs and the rehabilitation programmes have been analysed in the study. According to the author, only preventive measures and better initiatives can prevent trafficking in the society.

**Rijken** (2003) in his book *'Trafficking in Persons Prosecution from A European Perspective'* discussed the problems of human trafficking from an international perspective. He researched about the legal bodies and their enactments in trafficking, and the solutions to overcome the international trafficking with a realistic approach to improve the prosecution of trafficking in persons at the national and the international level.

**Sen** (2004) in his report on *'Trafficking in Women and Children in India (2002-2003)'* observed that human trafficking in West Bengal is influenced by deep-rooted social and economic factors. West Bengal along with its neighbouring country Bangladesh is a central hub of women trafficking. After crossing the border, women are kept in West Bengal before they are passed on to other nations if planned, such as the Middle East. Research indicates the presence of a human trafficking racket involving West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Uttar Pradesh. West Bengal, being the cultural and trade hub of eastern India has a massive influence on the practice of human trafficking. Two decades back, the incidence of buying and selling of minor girls was found to be the highest in West Bengal. Women and minor girls who are trafficked from West Bengal end up in red-light areas of Mumbai, Delhi, and Goa. The West Bengal police in association with the Kolkata Police Department oversee the cases of human trafficking that fall under their judiciary. A state advisory board had been constituted in 1994 that is still working in this direction. Further, the government of West Bengal has taken steps for involving the Panchayat Raj Institutions for the prevention of trafficking.

**Bales** (2005) in his book *'Understanding Global Slavery'* wrote about bonded labour, sexual slavery, the different forms of trafficking, forced prostitution child placement, debt bondage or



indentured servitude, removal of organs, mail-order brides, and so on. He also wrote about a bonded girl Meera, who, when freed from the bondage, helped in freeing others too from the landlord or slave holder. Bales shared his understanding about the demand behind trafficking and how to reduce the demand for prostitution along with legal approaches. He has contributed with his new updates on trafficking and on slavery.

**Bales** (2007) described how slaves were costly in the past but now are cheaper than ever. Today's slaves cost little but can generate high returns as their ability to work has not decreased with price. Slave's price depended upon the value of the land, the annual wages paid to free agricultural worker/s, and price of oxen. As mentioned by him the low investment on the slave means no special care and can be easily replaced. He wrote about ending slavery with anti-slavery with anti-slavery campaigns and awareness through books, films, websites, and blogs.

**Ishmael** (2007) in *'A long way gone'* narrated his life from the perspective of a little boy, who along with his brothers and friends were so fascinated by the western world especially rap music, they all decided to flee home. Only after travelling a long distance, they realized the expected terror. They decided to return, and on their way back home they encountered unknown people telling them about brutal killings taking place in the region. Their attempts of escaping from the hands of the violent rebels were not successful as even children were not spared from being forced to handle guns like the G3 and AK-47s. Boys as young as seven were also made a soldier by force. They were given drugs like cocaine mixed with gun powder and forced to smoke marijuana to make them forget the pain and the harsh reality. They were shown war movies. Ishmael relates how he lost his friends in the firing as he could not stop this, with the corporal

making them do more killings to get food, fuel, and other amenities. He had begun to feel that his squad was his family, that his gun was his provider and protector, and that his rule was to kill or to be killed. His childhood had gone without him having the realization of the same. Finally, the staffs from UNICEF had come to help them and to have them rehabilitated, where he and others were taken care of. It helped them to recover from the traumas of war and the violence and atrocities experienced during their childhood.

**Zach** (2007) author of the *'Be the Change'* is an abolitionist, who brought to light the fact that there is a scarcity of help needed to raise awareness of individuals in society regarding slave trade. He is a teenager who tries to spread the message all over the world through bands like Leeland and Switchfoot. He believes that his generation has the power and passion to change things. He has written about children who have been traded by their parents at their tender years due to poverty, unemployment, and so on. These children have been robbed of their childhood. He has cited biblical examples like how Joseph had been sold by his brothers into slavery as he wants to end the sale of human beings. He has further written that even one person can make a difference by living up to his passion in order to fight slavery.

**Ghosh and Kar** (2008) discussed in their article *'Trafficking in Women and Children in West Bengal'* the state of trafficking in women and children in West Bengal. According to them, the concern of trafficking offences against children and women in India in general, and West Bengal precisely, has emerged as a critical social issue in the contemporary era. The paper derived a large pool of credible data from an intensive study of as many as 22 villages and strategic locations under 12 police stations of the six districts of the southern part of West namely Burdwan, Bankura, Birbhum, Purulia, Hooghly and West Midnapur during 2005-2006.

Supplementary data was collected from official NCRB records and reports as well. The key findings of the study were that West Bengal serves as a source, transit, and destination for national as well as international trafficking in children and women. This is surprising as the state is understood to have undergone an evolution during the past few decades in terms of positive institutions that aim at gender justice. As the state shares its boundary with multiple states and other countries, the geographic location makes it vulnerable for human trafficking. According to the field study the border areas of West Bengal are most suitable for trafficking of women and girls. Girls are brought from Bangladesh and Nepal as well as from strategic locations within the state so as to supply them to the cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Jaipur, Haryana, Ahmadabad, or Pune. They have discussed five cases of trafficking where girls as young as 13 years old were trafficked. Girls having poor economic conditions and having single parent family are more vulnerable for being trafficked. Trafficking has been linked to migration and mobility. Globalization has paved the way for development of tourism, business, and entertainment agencies in the region. Police too harass the victims more than those who have committed the crime. These limitations not only make the socially economically backward people vulnerable to trafficking, but also explain why re-trafficking is so rampant in the society. Preventive measures are discussed in this article.

**Jesse and Kasten** (2008) in their book titled '*Enslaved*' discussed the different forms of contemporary slavery including chattel slavery, debt bondage, sex slavery and forced labour. Chattel slaves, the term taken from the French word for "cattle", are considered their master's property, and can be bought, sold, traded, and even inherited from generation to generation. America has a long history of slavery, with sex slavery having ensnared millions of women and girls. Some were as young as four, and they had been kidnapped, deceived by false promises, and

even forced to work as prostitutes. This book includes collection of stories from survivors of forced labour, domestic slavery, and human trafficking. Micheline Slattery was from Haiti and the form of slavery which she experienced was that of 'restavec' - meaning "staying with" her father who was assassinated by a ruthless gang. Her mother did everything to look after the family, but again the gang also killed her mother. With the help of an old couple, she was brought to her aunt's family only to be ill-treated. Both of her aunt and uncle were voodoo priests and had promised to sacrifice their youngest daughter if they would be given wealth in return. When the time came, they wanted to sacrifice Micheline, so she was taken to the cave and placed in the altar, but the snake god refused to accept her. She therefore managed to escape from there and met her cousin who again treated her very badly, from there she was taken by Leonie who seemed to be a good woman but later she changed into a hard-hearted woman. She sent Micheline to America and again to Connecticut from there, where she married a man who made her his slave, tortured and raped her every night and also made her undergo abortion. She wanted to end her life but was stopped when she was told that she could divorce her man which she later did and was let free at last. She has now become a strong activist fighting against human trafficking. There were others like Jill Leighton, AbukBak, Beatrice Fernando and others who were the victims of sex trade, domestic violence but they have managed to escape and shared their experiences with the world.

**Aronowitz** (2009) in the book titled '*Human Trafficking, Human Misery*' wrote about trafficking of human beings in the context of a globalized world, focusing on the relation between the traffickers and the victims, and trafficking as a network and as a business. His work also focuses on the growing problems of trafficking and the preventive measures required protecting the

victims of slavery in the host countries upon returning from other foreign nations where they had been trafficked to, with the help of law enforcement agencies.

**Joyce** (2009) in the book titled '*Human Trafficking*' brought to light the different forms of trafficking which are taking place in every continent along with the causes leading to it, like poverty, cultural influences, lack of education, involuntary servitude, corruption and weak enforcement of laws, lack of awareness, war, demand for services and huge profits. The author also focused on the social effects, such as poverty, debt, illiteracy, cultural effects as the same make people believe that a group is better than the other, gender discrimination whereby males are more superior than women who feel worthless and develop low self-esteem, as well as the means which can be implied in order to stop trafficking and the role of United Nations to stop human trafficking.

**Kara** (2009) in his book '*Sex Trafficking*' brought out the true confessions of the trafficked victims who were interviewed around the globe. He measures the growth, the profitability of sex trafficking and has brought forward metrics that have never been brought before. He also wrote about the various forms of trafficking that has been taking place by fraud, by force and in other forms.

**Sen and Jayashree** (2009) wrote about the interlink between migration and trafficking in their book '*Women and Children*' and also throw light on the international scenario as regard to the reasons leading to trafficking, victims of commercial sexual exploitation and non sex based exploitation. It talks about the legal measures to solve the problems of trafficking from the very micro level studies along with the mapping which has to be considered from the point of law and order and keeping all parameters and dimensions in view.

**Skinner** (2009) in *'A Crime so Monstrous'* narrated the plight of the Haitian people in relation to trafficking whereby they were traded by the Arabs who called them as 'Abeedi' meaning black slaves. How they had to undergo beating, rape, torture, humiliation, and different forms of sexual abuses are explained in the narration. The author had travelled around the globe to study about the victims' life as a slave and has come up with several case studies about the life of those who are subjected to various forms of exploitations like forced prostitution by the traffickers, pimps and police administrations. He also highlighted the case study of a lady Tatiana who had been freed. She, instead of retreating from the world as others did, went to confront the traffickers, risking her life and testifying in their prosecution. Later, she also founded an organization 'Atalantas' where they reached out to trafficked women by placing stickers on bathroom mirrors of brothels, slipping them contact information in lipstick containers, letting slaves know they were not alone and helping them and giving hope to come out from the humility and shame they had been through.

**Subba and others** (2009) in the book entitled *'Indian Nepalis Issues and Perspectives'* discussed the issue of trafficking of Nepali women in India owing to the high demand for Nepali girls who are mainly trafficked through Darjeeling-Sikkim-Jalpaiguri regions. It also focuses on the factors linking to trafficking and the measures to be implemented to check trafficking.

**Roy** (2010) in her book *'Women and Child trafficking in India: A Human Right Perspective'* focused on the discourse of human trafficking from the historic past and to the present day. The

author pointed out the difference between trafficking and smuggling that while a smuggled person is freed a trafficking victim is not. She has exposed women and child trafficking in India along with the factors like deception, intimidation, feigned love, isolation, use of physical force and debt bondages, and the different ways used to combat it through legislation, executive and judiciary, and other governmental measures.

**Sharon** (2010) in the book '*Radhika's Story*' had given a testimony of an innocent girl Radhika from Kavresthali, north-west of Kathmandu, Nepal, who was from a poor family. She had been lured by a person Sanjay Lama, who promised a better job and better living condition. She had been drugged and taken to India and when she woke up there was excruciating pain in her lower left abdomen. She discovered that her kidney had been removed without her consent. She was in Chennai (Madras) hospital, but there too she was not free as Murari Pariyar was her captor who brought her back to Nepal and kept her in his house. There she met Rajesh Kumar who was introduced to her by Pariyar. She was forced to marry him, and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She was abandoned by her husband, and she was living with her son when two men came to visit her and introduced themselves as her husband's cousins. They promised to take her to her sister's house in the city and when she agreed she was forcefully taken to Assam (Silchar) and into a brothel. Her son Rohan was taken away from her by the pimp. She had to please even thirty clients a day. After six months in Assam she was taken to Kolkata (Sonagachi area) with her son, where again she was separated from him and forced into selling her body. She met Jigme here who had come as a client but was more interested in knowing her as a person. He helped her to escape from the brothel but was chased down and taken back again. However, with her courage and strength, she once again made an escape along with her son never to return. She

finally reached Maiti in Nepal, where both of them were counseled and rehabilitated. Now she is in her village with her family never to forget her past.

**Shelley** (2010) in her book '*Human Trafficking: A Global Perspective*' examined all forms of trafficking globally, and the numerous interconnected elements that comprise the crime of human trafficking, including the interplay of supply and demand and the role of transnational organized crime. She claimed that women are at times themselves the traffickers, running many brothels. She discussed the nature and forms of human trafficking, the routes and destinations of traffickers and how they use their methods in transition, and the efforts that can be put in to stop trafficking.

**Thakuri** (2010) advocated the idea that women should be made aware about human rights. She mentioned in '*Flippancy*', a book on women's rights, the atrocities faced by women in trafficking and prostitution, as well as physical violence, matrimonial or domestic violence, sexual violence, dowry deaths, rapes, and sexual harassments. The safeguarding of woman's rights along with legal measures can prevent and stop these anti-social happenings from taking place.

**Bright** (2011) focused on the exploitation of human trafficking through rape, beatings, malnutrition, diseases, horrible physical and sexual abuse. His work highlighted how people are being trafficked on various grounds. It also discussed about the prevention and solution of human trafficking. Although this kind of trade or act cannot be stopped it can be reduced drastically by engaging various anti-trafficking agencies and non-governmental organisations in creating awareness on trafficking in addition to setting laws to protect rights of women. His work



also discussed case studies of trafficked victims from across the globe. His main objective was to rescue, reintegrate, and rehabilitate the victims of trafficking into the society.

**Farrell** (2011) threw light on various forms of exploitation and factors that lead to trafficking, ranging from child marriage, camel jockeying, and sex tourism to children being abducted for militant groups. He discussed trafficking of women, children as well as babies in Asia and across the globe. He also shared the survivor's stories pertaining to what all they had to undergo while living as sex slave in their own country as well as in other countries. He moreover focused on human trafficking from different dimensions such as political, societal, statistical and scientific angles, coming up with solutions which can overcome the trafficking issues.

**Hua** (2011) in her book on '*Trafficking Women's Human Rights*' discussed the trading of human beings for servitude or sexual slavery where they are bought and sold. This practice has been as old as a civilization. She said that the conditional nature of obtaining rights, racial differences through governmental documents including a range of congressional hearings, trafficking reports and studies, presidential addresses, transcripts from anti trafficking cases, media sources including media coverage, journalist narratives and non-governmental organisations can bring about a change in the society.

**Nair** (2011) focused on the indicators of preventing trafficking in persons. Some case studies also have been included in his book '*Human Trafficking, Dimensions, Challenges and Responses*'. Here, the role of the NGOs has been discussed along with members from different professional backgrounds who can work together to combat trafficking in society.

**Perera** (2011) in his book '*Human Trafficking: A Crime that shame Humanity*' attempted to bring out all forms of human trafficking globally starting from Asia to America and Africa. It also brought out the nature of the traffickers, the factors leading to human trafficking, the problems like how the individuals fall as prey to the traffickers due to various reasons, and the protective measures such as anti-human trafficking by law enforcement agencies.

**Doshi** (2012) in his book titled '*Readings in Women and Children Trafficking*' discussed the forms of women and children trafficking. He wrote about the various abuses faced by the victims of trafficking. He found out that even after their rescue, women and children are again trafficked for labour and other forms of exploitation. He also wrote about the preventive measures and role of the existing law enforcement agencies for combating trafficking.

**Upadhyay** (2012) described the ways human trafficking has been taking place, its different types ranging from slavery to prostitution, the role of human rights in regard to women, and also the awareness among the women. Further, he discussed the different sections of the constitution dealing with the prevention of women and child trafficking; and how laws can be checked so to stop trafficking.

**Jahan** (2012) in the article titled '*Women and Child Trafficking in Bangladesh: An overview of Causes and Consequences*' stated that trafficking of women and children from Bangladesh is carried out primarily in India, Pakistan, and the Middle Eastern Countries largely for the purposes of forced prostitution and in some cases for labour servitude. Male children from

Bangladesh are mostly trafficked to Middle East to work as camel jockeys, an activity that is both psychologically traumatizing and physically hazardous. The writer discusses the various techniques or strategies of trafficking. The traffickers use force and deception to trap their prey. Trafficking is carried out by well-organized syndicate or 'Mafia' group that operates both nationally and internationally. The local agents collect the targeted women and children from different places of Bangladesh and then handed them over to the brokers who arrange the travel to the border belt areas and hand over to their counterparts across the border. Demand and supply factors are responsible for trafficking. The issues related to health, social, and legal consequences of trafficking have been highlighted here. It talks about the current trafficking issues and the protection of the victims of trafficking.

**Deshpande and Nour** (2013) have written in the journal '*Sex Trafficking of Women and Girls*' that sex trafficking involves force or sexual exploitation not limited to prostitution. Victims of sex trafficking can be of any age and of either sex but the majority of them are women and adolescent girls. The methods of coercion, recruitment and enslavement are mostly carried out to coerce victims into situations of sex trafficking. Most commonly, victims are promised a good job, education or citizenship in a foreign country or offered a false marriage proposal that is turned into bondage. Many victims are sold into sex trade by parents, husbands, and significant others, whereas others are unwillingly and forcibly kidnapped by traffickers. They have mentioned that the most common tactic of coercion used among victims is debt bondage, an illegal practice where the victim has to pledge personal services in order to repay some form of debt, such as transportation into a foreign country or living expenses. Traffickers recruit victims who are economically or socially vulnerable like women and girls who are susceptible to poverty, societal isolation, drug addiction, family violence etc. It may also include orphans,

women with physical disabilities and those who are illiterate. Once the women and girls become involved in the sex industry, it becomes very difficult for them to escape. Victims of sex trafficking acquire adverse physical, social, psychological health conditions and social disadvantages.

**Ghosh and Kar** (2014) conducted an intensive field study of 22 villages and other strategic locations under twelve police stations of the six districts of South of West Bengal namely Burdwan, Bankura, Birbhum, Purulia, Hooghli and West Midnapur during 2005-2006. According to the field study the border areas of West Bengal are most suitable for trafficking of women and girls. Girls are brought from Bangladesh and Nepal as well as from strategic locations within the state so as to supply them to the cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Jaipur, Haryana, Ahmadabad or Pune. They have discussed five cases of trafficking where girls as young as 13 years old were trafficked. Girls having poor economic conditions and having single parent family are more vulnerable for being trafficked. Trafficking has been linked to migration and mobility. Globalisation has paved the way for development of tourism, business, and entertainment agencies in the region. Police too harass the victims more than those who have committed the crime. These limitations not only make the socially economically backward people vulnerable to trafficking, but also explain why re-trafficking is so rampant in the society. Preventive measures are discussed in this article.

**Deb and Sanya** (2017) in their research article titled '*Human Trafficking: An Overview with Special Emphasis on India and West Bengal*' attempted to explore the causes and mode of human trafficking, mainly women and children, globally with a special reference to India and West Bengal. They have collected secondary data from NCRB records. According to them the causes of human trafficking are poverty, political conditions, war, social and cultural practices,

the demand for cheap labour, child marriages, mutilation of organs, sex tourism, child labour migration etc. It has been mentioned that in West Bengal, women and children continue to fall prey to illegal recruitment agencies that entice them with false job offers and then trap them into domestic slavery. A case study has been narrated where a young girl was trafficked to Pune for commercial sex and was rescued by the Police. Police had also rescued a group of 30 young Bengali girls who were also trafficked to Pune but only four of them could be rescued due to illegal problems. According to them in order to prevent trafficking 3Ps are important- Prosecution, Protection and Prevention. The Indian government has not taken any step to combat human trafficking. India's effort to protect victims of trafficking varies from state to state but remains inadequate in many places. The community should be sensitized about trafficking; the members should be motivated to keep watch for irregular movements of child victims from their areas. Awareness programmes to be held in villages, local schools, among kids of the poor society and public to be alert of being victimized.

## **1.6 Research Gap**

From the above comprehensive review of the existing literature, it can be concluded that many research studies have been conducted on women trafficking across the globe. Some were undertaken in the Indian context. Nevertheless, there exists no research work undertaken solely on women trafficking in Darjeeling Hills. The cases of trafficking in the Darjeeling hills are on the rise but the issues related to it remain unnoticed in the field of social science research till now. The present research study is an attempt to fill up the research gap with deeper insights into the subject.

## **1.7 Research Methodology**

The focus of the study is to develop a thorough understanding about the nature of human trafficking, and the socio-economic and other factors leading to trafficking of women in Darjeeling Hills. The methodology applied in this research is both qualitative and quantitative in nature. A pilot study was conducted to determine the size of the sample along with the tools to be used. Descriptive observation has been used for observing and describing the behaviour of the subjects that is the victims, without influencing or having any pre-conceived idea about their situation/environment. Case studies have been carried out to derive in-depth information from the cases or the victims of trafficking. The age group selected for the case studies were from 12 to 40 years. Two different sets of interview schedules comprising both structured and unstructured questions were put forward to the NGO staffs and police officials, and their answers were recorded by the researcher in a face to face situation. A logical investigation was conducted to keep it free from biases and manipulation of emotions and social values. Collected quantitative data have been framed in the form of statistics and shown in tables/charts etc. The research work is exploratory in nature as it explores the issues of trafficking of women that has been taking place in Darjeeling Hills. The study is also analytical and empirical in nature as empirical data had been collected by conducting field work and then those collected data have been analysed appropriately.

### **1.7.1 Area of the Research Study**

The main research area for the existing study is Darjeeling hills. But without including Siliguri as an additional research area, the existing research work cannot be completed as well as will not be a fruitful one as Siliguri has been one of the infamous corridors for trafficking of women and

girls from Darjeeling hills. It has been the transit point for the people of Darjeeling hills. The research study has been done by organizing the fieldwork to collect data from the NGOs, Police officials and victims of trafficking from Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Kurseong, Mirik and Siliguri.

### **1.7.2 Selection of Respondents**

The present research study has been carried out by focussing on the target population/groups, and then generalizing the results of the study. The target population for this study are the women and girls who fall in the age group of 12-40 years old and are the victims of trafficking. The other two target groups are the NGOs and the Police who work for combating trafficking and have provided useful information needed in the present research study.

### **1.7.3 Selection of Sample**

A sample design is a definite plan for obtaining or selecting the needed sample from a given population. In order to draw the sample, a clear idea of the chosen population was ascertained. The samples for this study were chosen purposively. In purposive sampling the researcher selects the samples deliberately or makes his/her own decisions in selecting the samples which represent the whole or target population. Particularly, snowball sampling has helped the researcher to get in touch with adequate number of cases (women) who were the victims of trafficking. For the existing study, case studies of 30 (thirty) women and girls who were victims of trafficking were done. 14 (fourteen) officials from different NGOs and 11 (eleven) Police officials from relevant police stations (Thana) were approached and interviewed to collect needed data for the existing study.

#### **1.7.4 Sources of Data**

Data have been collected for this study from two sources: primary sources and the secondary sources. Primary sources are the observation made by the researcher as well as direct responses from the respondents to the researcher. Primary data are those which are collected afresh and for the first time directly in a face to face situation by using semi-structured interview and thus it serves as an original source of data for the study. In the present case, primary data have been collected from the survivors of trafficking, NGOs officials as well as Police officials (the City Police and the Railway Police Force). Along with these, many other relevant human sources of different fields have provided information for the study. Secondary data are the second hand information collected through books, journals, articles, newspapers, magazines, research reports, census reports, seminars and information collected from the governmental departments and records from various organizations. Books, journals and the official records from the DCRB (District Crime Record Bureau) Office, Darjeeling, have been consulted and utilized in the present research.

#### **1.7.5 Tools and Techniques for Data Collection**

Data have been collected using a mixed method with both qualitative and quantitative data. In order to address some of the objectives of the present study, the researcher used interview technique using structured and unstructured questions for NGOs and Police officials for a proper understanding of the factors which lead to trafficking of women in Darjeeling Hills. In order to address the second and third objectives of the present study, the researcher have used the case study method to do an in-depth investigation of the cases (victims of trafficking) and to collect data from them.



Interview, case study and observation were the major tools and techniques for data collection. A field diary was used as a very important tool to note down activities observed during the fieldwork including the thoughts and reflections of the respondents. So, a record was taken of all the things observed around, like the surrounding, the utilities, and the personal information which they gave to the researcher. Answers given by the respondents were recorded and noted down by the researcher. An audio recorder was used during the interview to record the verbatim of some of the informants in accordance with their permission. Few participants hesitated to give a smooth flowing answer when they noticed that their information was being penned down by the researcher. In such a situation, they were made to feel comfortable by the researcher by building a good rapport. The use of the recorder helped in collecting all the information given by the respondents which proved helpful for preserving the entire verbal part of interview for later analysis.

#### **1.7.6 Preparation of Questionnaire/Schedule**

Three different sets of semi-structured questionnaires were framed for the victims of trafficking, NGO officials, and Police officials. Questions were kept simple so that those could be easily understood and answered by the respondents/informants.

#### **1.7.7 Interview**

Face to face interviews have been conducted with the members of the NGOs, Police officials and the victims of trafficking. Semi-structured interview schedules were used to collect data from them.

### **1.7.8 Observation**

Observation as a method helps in seeing and understanding the social environment, the individuals, and their behavioural patterns. Observation method, in the present case, has given more insights to learning as the researcher could observe and record much information from the NGOs, police as well as the survivors of trafficking. The researcher had to gain the confidence of the NGOs, police, and victims/cases by convincing them about the utility of study. The researcher observed that most of the cases (victims of trafficking) were very emotional as they were crying during narrating their past incidents. Some of them were very welcoming while some took time to open up to the researcher. The researcher observed that many of them lived with their families, while others were living with their friends. The NGOs and the police too were very helpful and co-operative to provide necessary information.

### **1.7.9 Case Studies**

Intensive and in-depth studies have been conducted on the victims of trafficking. Their case histories have been recorded as to know how they were trafficked to other places and how they were rescued later on. These in-depth studies of the victims of trafficking have helped in fulfilling the aims of the study.

### **1.7.10 Data Analysis**

The collected data has been analyzed by utilizing both the quantitative and qualitative techniques. Qualitative data has been analyzed on the basis of systematic and analytical description / data reduction whereas the quantitative data has been analyzed using the statistical

tools and presented through tabulations, graphs etc. The field data have been analyzed in accordance with the objectives of the study to draw out inferences.

### **1.7.11 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

The present research study which is done on Himalayan society has been carried out with sociological perspective. It is a fact that a number of challenges that emerge owing to the exploitation and trafficking of human beings are reported to be preventable. The reason is that these challenges do not arise naturally in uncontrollable conditions. Instead, they are orchestrated by what is understood to be an unacceptable blend of social factors permitting individuals who are vulnerable to be enslaved and abused to the point that severe consequences result. These outcomes are noted to be otherwise prevented by focus on the social determinants facilitating human trafficking. Social determinants are known to be taking a central place within the processes that mitigate and promote the exploitation of women and children in Southeast Asia. In particular, the facilitation of empowerment and education, together with the creation and enforcement of effective policies, holds the potential of lessening the vulnerability of women and children to modern-day slavery.

Addressing social determinants would be the primary approach to the achievement of equity. The identified social determinants that are associated with human trafficking serve as the upstream opportunity of preventing and mitigating the trafficking of children and women in Southeast Asia, thereby fostering social equity among communities that are stratified. Every human being, notwithstanding their socio-economic status, has a fundamental right to be living a life devoid of abuse and oppression. Indeed, human trafficking amounts to a fundamental human rights violation from the sociological point of view as it engages in abrogating so many other human

rights such as rights to life, liberty, security, freedom of movement, health, education, just work conditions, and freedom from torture, to name a few. Reportedly, key social determinants facilitating human trafficking include female gender, poverty, migration, age, lack of enforcement and policy, ethnicity, culture, displacement and conflict, caste status and ignorance of trafficking methods. Conversely, there exists some protective determinants mitigating trafficking such as citizenship, formal education, higher caste status, maternal education, and birth order (Perry & McEwin, 2013:138).

Trafficking of women has been an emergent problem throughout the world. Women and girls are being sexually exploited. The present study focuses on this problem occurring in Darjeeling hills where innumerable women and girls have gone missing. The structural functional approach has helped for a proper understanding of the social situation in general and problem of trafficking of women in particular of Darjeeling hills. Societies are wholes comprised of systems which are inter-related. Each part has meaning in terms of its relation with the whole, performing a specific function within the system. Society is thus a system of interdependent elements all of which contribute to the integration and adaptation of the system as a whole (Swingewood, 2000:142). Sometimes, when these elements fail to function properly, it leads to the disorganization or dysfunction of the social system. Functional theory shows the issues or societal problems which occur in society due to the dysfunctioning of the elements or the parts of the society (Francis, 2012: 72-75). Trafficking of women as a social phenomenon has been studied with the help of structural functional approach where the element or the social institutions play a major role in preparing individuals fit for the society.

Feminist approach has also helped to understand the issue from women's perspective. Just like class struggle, there emerged the feminist struggle which aimed at doing away with sex

difference. Feminist theory tried to analyse the conditions which shape women's lives and to explore cultural understandings of what it means to be a woman. The issues related to oppression and social subordination of women gave way to feminist theory. Feminists refuse to accept that inequalities between women and men are natural so inevitable. They insist that this should be questioned. According to them in a non-patriarchal society there would be no social difference between men and women as authority of men would not exist. Radical feminism was based on two emotionally charged central beliefs. First, that women are of absolute positive value as women, a belief asserted against what they claim to be universal devaluing of women. Secondly, that women are oppressed-violently everywhere by the system of patriarchy. Over the period of time, Delphy put it as 'If women were the equals of men, men would no longer equal themselves' (Jackson, J. 2011). A feminist approach towards understanding women trafficking in Darjeeling hills, West Bengal, prioritizes the security of the trafficked individuals and recognize the process in which victims are subjected to threats by the traffickers as well as the state itself. In the present study, it is acknowledged that there is a need of investigating the social construction and the chains of human trafficking.

The theory of gender and sexuality has been used since the early 1970's to denote culturally constructed femininity and masculinity as opposed to biological sex differences. The concepts of gender and sexuality both take 'sex', a highly ambiguous term, as a point of reference. In the English language the word 'sex' can denote both the distinction between male and female(as 'two sexes') or sex as an erotic activity e.g.to 'have sex'. Similarly, 'sexual' can refer to the different activities or attributes of men and women, as in such phrases as the sexual division of labour. The female sex is usually subordinated to the male sex. Theories of gender oppression describe women's situation as the consequence of a direct power relationship between men and

women in which men have fundamental and concrete interests in controlling, using, subjugating and oppressing women-that is, in the practice of domination. By domination, oppression theorists mean any relationship in which one party (individual or collective), the dominant, succeeds in making the other party (individual or collective) the subordinate, an instrument of the dominant's will, and refuses to recognize the subordinate's independent subjectivity. Or conversely, from the subordinate's viewpoint, it is a relationship in which the subordinate's assigned significance is solely as an instrument of the will of the dominant (Lengermann and Niebrugge, 1995). Women's situation, then, for theorists of gender oppression, is centrally that of being used, controlled, subjugated and oppressed by men. This pattern of gender oppression is incorporated in the deepest and most pervasive ways into society's organization, a basic structure of domination most commonly called patriarchy. Patriarchy is not the unintended and secondary consequence of some other set of factors- be it biology or socialization or sex roles or the class system. It is a primary power structure sustained by strong and deliberate intention. Indeed, to theorists of gender oppression, gender differences and gender inequality are by-products of patriarchy (Ritzer, 2011: 131,457,459). The focus of the present study is on the trafficking of women in Darjeeling Hills is also result of the domination-subjugation relationship among men and women. In the present research there is a realization that gendered identities and gendered interactions of individuals exert a deep influence on women trafficking in Darjeeling area. Girls and women have a predisposition to become victims of human trafficking. Variables that lead to the vulnerability of being trafficked include membership in a marginalized group. Girls and women who are trafficked are thought to encounter a high rate of sexual and physical violence, including torture.

The notion of patriarchy functions as a critical tool in the robust analysis of gender relations. As a concept, patriarchy finds the history of its use among social scientist. Sylvia Walby, a noted sociologist, patriarchy must be examined through lateral thinking which plays a role in facilitating the nuances and complexities of the association of patriarchy and social factors. According to Walby, patriarchy is the system of social structures and practices in which men engage in dominating, oppressing, and exploiting women. Walby argues that patriarchy exists in the modern-day societies in a complex manner through six defined and unique structures. These are production relations in the household, paid work, the patriarchal state, male violence, patriarchal relations in sexuality, and patriarchal cultural institutions. Moving on, two forms of patriarchy in the social world have been denoted by scholars, namely hard patriarchy, and soft patriarchy. While hard patriarchy is rape and evidently illegal, soft patriarchy is asymmetry of power, infiltrates and subverts relations. Essentially patriarchy is a social structure in which men have a monopoly on power with women expected to be submitting to this power. The theorists of patriarchy view the male members of the society as controlling access to power that is instrumental. Within the system of patriarchy, men define the role that women must be playing by force, direct pressure or through ritual, law, tradition, customs, education, etiquette, and the division of labour. Patriarchy is a way of thought; a set of ideas acting to explain and justify the dominance of males. It is time and again argued that the roots of patriarchy and its related inequality were set in the earliest periods of human's existence as a result of genetic as well as reproductive differences between male and female. The theory of patriarchy, aligned in close association with evolutionary psychology, posits that gender inequality has become an inherent element of human social structures (Walby, 1999: 153-174). Reflecting on the scope of the present research on women trafficking in Darjeeling area it is worth mentioning that it is a

humanitarian concern, instead of a partisan issue. Human trafficking is a real manifestation of a patriarchal culture, wherein men rule by virtue of their desire for dominance. Men engage in fantasizing domination and power when they show patronage towards the trafficking of women and children. Taking the control over their lives gives them the illusion of control over others. Without the affirmation of this power they do not feel competitive with other men in the patriarchal society.

The theory of stigma is also applicable to the present study. In a number of cultures, human trafficking is highly stigmatized. Stigma, as understood to be a process attempting to disgrace or discredit an individual or a group on the basis of a circumstance or an identity, keeps the victims of human trafficking from seeking out much-required assistance and counselling. Emile Durkheim was the first scholar who considered exploring stigma as a distinct social phenomenon in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. According to him, stigma is a socially constructed notion of social acceptance on the basis of identity and association. Sociological approaches to stigma in the following years have considered defined frameworks.

Erving Goffman, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, considered stigma as the phenomenon whereby a person having an attribute discredited by society is not accepted owing to the attribute. Stigma, as perceived by Goffman, is a process by which the reactions and actions of others impairs the normal identity of an individual or a group. According to Goffman's theory of stigma, a stigma is to be perceived as a behaviour, attribute or reputation which is discrediting in a specific manner. In a prominent manner, it leads to the individual being mentally classified in an undesirable manner by others. Goffman considered defining stigma to be a unique form of the gap existing between actual social identity and virtual social identity. Moving forward with Goffman's theory of stigma, he divided the relation of individuals to a stigma into three distinct categories. These



are the stigmatized bearing the stigma, the normal not bearing the stigma, and the wise among the normal who are accepted by the stigmatized as “wise to their condition”. Goffman put emphasis on the idea that the stigma relationship exists between an individual and a social setting that upholds a particular set of expectations. Individuals are to cope with stigma in myriad ways, the same varying across groups, situations, and time. Gerhard Falk, a famous sociologist, had commented that all societies would always engage in stigmatizing some behaviours and conditions since doing so enables group’s solidarity (Goffman, 2018:24-31). The association between human trafficking and stigma is strong, with survivors of human trafficking being socially marginalized. Prior to the study with cases of women trafficking in Darjeeling area it is perceived that there remains a necessity to battle stigma that surround women and children who are victims of the organized crime of human trafficking. Humiliation in the private and public space is common for a survivor of human trafficking, irrespective of the gender.

The theory of globalization is very significant in determining the trafficking taking place from a global perspective. As there is widespread awareness which is stretched beyond our conventional boundaries ‘global consciousness’- a consciousness that not only drives our life but also at an empirical level, is a source of socio-cultural change. Globalisation refers to those processes which tend to create and consolidate a unified world economy. The globalisation discourse in India has set from the 1990s. During this decade the mantra of Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation (LPG) was set into motion by the Indian state (Somayaji & Somayaji, 2006:1-6). Globalisation is also characterised by greater mobility of goods and people on a rapid pace. Remote parts of the world are now integrated into the global economy. Globalisation gives way to migration of women and children from one country to another which can also make them the servants of globalisation where they become easy targets for trafficking. There are two ways in

which globalisation has influenced the internationalisation of trafficking in persons. Firstly, it can be said that the victims of trafficking in persons are more often and more easily moved from one place to another place and from one country to another. The organisation of the trafficking has become easier through the use of modern communication techniques and the various forms of transportation that can be used to transport victims from one place to another. With the use of these techniques, the traffickers are for instance more able to serve the specific demands of the sex market. Secondly, it is widely observed that poverty and unemployment affect women more often than men. Consequently, the effects of globalisation affect women disproportionately, making them more vulnerable to trafficking practices. It is widely recognised that poverty and underdevelopment is one of the main reasons for the existence of trafficking in persons. Therefore, trafficking mainly takes place from poor, underdeveloped countries to rich countries (Rijken, 2003: 5-6).

Globalization has a mixed impact on migration and trafficking. Market integration has generated substantial economic growth on a global scale, resulting in more jobs, improved livelihood and an overall reduction in poverty. At the same time, by bringing larger benefits to individuals and countries already possessing physical and human capital, globalization has accentuated disparities within and between countries. Some of the effects of this incident are the increases in urbanization and cross border migration. Further, globalization is distinguished by increased focus on competitive markets. Such competitive markets tend to be characterized by considerable inequality in incomes and wealth and it is this inequality and disparity coupled with the rise of consumerism that as much as poverty, are promoting migration and trafficking (Sen and Ahuja, 2009: 20). Darjeeling is experiencing globalization in the form of increased trade relationships with other parts of the world by virtue of their tea plantations and tourism. Such a

form of integrated economy which has been becoming weak day by day pushes human trafficking to thrive. Modern day human trafficking is found to be a lucrative business that has only emerged to be rewarding with the advent of globalization. Indeed, it is understood that economic globalization and its factors have an increasing influence on trafficking in Darjeeling hills.

## **1.8 Chapterization of the Study**

### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

The chapter discusses the issue of women trafficking in Darjeeling hills. It also throws insights about the global scenario of trafficking taking place along with the indicators of human trafficking. Historical scenario of trafficking in India has also been discussed with the focus on the present status. Objectives, research questions and review of literatures, research methodology have been put down in this chapter. It also introduces theoretical and conceptual framework for the present work.

### **Chapter 2: Role of NGOs to Prevent Women Trafficking in Darjeeling Hills**

The second chapter presents the Profile of the local and International NGOs and their role played in combating women trafficking in Darjeeling Hills. Registration number of the NGOs, their location and the designation of the informant/s are mentioned and presented through tables. The data collected from the NGOs are also presented and discussed in this chapter.

### **Chapter 3: Functioning of Police Administration to Control Women Trafficking in**

#### **Darjeeling Hills**

This chapter discusses the function of the police administration to control women trafficking in Darjeeling Hills. The information collected from the city police as well as the railway police force along with the official data collected from the DCRB (District Crime Record Bureau) office at Darjeeling have analysed here. Tables are presented with the number of missing adults and minors (females) during the past years.

### **Chapter 4: Case Studies on the Victims of Women Trafficking**

The fourth chapter presents the case studies of the victims of trafficking. Case studies have been done and recorded from Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Kurseong, Mirik and Siliguri.

### **Chapter 5: Major Findings, Concluding Remarks and Recommendations**

This chapter presents the summary of major findings of the study. It prescribes some recommendations for preventing and combating trafficking of women in Darjeeling hills.

#### **1.9 Significance of the Study**

- 1) Darjeeling Hills is the main study area, with the research focussing on the nature and status of women more acutely so that people are highly alerted and aware of the need to combat women trafficking.
- 2) The study can also help the Non-Governmental Organizations to form a nexus in working against trafficking in the region by taking certain necessary steps to prevent trafficking.

- 3) This study can also help parents to implement measures to check on their wards and become more vigilant towards the outer magnified circle of their children, either in their academic or professional field.
- 4) The Police too can be programmed to function in a much efficient and prompt mode to combat trafficking and to track down the traffickers.
- 5) This study brings out more insight about trafficking in Darjeeling which had been left unnoticed, thus filling the gap in the field of research as well as adding more knowledge and contributing to the discipline.

### **1.10 Ethical Considerations for the Present Work**

While conducting any research, it is to be kept into consideration that the research procedures must not be causing any kind of harm to the respondents or the participants. The researcher in the present case has applied several methods related to research ethics for carrying out this study on trafficking of women in Darjeeling Hills ethically, as it is a very sensitive issue. Obviously, the research required protection and full privacy of the respondents. Firstly, the researcher obtained consents from various respondents related different Non-Governmental Organizations. Secondly, the researcher also met and took the approvals from the legal enforcement departments like City Police, the Railway Protection Forces, and the Governmental Railway Police Forces for collection of data. Many Sub-Inspectors, Circle Inspectors, ASI, OC (Officers in Charge) were also interviewed. Some respondents wanted to be interviewed only over the telephone. But the researcher assured them that their identity would be kept in anonymity. The researcher also informed and assured the interviewees that their information could prevent many others from being victims of trafficking. This assurance helped them to turn up for a face-to-face interview.

Verbal consent of the respondents was taken by ensuring adequate level of confidentiality and protecting their privacy. Therefore, the researcher has maintained anonymity of the individuals in the entire study. The respondents were able to open up more, without any fear of having their identity disclosed. This helped the researcher to collect the very pertinent information/data from them. The researcher has prioritized the dignity and given utmost respect to respondents by considering the very thin line which has been drawn between the exploiting and the exploited. If the researcher goes too far in carrying out the study, then the researcher is exploiting the participants, and if the researcher has not done enough then it is considered that justice is not being done to the study. Therefore, the researcher has been successful in understanding and prioritizing the dignity, rights, safety, and wellbeing of the participants in the study. Consequently, the researcher had maintained certain boundaries while collecting information from the victims as the data collection process could revive their bitter past. Therefore, the researcher has taken utmost care of not disturbing them by going to extreme level of questioning.

### **1.11 Limitations of the Study**

Some issues might be the limitations for the undertaken research study but these issues were overcome by the researcher by applying the following measures:

- 1) The researcher visited the NGOs and police offices to meet the officials who are generally very pre-occupied, traveling and busy persons. The researcher visited repeatedly to check on the officers' availability there and finally was successful to collect the needed information from them.

- 2) The topic being very sensitive, it was a big challenge for the researcher to find out the victims of trafficking as people hesitated to disclose the identity of the victims. But with the use of snowball sampling this limitation was overcome.
- 3) Some of the trafficked victims (respondents) on whom case studies have been done mainly the tribals spoke in bi-lingual language of Hindi and tribal language so sometimes which became difficult for the researcher in understanding their cases. To overcome the situation, an interpreter was used who helped in explaining the cases.

## **CHAPTER -2**

# **ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND THEIR RESPONSE TO PREVENT WOMEN TRAFFICKING IN DARJEELING HILLS.**



## CHAPTER -2

### ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND THEIR RESPONSE TO PREVENT WOMEN TRAFFICKING IN DARJEELING HILLS

#### 2.1 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

The present research study is on 'Trafficking of Women in Darjeeling Hills- A Sociological Study'. Since Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) have been working to prevent women and girls trafficking taking place from the rural areas to the towns and cities so it is important to give the focus on the role played by NGOs in Darjeeling Hills and its surroundings. NGOs are a voluntary group of individuals or organizations usually not affiliated with any government which are formed to provide services or to advocate a public policy. Although some NGOs are for-profit corporations, the vast majority are non-profit organizations. They are independent of government, state or international governmental organizations (though at times they are funded by government). They perform a variety of humanitarian services and the members can be voluntary citizens or groups or individuals having common interests. Their main focus is to uplift the vulnerable sections of society so as to make them physically and mentally fit to fight the exploitations in the surroundings.

Different NGOs cater solutions to different kinds of social issues and their focuses are on a wide range of scales ranging from human rights to improving health, providing education to the underprivileged, spreading awareness on the environment, upliftment of women and children combating human trafficking and so on. The term 'NGO' is not always used consistently. In some countries, the term NGO is applied to an organization that in another country it would be called as NPO (Non-Profit Organization) and vice versa. Although NGOs vary considerably in size, organization, and approach, they share the basic belief that principled individuals working together can do much to solve human and environmental problems.

NGOs are sometimes even referred to as civil societies which are organized to work on the community. Cambridge Business English Dictionary defines a Non-Governmental Organization as an organization with social or political aims that are not controlled by a government. The term "NGO" has various interpretations, it is generally accepted to include private organizations that

operate without government control and that are non-profit and non-criminal. Other definitions further clarify NGOs as associations that are non-religious and non-military. Historical records suggest that the term Non- Governmental Organization came into use in 1945, the term was coined during one of the conferences of the United Nations, as a measure to distinguish organizations from inter-governmental and member organizations. Studies suggest that several organizations were actively engaged in combating slavery, racism and women suffrage during the late eighteenth century. These organizations run with the help of donations given by families, friends and well-wishers (<https://en.m.wikipedia.org>).

Some NGOs may have 'Charitable Status' whereas others could be the registered ones based on tax exemption. Some NGOs could be provided with some financial assistance from the government. Some work for religious purposes, some for political or on other interests. In regard to human trafficking, there are numerous NGOs that have already started working to combat the social evil from society. There are some who wholeheartedly surrender their dedication to society. These organizations relentlessly work towards development and bringing a positive change in society. NGOs may have different structures, activities and policies, but all NGOs are committed to their cause and perform their functions to achieve their respective goals.

Sociological sciences emphasize their importance in enhancing social integration, implementation of the principle of subsidiarity, building civil society, social dialogue and participatory democracy. The main tasks of NGOs in the health system are providing services and health advocacy. Provision of services includes medical, social and psychological services as well as, integration activities, care and nursing, material and financial support, educational and information services and training. Health advocacy is a combination of individual and social actions designed to gain political commitment, policy support, social acceptance and systems support for a particular health goal or program. An important task carried out by NGOs is participation in the formation of health policy. The increasing role of NGOs in providing social services and the participation in political processes, result in the need to confirm the validity and credibility of their operation. One of the ways could be to introduce the mechanisms to assess quality and efficiency, such as registration as a part of a legal system, self-regulatory activities (card rules, codes of ethics), certification, and participation in networks, monitoring and audit.

There are many challenges that come their way like the shrewd and dangerous traffickers, goons, and mafias, who threaten as well as cause obstruction in their functioning. Some corrupt officials who tend not to take these matters seriously even if they are aware of the traffickers somehow try dismissing the case. Sometimes they shake hands with the traffickers and at other times they counsel the victims and their families about the dragging of the court cases, asking them to make some agreements. Because of the weak legal justice system, it takes ages for the justice to be given since there are no fast-track courts. There is deep-rooted gender inequality as males are given more preferences than the females. Though in the Hills there are not many differences seen, there is a line drawn between masculinity and femininity, which are indices leading to the increase in trafficking.

There are several NGOs in Darjeeling Hills that are working to combat women and girls trafficking. They have initiated different ways and methods to combat trafficking, by organizing outreach programmes regularly, spreading awareness among people through seminars, demo acts in schools and colleges especially for students and also distributing pamphlets, documentaries, short video clips are shown especially in the rural areas. They have formed clubs and committees in schools and colleges like 'Students Against Trafficking Clubs' (SATC), Youth Against Trafficking Club (YATC), and others. Organizations like MARG (Mankind in Action for Rural Growth), HSWS (Hill Social Welfare Society), Crossroads, Bal Suraksha Abhiyan, Hariyo Kharka are NGOs from Darjeeling and Kalimpong. Along with them, other NGOs from Siliguri have equally joined hands working to stop Human Trafficking. NGOs like KUKWS (Kanchanjunga Udar Kendra Welfare Society), Tiny Hands Society, Aatma Vikas Sansthas, Darjeeling Mary Ward Social Centre, CINI (Child In Need Institute), World Vision, Duars Express Mail from Doars, Maiti Nepal from Indo-Nepal border, IMPULSE organization from Shillong (Meghalaya) are all working to prevent human trafficking.

The NGO people have formed different groups accordingly for their awareness programmes in the tea gardens, rural areas where people are poor and illiterate. Panchayats heads are approached, local Samaj which is formed with same caste people are approached for those programmes. They mainly focus on schools, colleges in urban areas. Rickshaw pullers, drivers are made aware whereas DAT (Drivers Against Trafficking) as an organization against women trafficking has been formed in urban centres like Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Kurseong, Mirik.

Awareness Programmes are conducted for the hoteliers or owners of the hotels and restaurants. Police both the traffic police and the city Police are sensitized on a regular basis.

**Table 1: The List of NGOs and the Resource Persons contacted for Interview**

SL.No.	Name of the NGO	Year of Establishment	Registration Number	Location	Name of the Interviewee and His/Her Designation
1	MARG (Mankind in action for Rural Growth)	8 <sup>TH</sup> September, 2006	S-56516-2006	Darjeeling	Mr. Nirnay John Chettri (General Secretary)
2	HSWS (Hill Social Welfare Society)	23 <sup>RD</sup> November, 2000	S\IL\1026-2000-2001	Kalimpong	Mr. Govind Pradhan (General Secretary), Mrs. Yuden Bhutia (Member)
3	KUKWS (Kanchanjunga Udhar Kendra Welfare Society)	15 <sup>TH</sup> December, 2004	S/IL 26023-2004-05	Siliguri	Mr. Prabhat Pathak (Member)
4	Tiny Hands	1 <sup>ST</sup> June, 2016	S/2L/59735-2016-17	Siliguri	Mr. Ashim Rai (Co-ordinator)
5	Darjeeling Mary Ward Social Centre	2016	S/IL/59769-2009-2010	Siliguri	Ms. Margret Horo (Member)
6	CINI (Child In Need Institute)	1975	S/17076, 1975-1976	Siliguri	Mr. Shekar Saha (Unit Co-ordinator)
7	World Vision India	1970's but functional from 2004	NO 63-27/3/1976	Siliguri	Mr. Amos Tshering (Member)
8	Impulse NGO Network	1980's but functional from 1993	SR/INGON-74/99-1999	Shillong	Ms. Hasina Kharbhih (The Managing Director)
9	Duars Express Mail Welfare Society	May, 2000	S0000276-2018-2019	Odlabari, Duars	Mr. Raju Nepali (Founder)
10	CROSSROADS	August, 2014	IV-00069-2014	Kalimpong	Mr. Bhim Bahadur and Mrs Kylie Duncan (Founders)
11	Aatma Vikas Sanstha	September, 1990	24886	Siliguri	Mrs. Niruta Sherpa (The Managing Director)
12	Bal Suraksha Abhiyan	2006	--	Kalimpong	Sister Subeshna Thapa (The Managing Director)
13	Hariyo Kharka	2010	--	Kalimpong	Ms. Sharu Koirala (Member)
14	Maiti Nepal	April, 1993	--	Kakarvitta, Jhapa	Mr. Govinda Ghimirey (General Secretary)

**Source: Interview with resource persons from various NGOs**

## **Case Studies of Some of the Important Non-Governmental Organizations**

### **2.1.1 Case Study 1: MARG**

MARG (Mankind in Action for Rural Growth) is an organization that is self-financed and very active in Darjeeling Hills. It started on 8th September 2006 under the guidance of Mr. Nirnay John Chettri, who had a vision to work for the society especially the 'Darjeeling Hills'. Having its regional Centre in New Delhi its sole purpose was to 'Ignite Smiles' in the lives of under privileged and marginalized sections through the medium of education, health care and livelihood generation.

It not only works as a rescuing unit for the trafficked victims but also provides basic education for the under-privileged women and children. It also helps to bring awareness amongst the people. Initially, it had started with the humble step of financially sponsoring 9 children from the nearby rural areas, which started increasing and till the present day they have 250-300 children. MARG has been financially supported by relatives and well-wishers around, though, at times, there are some projects which are given by the Government. In 2010, MARG started working against the trafficking of women by taking on a project in which they recovered 9 girls from Darjeeling who had been taken to Bangalore and had become victims of commercial sexual violence.

There has been no accurate calculation then but from 2012 onward 12-43 girls have been rescued from various age categories. Seven men were convicted to two to four years of imprisonment. 150 so far recovered but the saddest part is that there is no rescue home (shelter home), in Darjeeling so they have to be kept in Coochbehar. The victims cannot be brought home until the court has given the order and the home verification is carried out. Most of the victims were minors below the age of 18. There are various reasons as to the trafficking taking place in the hills. The registered missing cases collected from the District Crime Bureau have shot up from 420 in 2010 to 923 in 2012. According to Mr. Chettri, this report indicates how awareness has helped in the increase of reporting cases.

MARG has been successful in spreading awareness amongst the residents of Darjeeling as well as the surrounding areas sensitizing the local press in such matters and removing the stigma

attached to the trafficking victims. They have recovered many girls' mid-way from trains and buses.

Information is gathered from various sources like from parents, police, Sansthas (Committees) and local clubs. Once the missing information is reported to the organization, be it a minor or a major, it is taken very seriously. The police are mobilized immediately and more information is gathered about the victim. According to Mr. Chettri, past working experiences are a great help to identify the case whether it is of elopement or trafficking, though 1% still remains unknown so chances cannot be taken.

Working against crime is not very easy, there are lot of difficulties faced by the organization in fighting against trafficking- According to MARG there are two perspectives one from the society where they appreciate the good work being done, the other perspective is from the trafficked victims who regard the NGOs and the Police as outsiders and as bad forces, for them it is the trafficker who provides them with food, clothing and finances. There have been many instances when the Police went to rescue the girls, they bit the Police personnel's who later had to be injected with tetanus, and sometimes, they also ripped off their clothes in front of them so that they could run away and hide, as they had been misled by the madams and pimps, they fear the Police. After the raid the one who has been rescued has to be separated from the rest and even in the Police vehicle, she has to be kept separately because by the time they reach the Police station her verdict may totally change which most of the time becomes impossible. There is no timing for rescuing, it can take any moment, and at times the Police personnel are corrupt or may have joined hands with the traffickers who might have warned the traffickers in advance about the raids to be conducted. The organization takes help from higher authority rather than the grass root for this very reason.

Mr. Chettri added "It was very difficult for the organization as well as the Police to carry out their rescue operation. Therefore, the Supreme Court has passed an order that in times of rescuing the Police has to take female constables as well as one organization member has to be accompanied along with some blankets, bed sheets and so on. Rescued girls from the Hills are languishing in various shelter homes outside Darjeeling as there is no rehabilitation Centre so far established, so the rescued girls are kept in the nearest shelter homes at Coochbehar, Jalpaiguri, which becomes very difficult in functioning well." After rescuing from the destination points,

like Delhi, Bengaluru, Goa, and other cities, they are brought to the shelter homes/ protection homes, nearest which is located in Jalpaiguri and Coochbehar, since Darjeeling does not have a shelter home. The women and girls have to be kept at other places.

It is not a very easy process of making the society accept the trafficked victim, where in one instance a girl trafficked from Kalimpong was rescued and brought back, the people in the region were totally against, they made it a point that they would not allow her to cross the river Teesta, so awareness had to be drawn so that the people could change their mindset and not consider the girl as an outsider but as their own daughter, sister in great distress requiring utmost help. So, after the rescuing, the victims are counseled by professional counselors who help in reintegrating in society. MARG has two counselors Miss Aditi Kharel and Miss Gayatri Rai.

### **Victims Rescued by MARG**

Amongst the cases rescued by MARG, maximum was of schedule caste category followed by the Schedule tribes and majority falling in the BPL (Below Poverty Level) category. Age group ranging from 12-40years. The victims were from Kurseong, Kalimpong, Siliguri and Darjeeling. The organization has successfully formed clubs like 'DAT' (Drivers Against Trafficking), there are 2 in Kalimpong, 1 in Darjeeling. There is also the Maha Sangh Committee which collaborates and works with DAT. Religious communities also have extended their help in the form of providing psycho-socio counseling and life development programme and supporting the organization. There is also the 'VAT' (Villagers Against Trafficking) Club, in Dhajay, Sittong, Phuguri where they maintain register of members in the village, keeping a record of all the members going out of the village and the reasons to it.

### **Outreach Programmes**

A lot of outreach programmes are organized by MARG every now and then, especially in schools, colleges in and around Darjeeling, Kurseong, Kalimpong and also will be centering Jalpaiguri and Siliguri colleges by forming clubs amongst the students, so far, there are 7 clubs in Darjeeling, 4 clubs in Kalimpong. Awareness programmes are initiated even to the grass root level where the local Samaj, Hotels, Drivers Samaj, the Police are being made conscious about the ills of trafficking.

According to MARG, the Police are very supportive which was not so in the past. At present, a lot of sensitizing is happening amongst the police personnel and they have become more co-operative and are providing good support. Organizations directly approach the senior level Police force who are well sensitized and act instantly. There is always a joint venture undertaken between the NGO's and the Police. The Rail Police Force is also alerted in times of need as well as in stopping the traffickers. Without the support of the Police the organization is crippled likewise, the Police too requires the support of the Organizations.

Regarding the Political influences, the organization has never let it come in between their work. Mr. Chettri says there is no fear when the community supports and works together as a team. In Darjeeling Hills, the numbers of rape cases (minor) too are soaring along with trafficking. The laws which have been imposed on them (the traffickers) are POCSO ACT (Protection of Children against Sexual Offence Act) which came up after the NIRBHAYA CASE (14<sup>th</sup> November 2012). If a child below 18 years is subjected to sexual abuse or any other lewd comments and messages are being texted to her, one can approach POCSO which will count it as a very severe offence and the person will be sent to jail. Another ITPA Act where if a person is convicted, he/she will be liable for 7-10 years of imprisonment. Another can be IPC kidnapping offence along with trafficking a person is sent behind bars.

### **Prevention of Trafficking**

By spreading awareness to the parents, youngsters particularly students through awareness programmes like seminars, skits, procession in schools and colleges as well as even in rural areas either by performing or educating them about the ways they and their children can be lured by false promise given by traffickers of providing good job opportunities in cities and abroad. Through seminars in schools it was noted that two youngsters named Tejasweeta Pradhan (18 years) and Shivani Gond (17 years) members of the 'Students Against Trafficking Clubs' (SATC) of Darjeeling had helped in exposing an international sex racket at Munirka in New Delhi, Gurgaon and Haryana. They saved several girls from Darjeeling, Dooars, Sikkim and Nepal from the traffickers. These two girls were awarded by the West Bengal Commission for protection of Child Rights (WBCPCR) on 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2016 in Kolkata. So awareness programmes are a must. (Source: The Asian Age, 17<sup>th</sup> January, 2017)



## **Future Plans of MARG**

It is a big challenge for the organization, as in the past it was easy to identify the trafficker with the physical attributes, description and so on, but nowadays, the traffickers are very advanced and they use the mode of ICT-Information Communication Technology through this they are faceless characters they use other persons fake accounts, someone else's photo where they disguise/ hide their actual identity. So, as the saying goes, 'Iron can be moulded by iron' so even the rescuers have to be faceless (hidden identity) to catch the traffickers and to counter this trafficking issue. Traffickers use mobile phones to traffic likewise, the Police too uses mobile phones to trace and catch the traffickers.

Regarding the data of trafficked and rescued victims, before 2011, the data were not properly kept as they did not feel the importance, but from 2012 onwards they rescued 12 minors and 30 majors along with those 30 traffickers too were arrested and five were convicted. There were girls from the tender age group of 12-40 years and most of them were from the SC category (below poverty level). In one case five girls were trafficked from Madarihaat and recovered in Delhi, and then they were kept at Delhi shelter home. 2 girls were from Darjeeling but since there is no shelter home, they too were kept in Delhi Shelter Home. There was another missing case of 3 girls (minors) who were rescued and handed over to CWC (Child Welfare Committee), later they were reintegrated. There are two shelter homes nearby - Nariniketan in Coochbehar, and Korak Home in Jalpaiguri. The girls from the hills after rescuing are kept in these homes. Society's expectation is very high, in case of a missing report, they want a very quick response where the NGOs and Police have to act very quickly and give them the response. Slowly, society has given into acceptance of the trafficked victims, due to the initiation of regular awareness programmes which are conducted. The news may sometimes mislead especially it happened in the case of Teesta Rape CASE of a minor, where there was no compensation given even after the collapsing of three years but in the newspapers, it was mentioned that the compensation was made.

MARG also states that the National Schemes like the UJJWALA and SWADHAR has to be relooked upon so that a new rehabilitation scheme can be prepared by the panel constituted by the Supreme Court, where the Government would help them start afresh life as to set up a

business or to study. They also will be given the option of either being rehabilitated in an institution or staying at rented premises.

### **2.1.2 Case Study 2: Hill Social Welfare Society**

The chief functionary of the Hill Social Welfare Society (HSWS) is Ms. Shova Chhetri. This organization is a women-based organization working for the empowerment of womenfolk. It has been focusing on combating Women and Girls Trafficking and even spreading awareness by imparting education as well as providing training to the youth. It also focuses on agriculture and provides jobs on farming based projects which are concentrated in four blocks of Kalimpong I, Kalimpong II, Block Algarah and Gorubathan, Rangli-Rangliot Block. It also checks on the health, proper nutrition and diet. Since Kalimpong is an agricultural belt and it has mostly rural areas, the focused area for them is the Bhalukhop area in Kalimpong where they go and organize programs and awareness camps. They also focus on multi-crop farming, square feet farming, animal husbandry etc.

The target group of this organization are distressed and deserted women (Destitute) and girls (Rescued victims/ FSWs/Domestic violence facing women/exploited victims), children, school dropouts, small and marginalized farmers, Self Help Groups (SHG) and single women (widow, unmarried, divorced and separated). It also runs an information Centre for the underprivileged and dropouts, a DIC (Drop-in-Centre) for the high-risk community people, a Centre for prevention, re-integration, restoration of women and child trafficking, a handloom weaving training Centre/ production existing with more than 100 of women beneficiaries and 316 Self Help Groups especially women from the rural belt.

Regarding their financial position, they are stable as they get donations from friends and well-wishers, also through memberships which are annual based and lifetime (Rs. 250/- and Rs. 1000/-). It depends on the mother NGO (West Bengal) for aids. FCRA (Foreign Centre Regulation Act) also provides the organization with funds for children (18 years and below) for their education and health of about approximately 2 lakhs-10 lakhs annually. The vision of the organization is to create a society with justice having ecological balance and gender equity. The mission is the upliftment of women, children and other marginalized in regard to holistic

development in the Hills as well as its adjacent areas without disturbing the cultural heritage and biodiversity within the period of 10-12 years.

### **Objectives of the NGO**

1. To pursue the Community Health related activities, sanitation, prevention and care units for STI/HIV/AIDS and linking approach of RCH (Reproductive and Child Health), Tuberculosis and malaria services.
2. To promote Livelihood development activities related to socio-economic development of the community in the sustainable way and linkage with different firms.
3. To establish the programme for relinquished children for their protection through Child Rights. To pursue activities on the educational and health, nutrition related to child and youth both formal and non-formal systems.
4. To promote and uplift the indigenous cultural status and local folks.
5. To make people aware on anti-human trafficking and ensure protection for the vulnerable children, girls and women.

According to Mr. Govind, the general secretary of the organization, stated that their organization has rescued many minors aged 13-14 from local areas as girls are trafficked to the cities and even to Sikkim, they have also rescued minors where the parents had given their child on free will which becomes even more challenging for the organization to deal as they might be counterattacked not only by the traffickers but by the parents of the victims as well. Mr. Govind too spoke about different factors leading to trafficking of the girls.

Awareness programmes are conducted once in two months. These are also held in rural areas of Lopchu, Peshok due to the closure of the tea gardens, forced migration is taking place so it is necessary for Awareness and outreach programmes. The organization has been taking care of 200 underprivileged children, having set up 12 educational schools (8 in Peshok, 4 in Lopchu with 12 teachers in total).

The organization has been receiving support from Panchayats, Muslim Sansthas and also from GDNS (Gorkha Dukh Niwarak Samelan). The members of the organization have been taking up the challenge of giving a platform to the rescued victims by providing a training based on sewing, kitchen gardening, beauty parlor courses, so that they can stand on their own, by earning

their livelihood in future. The sad thing is there is no rescue or shelter home so they have to keep the girls in Coochbehar or at Siliguri but they also do follow-ups after the rescue, they have also alerted the Christian missionaries and other Sansthas to take proper care of their members.

### **Access of Information and Facing of Difficulties**

They get the information from parents, relatives and friends. Police too inform the organization regarding the missing child, so whenever these cases are reported to the organization they ask to write a report and submit it.

Though, there are many difficulties faced by the organization but when there is no cooperation seen from the police it becomes very difficult to function as without the assistance/help from the police side then it is not possible to track down a missing individual. Many a time, the organization has given a direct letter to the SP (Superintendent of Police) seeking assistance from the Police force. Sometimes, the Police tend to be involved with the traffickers, so no seriousness is shown by them, and the cases are taken very lightly. It becomes very difficult for the organization to act in this type of atmosphere. Sometimes, there has been political pressure during the functioning of the organization, especially during the time of formation of GTA (Gorkha Territorial Administration) the lower level political groups created a lot of problems at the time when a girl was rescued from the brothel and the organization was trying to reintegrate her back into the society but they were not allowing, then the organization approached the top level and finally within a week's time she reintegrated with her family.

### **Rescue Operation**

When a written missing information is reported to the organization either by the parents, relatives or friends, a written application too has to be submitted for better evidence and the organization takes an updated information about the missing individual along with doubts or guesses which they have as to how and when or with whom, then the matter gets registered in the Police station. Police force is very much required at the time of rescuing as the NGO alone cannot act on its own, collective effort is needed but as said earlier the case is not taken seriously by the Police. Therefore, the higher authorities have to be requested during the time of rescue.

### **Acceptance/Non-Acceptance of the Rescued Victims**

Girls are not easily accepted by the society. In this context, there are two categories –first one where girls and women rescued from the traffickers hand before they land up in the brothels are accepted by the society whereas the second one where the girls rescued from the red light areas or brothels are not easily accepted by the society so with the counselling from NGOs and also the assistance from the Police the society gradually has accepted some of the trafficked victims back into the society. Regarding counseling, professional counselor is required but since the organization does not have a professional counselor, the total members from the organization are twenty-nine out of which four are the counselors who understand the problem and have the capability to deal, convince, counsel the victims, their parents and the society. Counselors are Mrs. Yuden Bhutia, Mrs. Meera Laber, Mrs. Tshering Lhamu Lepcha and Mrs. Sunita Rasaily.

### **Caste/Categories of the Rescued Victims**

As per the activity so far conducted by the organization the schedule tribes are the most targeted category as compared to the schedule castes, OBC's and General. But it does not mean that the other categories are not trafficked, the others are lesser in number in comparison to the schedule tribes who have poor economic conditions, illiteracy, and are schools and college dropouts, forced by the parents to migrate to other places.

### **Future Plans of the NGO**

The major focus is on control and prevention by providing training on various fields so that they do not have to go out in search of jobs, generating innovative ideas in them. Though, trafficking cannot be completely eradicated but it can be reduced when such provisions are given to them.

**Table 2: Activities on Trafficking by HSWS**

Year	No. of Cases Handled	No of Victims Rescued	Category (ST/SC/OBC)	Age Group	Reasons For being trafficked (Social/Economic/Political)	Response from Society	No. of Victims put in Protection Homes
2011-2012	17	17	ST and OBC	21-35 years	Friend circle/false marriage	Relatives did not accept them as they had been rescued from brothels	1 sent to Maiti Nepal
2012-2013	07	07	3 ST and 4 others	25-32 years	Poverty/unemployment	Rescued before they reached the brothel so family and society accepted them	reintegrated
2013-2014	14	14	2General, 3 OBC, Others ST	21-30 years	Economic conditions	Family accepted, no response from the society	reintegrated
2014-2015	04	04	2ST, 1SC, 1General	19-24 years	Failed in Madhyamik exams/ home issues/broken family	No acceptance	
2015-2016	Nil	Nil	-	-	-	-	-
2016-2017	Nil	Nil	-	-	-	-	-

**Sources:** Interview with Mr. Govind Pradhan, Hill Social Welfare Society (HSWS)

### **2.1.3 Case Study 3: Kanchanjunga Udhar Kendra Welfare Society**

Kanchanjunga Udhar Kendra Welfare Society is a very old Organization, registered on 15th December 2004. Ms. Rangu Souriya is the founder of KUK. This organization has been working for more than a decade already and it is the first to work on Prevention of Human Trafficking, what started as a voluntary involvement in the rescue of a 13-year-old girl from bonded servitude at the house of a businessman from Delhi who had captivated her as a bonded labour in 2004. She has not looked back since then, it has already rescued girls both major and minors from brothels and domestic servitude across the country. The main focus of KUK is that it works primarily in the domain of Child and Youth Development. The mission of Rangu Sauriya's life is to rescue these girls and put an end to the inhuman practice altogether. Though, along with this Child Protection, violence against women is also its focus. The area of work is Darjeeling district, Siliguri, Dooars and many times cases from Jalpaiguri and surrounding countries are also handled. They are financially supported by well-known Professionals like Doctors, friends, sponsors and they do conduct fundraising projects as well.

The organization has rescued victims from Mumbai's 'Kamakipura' area which is one of Asia's largest red-light areas, the other is from Pune 'Budabarpet' red-light area and the third is Kolkata's 'Sonagachi' red-light area. It also has rescued victims from Delhi's J.B.Road; Islampur and Khalpara (Siliguri) from West Bengal and so on. KUK has started with a mission to 'free women from sexual bondage and exploitation'. Ms. Rangu Sauriya has been conferred with over 22 awards from various regional organizations. Her work in this regard has been recognized and awarded by the Office of the President of India upon recommendation by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

KUK has been sharing close proximity with other NGOs national as well as international from Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh connecting it with mainland India. Siliguri has been the main transit hub for major sex rackets as women and girls from different regions are brought to Siliguri and from there the destinations are decided. KUK also does transit monitoring and cross border trafficking at the India-Nepal border town of Panitanki (near Siliguri) and repatriated them to their countries. It has been providing functional literacy, life skill, education and vocational training to the girls between the ages of 12 to 20 years who are not attending school. The Organization has been helping nine rescue workers (males) of closed tea gardens of

Panighata Tea Estate (situated in Terai of Siliguri subdivision) who were taken as bonded labourers to Mumbai.

### **Access of Information and Facing of Difficulties**

Information is given to them by the police when they come to know about any trafficking case. Village Protection Committees, where the locals of the rural areas are trained by the NGO officials - some of them are teachers and advocates who also provide information to the organization. They also receive help from '*Decoir Customer*' indicating to some known staffs from within the organization who acts as customers and make their search for missing individual/s. This local-level prevention helps in a lot of work. Religious communities like the Christian community have also helps the organization. Travel agencies also do report to the organization at times.

Previously it was difficult for the organization to function but nowadays technology and mobiles have greatly helped to track down the details as well as the location of the trafficked victims. Rescue can be done but the integration and rehabilitation is still a major challenge because there are chances of re-trafficking. Society does not accept the victims easily. One instance where one girl after being rescued was reintegrated but she committed suicide, so reintegration is also very challenging.

### **Rescue Operation**

After rescuing, the minors are kept at CINI shelter home, Siliguri and the adults who were rescued in Delhi were kept at Delhi shelter home for counselling till the court procedure got completed and then handed over to their parents. NGOs do the follow-ups even if it be long-distance, it is done over the phone and also request the partner NGO's to do the follow-ups. Company like VLCC came over and gave many of the rescued victims training at a very low rate. Many of them have been placed there as well.

### **Acceptance/Non-Acceptance of the Rescued Victims**

Societies from Darjeeling hills and Doars tea regions have accepted the rescued victims though there are some exceptions where some societies do not allow the victims to reintegrate but somehow organizations manage to help victims adjust in the society. Generally, the biased



perspective which society holds in regard to males and females likewise they feel that the victims have come from a bad place so they might as well traffic others from the area or might spoil the others in the society. Society blames the victims for their condition as to they themselves are responsible for the act and makes them feel guiltier which further affects them physically and mentally.

Counseling is given by the staffs to the victims separately and also to the parents. Counseling is very much required as sometimes when the victim has been in the brothel for more than six months they do not wish to come out from there due to addiction in their lifestyle so staff counseling, as well as professional counseling, is a must. The organization does not provide relief but has a lot of tie-ups with other partner NGOs which helps the rescued victims.

### **Caste/Categories of the Rescued Victims**

Nepalese are trafficked more in number due to their fair complexion, submissive behavior, as they fail to retaliate, they deal well with customers. Bengalis from Purulia, Malda are trafficked, tribal girls from Assam along with Nepalese are brought to Khalpara, Siliguri. Nepali girls from Nepal are trafficked more in number compared to the Nepali girls from the hills. Political instability in Nepal was another reason (push factor) that pushed the girls out from their own country. To escape the insurgency and also for the fear of Maoists, they crossed the border and came to the Indian side and then they were easily trafficked.

### **Outreach programmes**

Outreach programmes are organized regularly in schools along with police who shares talks about cyber-crimes. Joint programmes are very effective. Drivers association is placed at Darjeeling more where volunteers spread awareness to travel agencies by distributing stickers on prevention of trafficking. The organization has developed a very good rapport with the police force so they are very co-operative and active. There has been no political pressure on them so far in case of preventing trafficking.

### **Future Plans**

Since there are no shelter homes, the organization Kanchanjunga Udhar Kendra has taken it very seriously so whatever the matter holds or how much ever funding is required they have started

with the construction of a shelter home at Devidanga, Siliguri. As the saying goes “Prevention is better than cure”, the cure is not possible but at least prevention can be done. The organization plans to start SHGs (Self Help Groups) where the products can be made marketable and that the rescued victims can make their own living so that at least unsafe migration will reduce which will further reduce the trafficking cases.

Trafficking is just not the trafficking of women and girls but even men of different age categories are trafficked. In many cases girls are trafficked with fake passports to other countries especially the Gulf countries. In 2016, 79 male workers had been trafficked to Bangalore to work in Dhup Factory where they were locked for three years without adequate food. Finally, with the help of administration they were rescued.

In the year 2016, three batches of girls were taken to U.P, Bihar for Orchestra singing where Bollywood item numbers are played and one by one the girls are sold off to the people who attend this programme. 8 major girls were rescued from Raxaul (Bihar) out of which 5 were from Nepal, 2 from Doars and 1 from Assam. Approximately 100 trafficking cases of women and girls cases were handled in 2004-2008 out of which mostly were from Nepal who were running away to escape the Maoist threat. In 2013, 5 traffickers were convicted.

#### **2.1.4 Case Study 4: Tiny Hands Society**

Tiny Hands Society is located in Pradhannagar, Siliguri. It does transit monitoring, prevent trafficking by bringing awareness among passengers, stakeholders, rickshaw pullers, auto drivers, hotel owners and also travel agencies, Police and GRP (Government Railway Police). Its focus area is Siliguri Junction / Tenzing Norgay Bus Terminus / Panitanki, the Indo Nepal border/ New Jalpaiguri etc. its financial condition is good as it gets donations from members and their friends, other well-wishers and also from the church.

#### **Access of Information and Facing of Difficulties**

Information is given by the staffs since they do transit monitoring, sometimes members of SSB (Seema Sashastra Bal), the other branch of the organization is located at the Indo-Nepal border (Panitanki) so information is passed down from there as well.

A lot of difficulties is faced especially when the traffickers are spotted with the girls and the girls/victims do not accept that they are being trafficked. Sometimes, they deny knowing the trafficker/s as the victims have already been brainwashed by the trafficker/s. Sometimes the victims tell that they are going to work out of their own will, even after continuous counseling they retaliate/ fight a lot with the staffs of the organization. It has happened after the girl's denial that the person accompanying them was not a trafficker but later it was understood that the person was the trafficker. Without confirmation from the side of the organization neither can the police be called nor can the traffickers be stopped from travelling. There are instances when police were called, they arrived an hour late by that time the trafficker escaped. Since, there are no shelter homes it becomes very inconvenient for the rescued victims and the organization as the rescued victims cannot be brought home. It becomes very challenging for the organization when victims refuse to file the case against the traffickers and as there are no evidences gathered so the traffickers are let off. In case if a case is filed, the police have to go the court frequently for hearings so they also ask the case to be settled within the traffickers and the victims. The court cases get prolonged so the police do not show keenness to check on the issues.

### **Rescue Operation**

After rescuing, the minors are kept at CINI shelter home and for the majors, the parents are called and handed over. Sometimes, for the majors, the organization also requests the bus drivers to drop them off at their homes.

### **Acceptance/Non Acceptance of the Rescued Victims**

Victims those who are rescued before being taken to the brothels are easily accepted by the society.

### **Counseling**

The staff counsels the victims and put them into the shelter homes, though a professional counselor is required. The organization does not provide relief but makes sure that they reach their home safely.

### **Caste/Categories of the Rescued Victims**

Most of the big groups encountered were Nepalese from Nepal who were accompanied by the traffickers, since Kathmandu airport is very strict it becomes easy for them to cross Indo-Nepal

border by road which does not have very strict vigilance. They are taken to Delhi and from there they are flown to Gulf countries like Oman, Kuwait, Dubai and other places. In small groups there were Adivasi girls along with the traffickers.

### **Outreach programmes**

Outreach programmes are organized once in a while within the Christian community at Malbazar, Panitanki and surrounding areas. At hotels and restaurants too pamphlets are distributed to generate awareness.

### **Future Plans**

The organization is willing to do more for society and expand its areas of work. The organization has handled 52 cases in Siliguri area where 5-7 of the traffickers were kept in Police custody but again released. Trafficked girls were from the tribal community and scheduled castes.

50 cases were handled in Panitanki (Indo-Nepal border) of Siliguri subdivision where two traffickers were caught out of which one trafficker was convicted and sentenced to 20 years imprisonment according to the law of Nepal whereas in India it is 5-7 years and sometimes up to 10 years. 3 cases were from Malbazar, no traffickers were caught as victims were ready to give the statement but later they changed their statement and the trafficker was released. All the rescued victims from Siliguri and Malbazar were the tribal girls whereas all were Nepalese who were rescued in Panitanki situated in India-Nepal border of Siliguri subdivision. According to Mr. Rai, trafficker usually does not show himself, his identity is hidden where everything is monitored over by the phone, as to where the girls have to stand, whom they would be meeting, but the traffickers from Nepal have to travel along with the victims as they are crossing countries border and many of the girls hesitate to come on their own, so the traffickers accompany them.

#### **2.1.5 Case Study 5: Darjeeling Mary Ward Social Centre**

Miss Margret is a member of Darjeeling Mary Ward Social Centre, Champasari near Siliguri. She informed that the organization is run by Loreto Sisters and has been established in 2016. Though, it is operational from 2009. It is financially independent as it has funds coming from friends and communities. The focus areas of the NGO are the nearby tea gardens in Darjeeling

district. Six tea gardens are looked after by them- Mohar Gaon, Gul Marg, Sukna, New Chumta, Putin Bari and Nischaritapur Tea gardens.

### **Access of Information and Facing of Difficulties**

In case anyone reports them about the missing case, they guide them to lodge F.I.R. and these informants could be the relatives or the neighbours of the missing person. After that the rescue operation is conducted with the help of the police force. After rescue, the minors are kept in CINI shelter home and majors are reintegrated in their respective societies. The organization conducts a lot of awareness programmes in all these tea gardens which have helped them to know their rights. Regarding counseling, a professional counselor is required but since they do not have so the members of the organization give counseling to the victims. The organization does not provide relief but sees that the girls are reintegrated back into their families.

As informed, most of the cases encountered by this NGO are from tea garden areas belonging to the schedule tribe category. Panchayats and police provide assistance. Although they were not very cooperative before but they have started cooperating now. Political pressure is there at times.

The organization's future plans are to cover up more tea garden areas though, it has already started from Jalpaiguri district where they have conducted a Legal Aid Program in 8 tea gardens. They hope to expand their area soon. So far they had handled 22 cases, out of which 7 cases were based on trafficking. After rescue operation, minors were put in CINI homes and others reintegrated. Miss Margret says that she looks into other areas too like domestic violence cases, land-related issues, rape cases and child abuse cases also. She guides women and girls residing in these tea gardens as she herself is a tribal lady who can understand and talk to the tribal in a better way.

#### **2.1.6 Case Study 6: CINI (Child In Need Institute)**

CINI is an organization that focuses on the entire state of West Bengal and Jharkhand. The main focus of CINI (Child In Need Institute) is primarily on ensuring services in the realms of education, protection, health and nutrition to women and children living in the urban slums of Siliguri. They look into the system strengthening and providing a child friendly atmosphere.

They take care of children from the age of 0 to 18 years. Here '0' is actually the pregnancy phase, the gestation period of 40 weeks where the pregnant mother and the fetus is looked after by the organization. The main areas which are looked into by this NGO are health, education, nutrition etc. In West Bengal, the North Bengal wing stretches from Darjeeling to Alipurduar. The organization has been functioning with the help and support given by the well-wishers and sponsors. Government funding is also received along with certain training programmes initiated by the government for children through the organization.

Mr. Shekar Saha, the Unit Coordinator of the NGO, informed that trafficking usually takes place more from the rural areas compared to the municipal areas. North Bengal, Nepal, Assam, Dooars etc were the main areas and Siliguri is the main transit area for the traffickers to take them to and fro. It has reduced now compared to 10 years before as there is the SSB which has been monitoring at different points. The members of the organization are also posted at different bus stands and railway stations to monitor and prevent trafficking.

There has a three-tier system of the organization- primary, the secondary and the tertiary, where at the primary level the children sensitization programme takes place, at the secondary level the dropouts, children of single parents and the street children are monitored and it helps them to come to the mainstream, and at the tertiary level the girls rescued from the traffickers are kept at CINI provided with proper counselling after the social investigation procedure is done.

### **Rescue Operation**

After rescuing a child, the social investigation is done and then CWC, Child Welfare Committee gives the order for the child to be kept at the shelter home. Though family is the best place but the organization keeps the child in the shelter home for some days. If the child has faced serious trauma, first-hand counseling is given then process training so to reduce the trauma. Since there are very less professional counselors, the government has appointed expert trainers who can be hired at times. Then the parents are called to take their children home after completion of the procedure with the communication report of CWC. Children are kept in this open shelter for a time duration of 2-3 months according to the government rules and not more than that period. Sometimes, it becomes very difficult for the organization and police to act when parents delay in passing the missing information about their children.

The Government of India has also initiated the Railway ChildLine Programme in June 2015. ChildLine is connected throughout India. There is a Missing Portal that can track and keep a record of missing individuals. Passengers of rails, potters, sweepers, are very alert in reporting any case of suspicion. The main focus of the organization is to make Child Friendly Railway Station with Standard Operative Processing and Police where Home Departments and Railway Protection Force work together. Even in the villages, members of the health department, from ICDS, from Police, NGO, SHG (Self Help Group) come together with prevention mechanisms and create child-friendly environment tea garden areas.

### **2.1.7 Case Study 7: World Vision India**

World Vision India works for Humanitarian response and community development. It has its branches all over India. In Siliguri, the main focused regions are Phasidewa, Khalpara and Khoribari (Siliguri Subdivision). World Vision India is an organization where funding comes from foreign countries like the U.S.A., Finland etc. This project too has been sponsored by the U.S.A.

#### **Access of Information and Facing of Difficulties**

World Vision India has been following protocols or guidelines- where there is the coordination of different stakeholders, parents and police come and inform about the missing children. Online software has been established also known as '*Missing Person Portal*' that is an online case registry. IMPULSE has done a tremendous job of introducing this where it becomes easy for case intervention. There are many NGOs who have adopted this method and World Vision India is a moderator along with two or more NGOs. This online website is also known as 'Impulse Case Infocentre'.

Difficulties faced by the organization is solved through social media, a WhatsApp group which has been created where all the members of different NGOs share vital information, like a missing case, tracking devices, recovery and so on. It can happen that members from within the group can act as a betrayer and pass the information to the trafficker which could be a great stab for the organizations.

## **Outreach Programmes**

The organization has been holding a lot of awareness programs for adolescent girls like in these villages '*Girl Power Group*' has been formed under the age category of 14-18 years where they are made aware about the factors, and effects of trafficking. There is another form of awareness that focuses on the males of the village also known as '*Men Care Model*' which falls from 15-20 years. Police as such has been very cooperative.

## **Rescue Operation**

After rescue, counselling is given to the victims. There is an ATN-Anti Trafficking Network where 12-13 NGOs have come together and once a month they meet and are felicitated by World Vision. A good relationship is being established between Nepal NGO and Indian NGOs. Cross border meetings are very helpful in rescuing victims and reintegrating them back with their families. At times, there are political pressures so a group nexus is required.

## **Future Plans**

For the future, World Vision has planned to work in Khalpara area with Child-Friendly Learning and Recreation Centre. Education will be implemented for the children of sex workers.

### **2.1.8 Case Study 8: Duars Express Mail**

Mr. Raju Nepali is the founder of Duars Express Mail, an NGO working against human trafficking and child rights. The nature of work is on anti-trafficking, rescue and protection of rights, welfare and educational awareness for women/children. The area of work is in Jalpaiguri district, Alipurduar district, North Bengal and Sikkim. Regarding the financial position, it is self-financed; they receive support and contribution from the members and volunteers of the organization.

#### **Access of Information and Facing of Difficulties**

They get information from the police, parents or NGOs. First the missing information is registered, then the type of case is analyzed, sometimes it could be elopement also. In Nepali culture, in the Hills the practice of three days' time period is given to the girl to return home after eloping. In most of the cases they have found out that if the mobile is switched off it's a case of trafficking, many fake marriages have also led to girls becoming FSW (Flying Sex Workers).



There are many difficulties faced by the organization in rescuing mission- they have received threatening calls, sometimes also from Political power holders. The other difficulty is since there are no shelter homes, girls (minors) are kept in Jalpaiguri shelter home and in CINI, whereas the majors after being rescued are counseled, and kept as housemaids in some local families but without disclosing the incidents. Police delay a lot in reaching the spot, and other times they, in turn, depend on the organization for any type of decisions.

There is no financial aid given by the government in times of rescue. The girls are not easily accepted into the society.

### **Caste/Categories of the Rescued Victims**

All categories of women have been rescued so far. After rescuing the victims are counseled by the members of the organization as well as partner NGOs also help in providing expert counselors and after counseling the girls/women are provided jobs as housemaids in nearby areas. The organization provides some relief by giving them employment in the government introduced schemes like Geetanjali, as well as 100 days' work. North Bengal is a source provider and destination is other places mainly cities. The Panchayats, other NGOs as well as religious communities provide help and support when needed.

### **Outreach Programmes**

Outreach programmes are held on a weekly base and it is in inter-districts and nations like Bhutan, Nepal borders.

### **Future Plans**

For the future, they would want to encourage more of livelihood programmes along with Self Help Groups so that people are not compelled to go outside to work, they can get employment from within the villages.

### **2.1.9 Case Study 9: CROSSROADS**

Mr. and Mrs. Bahadur runs this organization named 'CROSSROADS' which was registered on the 14th of August 2014. The main objective of the organization is to prevent trafficking. The organization directs people to report cases and lodge an F.I.R. and also do follow ups by trying to locate them. They build a network so that even after locating the victims the staff helps them, by

providing counseling and spreading awareness. It focuses on the areas of Darjeeling Hills, Kalimpong, Doars and Sikkim.

### **Access of Information**

Many times it has happened that after the awareness programme, people come over to talk about the missing cases in their areas, or in their families. Then the organization helps them to report the cases and takes the follow-ups. Since the organization does not rescue it informs other organizations like MARG which takes up the cases along with assistance from the police. The police are very cooperative, thanks to the sensitization and awareness programmes held for the police that they play their roles very efficiently. There was a case from Pedong where a minor girl was almost being trafficked by a lady from Finland, but the organization on hearing this made a thorough check on the lady and with the help of the police the girl was saved from falling prey to the trafficker. Actually, the lady had befriended the girl's father and had promised a scholarship for her in Finland but in actual it was not so, and with the help of some friends in Finland they could get more details of the lady that she was a fraud. There was another case where two minor girls were trafficked and were travelling in the train without tickets the police arrested them and they were brought back home. Mr. Bhim also gave a term called '*Positive Deviance*' according to him he stated that there are cases where through social networking sites and other technologies traffickers are trafficking the victim but when the girl even after chatting or befriending a stranger online is alert and knows how to deal and refrains or stops/saves herself from being trafficked is Positive Deviance.

The organization would like to have trained counsellors or psychologists who would be able to counsel the victims after rescuing. The organization is conducting awareness programmes, making people come front and report the missing or trafficking cases on their own, but many are still hesitant, could be a hook that stops them, could also be a threat, or sometimes the traffickers too are in the same village who still convinces the parents that they would bring the girl back but even after a month the story is the same so the staff of the organization helps the parents to lodge complaints. The organization helps in alerting the surrounding nearby NGOs.

### **Acceptance /Non Acceptance of the Rescued Victims**

Girls are not easily accepted in society, and therefore more awareness programmes are required.

### **Caste/Categories of the Rescued Victims**

According to them the age category of victims trafficked are from 15-55 years. All categories are trafficked meaning that not only the schedule tribes or the schedule castes, others are trafficked also. The minors are referred to Childline for follow-ups, like two minor girls were trafficked from Kalimpong and rescued in Himachal Pradesh so the Childline of Delhi took over. According to Mrs. Bahadur, the education system should also be changed as to not enforce on the students as to what is written has to be accepted but also allow them to assess and give their views and opinions which would really help the youngsters.

### **Future Plans**

The organization is open to all types of ideas and information flowing so that they can improve as well as adopt new methods to act for the betterment of the organization and for society. According to them, the church as a religious institution should be involved in these cases so that the trafficking cases could be reduced.

### **2.1.10 Case Study 10: Aatma Vikas Sanstha**

Aatma Vikas Sanstha was established in September 1990 in Vivekananda Road, Khalpara of Siliguri. The nature of work is to rescue victims who have been trafficked, to generate awareness among different groups of underprivileged women and also empower them so that they are independent. This organization also gives ample opportunity to these women by teaching and providing training to them in handicrafts like beaded necklaces, bangles, earrings, shawls, scarves, and other clothing which is online based so these items are sold at different places nationally as well as internationally. They have their outlets in Delhi, Mumbai and U.S.A.

Areas focused are red-light area of Khalpara and places near to it like Kuleshimalla, Koiladipu, Tikiapara. Financial position is based on the work of handicrafts. There are presently 31 women of different age categories from 17-40 years who are salaried every month from this organization. They are paid Rs. 4000/- every month. Out of the 31 members, 25 are Muslims and 6 others. Mrs. Niruta Sherpa has rescued many women and five of them she has also kept with her at her residence. She tells that the work is very challenging and risky but it has made her mentally stronger. It has been 18 years already that she has been working in the Khalpara area though she has joined this organization in 2014.

## **Future Plans**

She tells that in future she has promised to rescue more women, take them out from the brothels and make them more confident and independent. Presently there are 31 in number; she plans to rescue more women and girls in future.

She has rescued many young girls, women from the brothels and also prevented them from being trafficked. There was a case of a young girl who was being sold off by her own father, the girl on hearing about Aatma Vikas came over to the organization and reported the matter to her. Mrs. Niruta intervened and rescued the girl. Now she has been working in Aatma Vikas for the last one year. Aatma Vikas has been able to support many women and girls and their families by building their self-confidences and giving them more strength and courage, making them independent to face society.

### **2.1.11 Case Study 11: Bal Suraksha Abhiyan Trust**

Bal Suraksha Abhiyan Trust (BSA) is a nonprofit organization run by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny which was established by prominent French nun Anne Marie Javouhey alongside eight others in 1807. The sisters' key mission is to uphold human rights for all and provide education to the underprivileged across the globe. The sisters strongly believe that no child should be deprived of basic rights to education and personal development, just because they do not have access to the resources needed to realize their dreams. The Organization runs a shelter home for the victims of child labor, it started in 2006.

The Director of the Organization is Sister Subeshna Thapa who focuses on the issues of trafficking (forced trafficking for forced labor), fights against child labor, where children below 14 years are exempted from carrying out other manual/physical work like working in brick kilns factory, daily wage labourer and so on, rescuing and spreading awareness among the people. Children, who have had a tough experience of life, are totally rehabilitated. They have supported over 700 children. Its targeted areas are Kalimpong, India-Bhutan border along with its networking with SSB, Darjeeling-Mirik, Sikkim-Pedong transit points where some projects for children are being organized.

In 2007, BSA partnered with Glenn Family Foundation which donated funds to build the Child Labor Rehabilitation Centre on BSA premises. The facility opened in 2009 and is equipped with dormitories, offices and recreation areas. At their base in Kalimpong they have a purposefully built facility that houses 130 children who have been rescued from child labour. GFF has continued to provide funds to BSA since 2007 which supports 100 children with basic needs such as education, food, health and hygiene. In 2011, BSA became an NGO partner of ChildLine India, becoming responsible for children in distress within Kalimpong district. As a result, BSA formed a ChildLine team who managed to offer instant access to support 24×7 actively intervene or simply just offer a listening ear for children in distress.

The mission of this organization is to promote human rights and dignified life for children and to protect those rights for holistic growth and development. The aim is to facilitate this growth through total rehabilitation of children by providing mainstream education, counseling and health and hygiene in a child-friendly environment. BSA has remained committed to fulfilling its vision of a child labour free society, having rescued and rehabilitated over 600 children since its foundation. Its goal is to move towards labour free society in which every child is given a fair chance to achieve their dreams. Kalimpong area is affected as children who are trafficked are rescued and brought to Bal Suraksha as there are no Governmental Homes, they are kept in this organization and their statements are recorded in the court, produced before the Child Welfare Committee, and provided counseling. CWC gives orders for the restoration process to take place and the children are handed over to the family.

### **Difficulties Faced by the Organization**

Previously, it was very difficult as families did not accept the victims but now after rigorous counseling sessions families too are accepting the children. Sometimes, the children after overcoming the fear factor are taking the risk of going back again which becomes very difficult. The main focus of the organization is to rescue and generate awareness among the individuals. Police have been very active and take up the FIRs in case of a missing child. MCA (Missing Child Alert) is very much in use. The Supreme Court too has allowed filing cases anywhere where the children have gone missing.

### **2.1.12 Case Study 12: Hariyo Kharka**

“Hariyo Kharka” (Green Pasture) is a religious organization, working in all the sub-Himalayan regions covering Darjeeling District, Sikkim, Jalpaiguri District, Bhutan, and Nepal. Its head office is situated in Kalimpong (below Mac Farlane Church). It started in 2010 and mainly focuses on various spheres- the spiritual growth, overall development of the youth like training in leadership skill, counselling, sports etc. Miss Koirala, a member of the organization has done a lot of study on the sex workers in the brothels of Mumbai and has been in touch with NGO’S working to combat Human Trafficking. According to Ms. Koirala, sometimes it is very difficult to reintegrate a victim because society is not ready to accept her and sometimes during the time of rescue, girls are not willing to come out because they fear that they will not be accepted in society again and another question arises as to their survival. During raids, the minors are hidden underground and in hideouts which we cannot even imagine, where girls are squeezed in and made to hide. In most of the time, the police are also the client and they take the weekly *hafta* (money) from the pimps/madams, so they themselves inform them about the unexpected raids beforehand. The minors who are rescued should be counseled by professional counselors and she also insisted on the fact that there should be proper Government aided rescue homes. She said that presently the treatment of the rescued victims in the homes are worse than animals, they are hardly given any respect as human beings. Many of them escape from these homes and again land up in the brothels because the traffickers too continue to eye the victims even after their rescue, so with their contacts again the girls land up in the same job as before.

She stated that even when major girls are rescued there is no place to keep them, sometimes the shelter homes are overcrowded and even after rescuing the police release them back into the brothels. In the shelter homes, there have been many cases of lesbianism as the girls have been habituated with their clients. There should be proper care taken and even the girls should be provided with some trainings so that they could survive well in the outside world.

### **2.1.13 Case Study 13: IMPULSE**

Miss Hasina Kharbhih is the founder, the Managing Director of IMPULSE which is an NGO working against human trafficking in Meghalaya. She has been fighting against the illegal trade of humans as well as the exploitation of child labourers in India and especially in coal mines in

Meghalaya. Thousands of children are working in hazardous conditions where mining is done unscientifically using the traditional mining method called rat hole mining where the labourers are forced to crawl into narrow tunnels deep under the ground to collect the coal without any safety equipment or structures. Many of the children working in the mines have been trafficked and sold as bonded labour to the mine owners. Impulse NGO Network conducted a variety of studies in the area by mapping the mines and child workers. The horrifying results were presented to both the State and Central Government. However, no concrete action was taken to help these child labourers. Impulse NGO Network is one of the first and foremost organizations to have started work to counter the rampant human trafficking in the region.

Impulse NGO Network works towards ensuring equal human rights for all particularly for women and children. The mission is twofold-to provide direct assistance to those in need of care, protection, and empowerment; and to create networks with the community, other NGOs and government bodies to ensure a rights-based approach as well as sustainable livelihoods are available for those who need them. To enable the creation of a just and equitable social order, Impulse NGO Network is committed to the goal of enabling individuals to live a life of dignity. The main focus of IMPULSE was to make all NGOs proactive for combating trafficking and facilitating a chain of robust under one umbrella so that they could function more properly and effectively.

Some religious institutions also have started putting their hands in all the pies meaning to state that if their focus is on the educational sectors, they have started plunging really deep into other departments as well which does not seem beneficial to the society. Therefore, IMPULSE is trying to fix up the ‘Meghalaya Model’ with the NGOs all over so that at least to some extent NGOs across the state can join hands and work as a team. This has been a mission and vision of IMPULSE as an organization to work against trafficking globally.

#### **2.1.14 Case Study 14: Maiti Nepal**

The words ‘*Maiti Ghar*’ in the Nepali language means ‘Mother’s Home’. This is used mostly for married women to refer to her ‘*Maiti*’ or her parental home where she is born, nurtured and raised till she leaves her home after marriage. She then moves to her husband’s house or the ‘*sasural*’ (in-laws) as used in local terms. Maiti Nepal was founded in April 1993 with the aim of

preventing human trafficking by reaching out to the community particularly children and young women by raising awareness and providing counseling, life skills to girls and women who are at risk of being trafficked. It takes care of all those who are exploited, rights violated and rejected by society. Maiti Nepal is an international organization, a nonprofit organization founded by Anuradha Koirala after years of servicing society and fighting against the ills existing in society. It is working in providing protection, rescue, and rehabilitation of survivors of trafficking by promoting their human rights in diversified avenues. They have also taken a greater opportunity to create greater sensitivity and generate broader solidarity among national lawmakers. The vision of the organization is to envisage a society free from sexual and all other forms of exploitation. The organization works towards providing gainful employment opportunities for survivors of human trafficking. It also provides life skills so that children and women are independent and do not fall prey to traffickers. It provides counseling, health counseling, and provides assistance to destitute women, and those who are victims of domestic violence. Though, the financial status of the organization is stable as they generate income from their handicrafts, mushroom cultivation, handloom weaving, tailoring and so on. There are donors and well-wishers worldwide who help the organization function.

**Table 3: Unique factors/causes of women trafficking given by various NGOs**

<b>Non-Governmental Organizations</b>	<b>Unique Factors/Causes stated by the NGOs for Trafficking</b>
<b>MARG</b>	Chor ko Shor, demonstrative effect/easy money, use of advanced technology-(Google earth), missed calls, advertisements for escorts/friendship clubs. Beauty parlours and emotional people are the causes for women trafficking
<b>HSWS (Hill Social Welfare Society)</b>	Shift in occupation, peer circle, Physical appearance and demand for white skin, early marriages, taking food offered by strangers, fairy tale thinking (inspired from movies), desire for latest gadgets
<b>KUK (Kanchanjunga Udhara Kendra)</b>	Globalization
<b>Tiny Hands Siliguri</b>	Lack of awareness, ignorance (especially they apply for jobs without understanding the details of the service asked), family pressure to bring income, intra country migration, deception of lovers, or between husband and wife after marriage
<b>CINI (Child in Need Institute)</b>	Less awareness of child rights
<b>BSA (Bal Suraksha Abhiyan)</b>	A sweet pledge, emotional blackmail
<b>Duars Express mail</b>	No fair wage for the tea garden labourers (no increase in their income in spite of the inflation in the prices of tea)
<b>World Vision India</b>	Social media
<b>CROSSROADS</b>	Politics, poor implementation of legislation-legal laws, sexual abuse

Source: Fieldwork



**Table 4: Common factors leading to women trafficking given by various NGOs**

Non-Governmental Organizations	Common factors/causes leading to women trafficking
MARG, HSWS, KUK, Tiny Hands Siliguri, World Vision, CROSSROADS, Duars Express Mail, Darjeeling Mary Ward Social Centre	Poverty, Illiteracy, Alcohol, Fake marriages, Unemployment, Domestic violence, Broken families, Closing down of tea gardens, Poor socio-economic background, Love affairs, Elopement, Large families, Well organized traffickers with the use of advanced technology, Unsafe migration, Use of mobiles/desire for the latest gadgets.

*Source:* Fieldwork

## 2.2 Some Case Studies of Rescued Victims by NGOs

### 2.2.1 Case Study No 1

Mrs. Yuden Bhutia from HSWS informed about the case of the minor girl from Kalimpong who was illiterate and had been easily lured on the pretext of false marriage. The girl was promised by her boyfriend that he would marry her, so they decided to elope and get married. The boy took her to Kolkata saying that his aunt lives there. They halted there for a night but did not meet the so called ‘Aunty’ and the next day they went to Mumbai, from Mumbai to Pune where the girl was taken to a room and introduced to a lady whom her boyfriend referred to as an aunt, he then left her saying that he would go to the market and buy some things, but when he did not return, the girl became panicky, it is then that the lady told her that she had been already sold off by that boy. The girl was surprised and totally broken, so she started crying loudly, the lady came in and started beating her up with a stick, she was then ordered to wear inappropriate clothing and to serve the clients at night to which she totally opposed and then she was beaten up by other male members and locked in that room for three days and nights and on the fourth day she was again sold off to another (*kothi*) brothel. She did not know as to how much she was sold off to the next *kothi* madam, even here, she refused to work as a prostitute, so yet again she was sold off to a third one, by now she had become senseless due to severe beatings, her health had gone

down and her physical body had been swollen, burnt with cigarettes. She was in mental trauma, and felt that there is no way of escaping from the brothel. She finally had to give in to the work. Here, she met an NGO member from Pune, she opened up to him about her being there, the NGO member promised to pull her out from there but the girl refused as she no longer had trust in anyone, since the one she had trusted the most had betrayed and had sold her off. In brothels matured girls were kept outside whereas young minors were kept inside. Mrs. Bhutia was then contacted and she furthermore went to the girl's house for more inquiry. She met the girl's mother, when Mrs. Bhutia asked the whereabouts of her daughter the mother was unaware of her child, she only knew that she had gone to Rangpo to her friend's place. It had already been 6 months and she had not heard anything from her daughter. Mrs. Bhutia then informed the reality of her child and asked her to go along with her to bring her back, this was the first time Mrs. Bhutia along with the constables and the mother of the girl headed to Pune. They along with Police Force from Pune went to raid the *kothi* at 3 in the morning, but to her surprise, the *kothi* had been informed in advance about the raid that would take place so the minors were nowhere to be seen. They searched everywhere but could not find, finally one Police constable located a big plastic water tank, when they opened they found it had been covered with thermocols and underneath were five minor girls aged 15, 14, and 12 years old had been squeezed into it, and this was in midsummer month of May, when they were taken out, the girls were senseless, due to the heat, they must have been hidden there for quite a long time. The girls were from 24 Parganas, Howrah and Kalimpong.

Mrs. Bhutia spoke to the girls and found out that they were made to drink, smoke and injected drugs so that they would be addicted to it and that they would do anything asked to them. The girls were brought to the shelter home in Kolkata. Regarding shelter home, it was in a very bad condition, overcrowded and the food given to the rescued girls was minimum- just two rotis and little dal (pulses). Elder girls used to beat up the young ones. The reason the girl had to be kept there in Kolkata home is that there are no shelter homes in Darjeeling hills, so after the rescue they requested CWC if they could bring the girl home but could not. Later, she was sent home. Presently this girl is working in HIV Project, she has become much smarter so as to never again trust anyone blindly, though Mrs. Bhutia tried changing her profession but she did not agree and is now a FSW, who handles her work on her own terms and conditions and also looks after her mother.

### **2.2.2 Case Study No 2**

According to Miss Margret from Darjeeling Mary Ward Social Centre, there was one case from Bagdogra (Siliguri) where three minors along with a trafficker and a lady had been moving around NJP station. Their organization was keeping an eye and finally tracked them down, when questioned the lady stated all were her relatives, Miss Margret asked for their identity proofs to which she became very agitated and refused to give. To this, the organization called the police, who came and took all of them in custody while one of the minor (local) started crying and spilled the beans out as to the lady (tribal) had a connection with another Muslim pimp and these girls were going to be handed over to her soon. On more investigation it was found that one was from Doars, the other from Jalpaiguri, and one was local. The girls were returned to their homes and others, that is the lady, her husband, and a young boy, were dealt in the police station but sooner or later they were released. It becomes difficult when there is no willingness seen by the parents to file cases against the traffickers and next is when the victims do not recognize the trafficker. The tribal society is way too simple especially when the organization is looking after the tea gardens the rescued girls are easily accepted by the society and reintegrated.

### **2.3 Data collected through Seminar and Interviews from other Sources**

Mr. Rishikant, Director of Shakti Vahini an organization working to combat Human Trafficking, was the resource person for the National Seminar on Trafficking in Person: Prevention, Control and Rehabilitation organized by the Department of Law, University of North Bengal on 26th and 27th of November 2016. Mr. Rishikant started the session as trafficking initially starts from violence as well a lot being media's influence. After watching Crime Patrol even the traffickers are alerted about their steps and technology.

He stated that there are a lot many reasons leading to women and girls trafficking from the region. The use of mobile phones by our young generation and the missed calls have given way to really big problems, where with a single missed call there has been a direct interaction between the trafficker and the victims. Mr. Rishikant stated that West Bengal has the highest number of trafficking cases, out of the 10 girls rescued 8 girls are from West Bengal. In

Kolkata's Diamond Harbour there are many hotels who give rooms for a few hours before girls were trafficked to Mumbai but now Delhi has become the next Destination (areas like Lajpatnagar, G.B.Road, Delhi and also Ghaziabad). In G.B. Road there are a lot of brothels, in a raid, the *dalal* (Aspak) and the pimp(Saira) were picked up by the police who in the raid found they had 10crores as bank balance and 100 crores were raided. He confessed having sold 5000 Bengali girls, this has also been documented.

From West Bengal girls were trafficked to Jammu Kashmir. He gave the example of a professor's family who had planned out a vacation to Kashmir and within the trip his daughter fell in love with a Kashmiri driver who was escorting them around, when they were back to Kolkata, the very same day the daughter went missing, later Shakti Vahini too was informed so finally they could track her down from Kashmir where she had been lured by the driver acting like a jilted lover, she could in no time be trafficked to some other place had it not been alerted at the spur of the moment. Mr. Rishikant also said that Nepali girls were sold from Rs.5 lakhs to Rs.8 lakhs. Girls from Nepal are trafficked easily through the Nepal-Indo border.

He stated that the girls are forced into prostitution, when they refuse to accept there is a term called '*Breaking Period*' where the victim is tortured physically and violently and also raped by the '*dalals*' unless and until she agrees to their terms and conditions. They are trafficked and made as escorts for business class men, pushed into massage spas and parlours, and also for entertainment purposes. In a spa in Salugara, Siliguri, a raid was conducted where minor girls about 14-15 years were into prostitution serving almost 40 customers a day. As far as North Bengal is concerned there are many dance bars that have come up in Siliguri after the metropolitan cities.

He also updated on the maximum trafficked cases were by having '*Puchhka*' where the water had made the victims unconscious for 24 hours. There were missing reports of 5000 missing girls from 24 North Parganas. He gave an example of a missing class 9 girls from Bagdogra where she was relocated at Uttar Dinajpur where her hand was about to be chopped off for begging.

According to him the police are very slow to deal with the cases as the traffickers have started using flights whereas the police use trains which delay their investigations. Rescue takes place but the '*dalals*' escape, police should be provided with good infrastructure and transportation

facilities so to counter the traffickers. Police should not be quiet, but they need to speak up to their higher authorities regarding the problems and the facilities required in their investigations. The traffickers are very smart. They know about the mobile tracking system, so they have started the use of WhatsApp which is not possible to track in India.

### **Interview with Sister Sangeeta Rai, Kalimpong Hospital**

Sister Sangeeta is the head of HIV/AIDS Department of the Sub Divisional Government Hospital, Kalimpong. She has been associated with the hospital for more than a decade, she has been dealing with HIV infected people as well as counseling and helping them with their health and other problems. According to her, trafficking has been taking place due to various reasons some of the cases which she has dealt with is Molestation in the tender years (10 years old) within the family, where the stepfather, uncle have taken advantage of the girls. Family molestations: when the family background is not very strong, could be a single parent household or either joint family, children are vulnerable to be exploited by the uncles or the other relatives in the household. This has also been a major factor to push these children into illegal activities. Some are sold by their own family members to the traffickers.

Alcoholism is a very bad practice in the hills where out of five homes, three or even four houses have alcoholics. Broken families where even the stepmother has played a major role in selling off the young girl to a pimp. Ignorance where People are simple in the hills, lack awareness as to their rights and also face a social stigma to hush up things instead of speaking it out. People lack education, many youngsters are school and college dropouts. Low income groups where people have to depend on outer sources for employment opportunities. Broken marriages, Peer pressure, Poverty are also some of the reasons for trafficking. Sister Sangeeta informed that many a times it is the NGO's who send the trafficked/rescued victims for examination like conducting tests on STD's HIV/AIDS and so on. The girls are traumatized so she does counseling by being one of them, where they can share everything with her. She has developed a good rapport which is very much required. If she acts professionally then it becomes very difficult to understand their problems and they hesitate to open up so she counsels them in a very friendly manner and provides them with medicines.

She has found out that the trafficked victims rescued have taken up the profession of FSW (Flying Sex Workers), in and around the area. School and college girls are engaged in flying sex work, reason is for easy money in order to have the expensive gadgets (mobiles), clothes, good food etc. Hills do not have brothels so the practice takes place in the hotels, but clients are less so the girls go to Sikkim. In Jorethang they have a much bigger place and they also go to Bangalore and Delhi if they get good money.

Rehabilitation becomes very difficult at times because the trafficked victims have been sex habituated, sex has become an integral part of their life and their body, not only with males but at times they show sexual advances even to the females. Substance intake without the use of drugs, cigarettes cannot survive. It becomes very difficult for reintegration as the society looks down as outcaste and does not accept them neither does their family so these girls stay on rent premises along with their friends in the same profession. It becomes very difficult for them to come to the mainstream. According to her, even if NGOs are providing some training skills to help them, they do not wish to do hard work instead it seems easy for them to indulge in sexual activity and earn for a living.

In the past there were many outreach programmes conducted along with the NGO (Hill Social Welfare Society) in the rural areas of Kalimpong, Peshok and Lopchu but it has been three years that all these projects, like TI- Targeted Intervention, have been closed by the State Government. Closing of the tea gardens have been of serious concern as the traffickers are ready to set their foot in and convince the labourers to give their children who in turn have no option but to hand over their children to them.

In Doars there was a case where the pimp herself came over and married a local tea garden labourer and acted as a bride of the house there was no suspension on her, within a year or so she was successful in trafficking many of the helpless girls from the tea garden areas. Awareness programme is conducted where free FC (Female Condom) is distributed and awareness of safe sex is emphasized, they have their checkups for STDs, vaginal tests to be conducted every six months.

Since 2007 to 2009 there were four trafficked girls who were taken to Mumbai and Pune. From 2010 onwards the girls were rescued before being trafficked before reaching the brothels. In

2016, three school girls two of class X went to meet their Facebook friend in Kolkata they stayed in the hotels but within no time they were suspected by the Police there that they were almost on the verge of being trafficked so they were returned home. Miss Yuden Bhutia along with her team brought them back. Regarding help from Police, they do cooperate, but it is only after being provided with all the updated details of the missing victim who has been trafficked otherwise they do not show any keenness in cooperation.

At times even the NGO's run around just for the credit, just for the fame which they derive through the media and other sources, they rescue a trafficked victim bring her back but what happens next that is uncertain. There is nothing of any security nor do any follow up. So, this topic still remains for a bigger discussion as to what can be done to the trafficked victims who have been rescued.

In addition, Sister Shanta Baraily, a member of the HIV/AIDS Department also stated that any exchange (could be items, objects or commodities) for sex would be termed as a "Sex Worker" likewise even a housewife who is getting some materialistic things in exchange for sex would be a sex worker. All classes of people are involved in it, mostly the lower class and the high class society. Lower class, due to the poor economic conditions and the High-class society they cannot have all their needs fulfilled. Sex worker can be out of choice or compulsion as they have chosen it as their profession but there is a difference as to a trafficked victim in a brothel who is providing all the sexual favours to the client, she has been sold off, without her knowledge or with her knowledge and has been forced into prostitution. Trafficking has been taking place due to the lifestyle where the girls are easily tempted to go to any extent even for fulfilling sexual favours, they become easy targets for trafficking. Some of the young girls say about 14-15 years old have boyfriends and many cases are there where the boys have demanded sex on their birthdays to prove their love for them and in this way many of them have been sexually abused leading them to FSW. It is after the childhood abuses children run away from homes in search of security outside but to their utter dismay, they fall into the hands of the pimps or madams and are forced into brothels and made to serve as escorts to rich business class people or a prostitute in the brothel. Trafficked victims after being rescued have started their profession as FSW.

According to her, NGOs too face a major problem when it comes to rehabilitation because the trafficked victims have been sexually habituated meaning to say that they cannot live without

having sex, as sex has become an integral part of their lives and their body, not only with males but at times they also show sexual advances even to females. Along with this, there is intake of substances could be drugs, cigarettes and other harmful substances, which also becomes very challenging for the organization to reintegrate them back into their families and their societies. According to her if the NGOs are providing some training skills to help them, they do not wish to do hard work instead it seems easy for them to indulge in sexual activity and earn their living. There are some who visit her for medication as they have been infected with HIV/AIDS and STDs, they have been rescued from brothels from the cities but now they have become FSW (Flying Sex Workers) and they also wear the used condoms ring as a bangle around their wrists as an indication for others to see. They have developed emotional bonds with some of their clients whom they refer to as *Babu* and they do not charge any amount to these people. Peer group also pull young girls into FSW.

### **Interview with Father Stanley Sj, Darjeeling**

Father Stanley, a Jesuit Priest who is also an advocate in Darjeeling, has also handled few trafficking cases. According to Father, the main cause of trafficking is poverty, unemployment and mostly tea garden laborers are the targeted ones. Though he does not rescue, many cases from the tea gardens were brought to him where he had referred to MARG. He stated that once the trafficker takes the victim out of the border areas it becomes very difficult to trace them back. The NGOs have to be at their toes and need to have a very strict vigilance especially in the border areas. NGOs have to work together for best outcomes

### **2.4 Conclusion**

Non-Governmental Organizations have been working to prevent women trafficking in Darjeeling hills. Awareness programmes are often conducted in both rural and urban areas. Educational schools and colleges are being focused on so that the youth becomes aware of trafficking. Seminars too have helped in preventing the trafficking of women and girls. The formation of trafficking clubs at schools and colleges have also created awareness amongst the students. Drivers are also sensitized so that they can inform the local NGOs or police when they suspect something unusual.



Ms. Hasina Kharbhih, managing director of IMPULSE, an NGO working against trafficking stated that NGOs have to form a nexus in order to work against trafficking. Since North Bengal is the corridor to the North East, IMPULSE is focusing to make all NGOs proactive in combating trafficking and facilitating a chain of robust umbrellas so that they could function more properly and effectively.

NGOs have started working together and have formed collaboration. Anti-trafficking Network has helped in passing down information in the group by various NGOs and the NGO whichever is located near the place of rescue goes out and helps in rescuing the victims whenever needed. They exchange their views and ideas which also helps them in rendering their services to society. NGOs have been coming together and meetings are being held along with their planning. Without the help of the organizations the victims could not have been rescued and the police also have been assisted by the NGOs during the rescue missions as well as they have been spreading awareness among the police forces. NGOs and Police working together have helped rescue the women and girls.

## **CHAPTER -3**

### **ROLE OF POLICE ADMINISTRATION (POLICE/ GRPF/RPF) TO CONTROL WOMEN TRAFFICKING IN DARJEELING HILLS IN DARJEELING HILLS**

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### **ROLE OF POLICE ADMINISTRATION (POLICE/ GRPF/RPF) TO CONTROL WOMEN TRAFFICKING IN DARJEELING HILLS**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

Law enforcement in India is performed by numerous law enforcement agencies. Like many federal nations, the nature of the Constitution of India mandates law and order as a subject of the state. Therefore, the bulk of the policing lies with the respective states and territories of India. Police administration includes police officers whose role is to manage and supervise police agencies; they have a large amount of control and responsibility for society. People usually look up to the law enforcement department for their security. The department of home of the state government controls the authority of the state police force. Police Department is responsible for maintaining law and order in townships and the rural areas of the state. They work with other agencies in enforcing laws to apprehend criminals suspected of committing crimes and other illegal activities in the society.

Police administrators have numerous roles to play; they are responsible for developing relationships with people in the community in order to curb crime and deviances. They are responsible for maintaining public order and safety, enforcing the law and preventing, detecting and investigating criminal and illegal activities. Human trafficking is one of the illegal activities which is taking place in society. The present research study deals with women trafficking in Darjeeling hills, so through the information gathered from the police personnel, we can understand the roles they play and measures that have been implemented to prevent the trafficking of women in Darjeeling Hills.

Trafficking of women in Darjeeling Hills is the main focus area for the existing study, so the researcher has collected information from the Police Departments/stations located in the Darjeeling and Kalimpong districts namely from the Darjeeling Police Station, Kalimpong Police Station, Kurseong Police Station, Mirik Police Station and Siliguri Police Stations. The Sub-Inspectors, the Circle Inspectors and the Officers-in-Charge were approached for relevant

information and were interviewed. They acted as the primary source of data collection since the data were gathered as first-hand information with face-to-face interviews. The researcher had approached and interviewed the police officials with a set of 16 open-ended questions.

The first question asked by the researcher was to identify the major causes leading to human trafficking. To this enquiry majority of the police officials answered that unemployment, poverty, broken families, illiteracy and ignorance are the major causes. Sri Dawa Sherpa who is the Sub-Inspector (SI) from Kalimpong stated that children from single parent/s are mostly targeted by the traffickers as they are more vulnerable and can be easily convinced, lured and then trafficked. Sri Sujit Lama, the Officer-in-Charge (OC) from Mirik, spoke about the school dropouts who can be easy targets for traffickers by promising them to give jobs. Other causes as pointed out were too many members in the household also acting as breeding grounds for trafficking as hardly attention is given to the children in such big families. The peer pressure encourages children to move out to other new places for fun. The simplicity and innocence of the rural people is another cause of trafficking. Three minor girls of Anand Tea Estate of Darjeeling belonging to broken families had run away from their homes situated in rural areas to the town area out of curiosity. Luckily they were recovered within Darjeeling town stated by Sri Rohita Lama, sub-inspector of Darjeeling police station. Lack of awareness, fake marriages, habituated beliefs, alcoholism, social networking sites, misuse of mobile phones; the desire to live a luxurious lifestyle, often lead to undesirable traits like cheating and unsafe migration from slum areas. The closing down of tea gardens has been a major cause of human trafficking in these parts.

The second question put forward by the researcher to the police officials was on the type of cases getting registered and handled. To this, the majority of the officers replied that they are the law enforcers, abiding with the legal processes and steps. They have to work hand in hand with the NGOs in order to rescue victims of trafficking. According to law when anyone below 18 years of age, a male or a female goes missing, it is registered as a kidnapping case under 366A that states as procurement of a minor girl, whoever by any means whatsoever induces any minor girl under the age of 18 years to go from any place or to do any act with the intent that such girl might be, or knowingly that is likely that she will be forced or seduced to illicit intercourse with another person shall be punishable with imprisonment which may extend to ten years, and shall also be

liable to fine along with ITPA (Immoral Trafficking Prevention Act). Before, this was not taken seriously. In case a missing complaint was filed it had to be kept under observance for 48 hours and then the Police would act, but nowadays, immediate action is taken once the missing report is filed. Be it major or minor, both cases are taken without any delay, it is then sent to all the police stations along with descriptions and proper information so in case of recovery the main police station is informed. Sometimes, missing case for major is kept waiting for at least 24 hours because it has happened that the cases were of elopement. In case if a girl has been taken under the pretext of false marriage, an offence under Section 366 under the Indian Penal Code will be implemented. When a missing case is filed first it starts with 370 under the IPC, followed by 363 and 366 under the IPC. When minors go missing the CWC (**Child Welfare Committee**) has to be alerted within 24 hours and the Child Welfare Officer has to be updated about the case. Likewise, Anti Trafficking Cell has been set up in each district as well.

The third question asked to the police officials was to specify the areas with acute social problems. To this the majority replied that human trafficking especially women trafficking has been an acute social problem in North Bengal and as Siliguri is the junction or a gateway for the Northeastern states; the Darjeeling Hills are very much affected by this serious problem. The rural areas are the targeted areas. Sub-Inspector Rohita Lama of Darjeeling Police Station stated that people of Badamtam Tea Garden area of Darjeeling who are from BPL backgrounds have been easy targets as it is easy to lure the simple and innocent people from the villages where most of them are poor.

The fourth question asked was on the actions that have been taken by the Police against the traffickers. To this, the officials replied that strict legal action is taken as according to the law it ensures the punishment to the culprit. In case of missing, it starts with 370 under the IPC followed by 363 and 366. Section 370 is applied on a trafficker.

The fifth question asked was on the appropriate number of victims trafficked every year. To this, the answers were that the exact number in this case cannot be determined. As reported by SI Sujit Lama, the yearly missing cases are near about 15 out of which three to four cases are generally related with minors. Missing cases do not get reported so they cannot tell that they were trafficked and the information has to be kept confidential also. SI Dawa Sherpa of

Kalimpong PS informed that a few recovered cases were of elopement which was handed over to the Bal Suraksha NGO of Kalimpong.

The sixth question was on how a trafficker gains access to the victims. The answers provided by them were that traffickers first understand the family background and try to developing trust with the family. Knowing that their financial condition is not stable, the traffickers act as well-wishers by providing monetary assistance, even buying mobiles for the young girls, putting recharge vouchers for them and then convincing them as well as their parents to build a strong faith in those individuals and then those girls are trafficked. In some cases traffickers are very much known to the family - they can either be a relative, a family friend, a neighbour or sometimes people who lure by offering good jobs in the cities. The accessing of social networking sites helps them in learning about the victims. SI Rohita Lama stated that lady traffickers can easily build trust within the family; the mentality is such that a woman easily relies on another woman, more than a man and even allows the children to accompany her. In the hills, there are hardly any queries made once the children have left their homes neither any type of contact is established by the parents, unlike other communities where they have a lot of questioning and when things are not clear, parents too accompany their children.

The seventh question put forward to them was on whether the police influenced by the political leaders/parties. To this question majority of them answered that there was no political pressure though few of them did mention that there was pressure from the political parties so they have to act according to the demands made by the political parties while some stated that in spite of the outward pressure they do what has to be done.

The eighth question was on whether it has happened in any case that the officer in charge has been transferred. To this all the officials answered that that such case has not happened.

The ninth question put forward was on how willing the police are to take up cases coming from the NGOs. To this, all replied they act accordingly to the cases put up by the NGOs and they are willing to help and cooperate with them.

The tenth question put forward was on whether there is any pressure coming from the higher authorities to give up on a case, to this, all officials answered that there was no such pressure so far.

The eleventh question presented was on how they get information about the whereabouts of the trafficked victims. To this majority of them answered that NGOs provide them with the required information, sometimes they get information from parents, Samaj (committees) or police sources.

The twelfth question on the type of difficulty they face while rescuing victims and to this question some stated that occasionally reported cases are false alarms which consume their time. In another case, if a victim is located, police have to bear all the expenses. Some issues like non-cooperation from the public at times, some police at the grass-root tend to take bribes which bring disgrace to the profession and building trust with the exploited and abused becomes challenging. The victims change their statements once brought to the police station which makes the situation for them difficult.

The thirteenth question raised was on whether there is any specific amount of fund allotted for combating human trafficking. To this all answered that they do not get separate funds for this mission.

The fourteenth question was on whether they organized outreach programmes and if so then how often. To this everyone answered that they organize outreach programmes, sometimes in association with NGOs. Dawa Sherpa, SI of Kalimpong PS stated that they organize once in three or four months or sometimes twice or thrice in a year. Rohita Lama, SI of Darjeeling PS also stated that it is held twice or thrice a year usually in the rural areas, tea gardens etc.

The fifteenth question was on the type of link they develop with city police as well as NGOs. To this everyone stated that they have developed a good relationship and there was an exchange of help among them whenever needed.

The sixteenth question asked was on the region which has the highest rate of victims trafficked. To this, some of them answered Darjeeling and Kalimpong districts (North Bengal), others stated West Bengal, North-East region and Nepal. Police officials are alerted on a missing case either

from their parents, police sources, mobile networks, NGOs and other complainants. Presently, West Bengal Police Departments have started taking initiatives in the Darjeeling Hills to curb human trafficking/women trafficking but not much has been done so far.

### **3.1.1 Information Collected from Dawa Sherpa, Sub-Inspector, Kalimpong Police Station**

Dawa Sherpa, Sub Inspector at Kalimpong Police Station stated that there are a lot of factors leading to human trafficking/women trafficking. Traffickers mainly target children of single parents as they do not have a stable economic background and can be easily convinced and lured. The use of mobile phones, nowadays also attract young children to fall prey and traffickers try providing monetary assistance, even buying mobile phones or putting recharge vouchers for young girls and convincing them as well as their parents to send them away for better job opportunities. Parents too build a strong faith in these individuals and then they easily trust their children with the traffickers.

He stated that police take the missing report filed very seriously be it of a major or a minor, which did not happen before, a proper investigation is carried out, and the missing details are forwarded to the other police stations as well. The NGOs have been informing the Police in this respect. Hill Social Welfare Society and Bal Suraksha Abhiyan are the NGOs from Kalimpong which inform missing cases of both majors and minors.

Most targeted areas are the rural areas where people are simple, and it becomes easy to convince the village people. The appropriate number of trafficked victims is difficult to determine as in many minor cases it was due to love affairs. Some parents also take back their cases as it involves court hearings once the statement is recorded, so cases get dissolved and cannot be termed under trafficking. In the villages, people can be easily lured as they quickly build trust in anyone. Traffickers take advantage of fitting in their families as one of their members and winning over their trust, some also provide the monetary assistance which allows them to blindly give their daughters to the traffickers.

Some difficulties which police face during their operations are: political influences do exist but when it comes to cases like rape, trafficking then it will not be given heed. The Police will act according to what has to be done without outward pressure. During the time of rescue, the NGOs of the other places also have to help the police or else it becomes very difficult to operate. There



is no fund given to the Police Force in the case of Human Trafficking but the NGOs working and rescuing gets the fund as to their expenses. Outreach programmes are held along with the NGOs, it is held once in three or four months. The recent one was in Munsong. The relationship between the police and the NGOs is very good as they cooperate and provide help where necessary.

In 2014, 14-18 girls were missing, major girls who were missing were recovered as cases of elopement and a few minor cases were there which were handed over to Bal Suraksha, thereafter regular counseling helped them reintegrate with their families.

### **3.1.2 Information given by Shiksha Singh Sarki, SI of Pradhannagar PS, Siliguri**

Shiksha Singh Sarki finds out the causes leading to trafficking of women and girls are the closing down of tea gardens, unsafe migration, social networking sites, single parents, family pressure, peer pressure etc. As stated by her, when missing cases are reported in the police station, if it is a case of a missing minor, the case is immediately registered but when it is a major, the police waits for at least 24 hours because majors are those whose ages are 18 years and above. Many a time the missing cases of majors reported were of elopement. So the Police does not act promptly for majors. There were missing cases which did not get registered as parents from the tea gardens, out of their own willingness had sent their children to bigger towns and cities for work so as a result they could not even file a complaint against the person who had lured them out from their villages. She also specified that since Siliguri is the interception point, cases from Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Kurseong, Mirik, Doars, Jalpaiguri are reported. She cited a case from Wasabari Tea Garden, located in Mal Tehsil of Jalpaiguri district in West Bengal, the girls were brought from the tea garden and were on the verge of being trafficked, but the trafficker was arrested at Siliguri Junction. According to her, traffickers use agents most of the time, agents like uncles, aunties from the same village who can easily be trusted by the victims so traffickers do not reveal their actual self. Nowadays with the use of mobiles, social networking sites like-Facebook, it is the known associates or agents who acts according to the will of the traffickers. When NGOs bring in cases, the police are very helpful and cooperative.

At times, there are political pressures so the police have to act in accordance to the demands made by the political parties. As for them, they have not busted any bigger rackets so that pressure has not come. Social media too puts pressure on the administration.

Outreach programmes are a must especially in the rural areas, tea gardens etc. Police have been organizing awareness programmes once in a while. They organized an awareness programme in collaboration with MARG NGO at Salbari, Siliguri. In Nepali Paramata School, Salbari another programme was organized by the Police team on Cyber Crime and on technology trend awareness. CINI a shelter home too organize seminars in the tea garden areas to create awareness on trafficking.

There are a lot of difficulties faced by the Police- firstly there is no cooperation from the public while collecting information from them. The public demands quick action which becomes difficult for the police as they lack many facilities so to act promptly like when police are called in to check on a murder case, trafficking case and an accident case at the same time, the police have to decide as to which case is more serious because vehicles provided to them are only two. When they get to the trafficking case after the crime and accident case, public starts scolding as to why they have reached so late. Though Government gives requisition, but it takes a very long time to reach. The Police do not have proper equipment which could be helpful for investigation. These are the difficulties faced by the police. The government does not give any extra fund to trafficking.

Shiksha Singh Sarki has dealt with three cases related to trafficking, apart from the missing ones from 2015-2017. The girls were from schedule tribe category one minor was of 13years, and two majors were of 18 and 20 years old from Wasabari tea estate, Jalpaiguri district, both of them had been lured to go out for work. According to her, age groups from 13-30 years are trafficked more. NGOs like Kanchanjunga Udhar Kendra, Tiny Hands and CINI provides a lot of information to the police. She says that the acceptance of the victims in society is very difficult. Even though the police counsels them sometimes the police personnel are scolded back by the victims as they do not want to be rescued, since they have already been adjusted to the environment there. North Bengal has a very high rate of trafficking as stated by her.

### **3.1.3 Information given by Rohita Lama, SI of Darjeeling PS**

Rohita Lama mentioned that the causes of women trafficking are mostly due to broken families, big families, unemployment, illiteracy, poverty, simplicity, ignorance of the rural people and peer pressure. Rural areas are more prone to trafficking as most of the people live below poverty

level, so they become easy targets for the traffickers. Their day-to-day activities are observed and recorded by the traffickers. In Darjeeling, Badamtam tea garden, people from BPL backgrounds too have been targeted. Missing cases from both rich and poor classes have been reported. Though, missing cases reported from the rich classes were mostly of elopement. She narrated a case from Anand tea estate in Darjeeling where three minor girls from broken families had run away from their homes out of curiosity but luckily, they were recovered from Darjeeling before being trafficked.

According to her, as soon as a missing complaint is filed for a minor it is tagged along with kidnapping case. Though, most of the cases registered have been of rape and molestation but not of trafficking. Missing cases cannot be determined under trafficking. Traffickers study and understand the family background first and then try developing trust with the family members. Sometimes the traffickers could be the relatives, friends, neighbours etc. In the villages, a woman easily trusts a woman and even allows their children to accompany them. Lady traffickers are easily trusted by the innocent victims as they are very good at convincing the parents. So, once they build the trust, parents do not even question as to where they would be heading to or who all would be going or when they would be returning. Parents hardly question the traffickers, whereas in other communities there is a lot of questioning and in case things are unclear, parents too accompany them. Women as much as they are victims are also facilitators of this human trade. Women exploit other women and young girls in servitude. In many places, women who are aged prostitutes lure and recruit the younger generation of trafficked victims. Women often train the trafficked victims to run the brothels along with them, when they start relying on them. According to her, there has been no political pressure in the work and police take a lot of initiative to provide help to the NGOs as well as the general public. Information is shared from police sources, parents, NGOs and complainants. They hold outreach programmes twice or thrice in a year in the rural areas, a recent one was held in Chowrasta and also in Hayden Hall (Darjeeling).

Police face a lot of difficulties, sometimes, the case brought in by the NGOs are false cases in the sense they tell the police that it is a trafficking case but later the police find out that it is not a trafficking case. An NGO had brought in a case of a missing girl, studying in class XII, her father was blamed but later the truth was that the girl was in the wrong company and was taking

substances (drugs) and had gone somewhere with her friends. There was a false alarm raised by the organization, so confirmation is very much needed to differentiate if a case is a missing case or a trafficked case. Police also has to bear all the expenditures. For example, if a missing girl has been located, a team is sent for her rescue, the head police have to meet all the expenses of the constables as well as the rescued girl, so it becomes very difficult for the police.

Transport Allowances are given but other expenses are not given. Even at times, parents of the victims accompany the police, if they are from poor backgrounds the police have to bear their expenses as well. Going to a far-off place is not very easy as accommodation is another problem, police quarters are not available so hotels have to be arranged that becomes an extra added expenditure.

No fund is given to the police force in the case of human trafficking/women trafficking. West Bengal accounts for a high rate of trafficking cases as compared to other states. Trafficking cases has not been registered in Darjeeling. 10-15 cases have been reported as missing cases but not of trafficking.

#### **3.1.4 Information given by Sujit Lama, Officer-in-Charge of Mirik PS**

Sujit Lama said that the factors for human trafficking are unemployment, fashion, fraud, cheating, desire to live a luxurious lifestyle etc. Regarding a missing case, it gets registered as soon as the complaint is filed. According to him, rural areas are more targeted than the urban areas. Traffickers find easy access through social networking sites like Facebook and WhatsApp; it becomes easy access for them to understand the victims. School dropouts can be easily lured by the traffickers who promise them good jobs in the bigger cities.

Information is shared from police sources, parents, mobile networks and NGOs. Once information is shared, missing cases are registered. There has been no political pressure so far in work. Police have not faced any type of difficulty for human trafficking/women trafficking.

Outreach programmes are held once or twice a year in rural areas, schools, hotels and also with local taxi drivers. Most of the targeted areas are Darjeeling, Gorubathan and Jaldhaka of Kalimpong District.

According to Sujit Lama, the yearly missing cases were 15, where three to four were minors. The age vulnerability for trafficking ranges from 14- 25 years, the major reason being poor economic condition. Before being posted in Mirik, Mr. Sujit Lama was in Ghoom Jorebunglow police station where he had rescued two major girls. One was from Ghoom, 23 years old, she had been rescued from Bangalore where she had been taken to work in a beauty parlour but there she was exploited. The other was a 24years old, who was rescued from Dubai with the help of the Indian embassy there. These were the two cases handled by him in 2012.

### **3.1.5 Information given by Suraj Thapa, SI of Kurseong Police Station**

According to Suraj Thapa, the factors for women trafficking are poverty, illiteracy, overexposure to electronic media, movies depicting modern lifestyles and serial etc. Victims are lured by the glamorous city life so the traffickers tempt them by promising good jobs in the cities. He too stated that rural areas and tea gardens are more targeted compared to other areas. He stated that if there is a case of a missing minor, the case gets registered immediately but if it is a major then a concrete allegation is required for the case to be lodged and then only the case can start. Without concrete evidence, it becomes difficult to register a missing case for a major as sometimes it might be a case of elopement.

According to him, traffickers gain easy access to the victims as they tempt them with good job opportunities. Police derive information from the NGOs. So far, there has been no political pressure on the work. Police are willing to work along with the NGOs as well as the public. There is no fund given to the police force in the case of women trafficking.

Outreach programmes are held along with the NGOs. According to him the exact figure of trafficking cases cannot be determined and even the information has to be kept confidential. North Eastern regions and Nepal have more cases of trafficking.

### **3.1.6 Information given by Sarita Pariyar, Circle Inspector, Siliguri Police Station**

Sarita Pariyar informed that fake marriages, habituated beliefs, consumption of excess liquor and ignorance have led to human trafficking/women trafficking. Though the Government has passed laws like the ITPA, Bonded Labour Act, Child Marriage Act, Child Labour Act, Organ Transplantation Act and also has set Anti Human Trafficking Cell in each district, the menace

continues unabated. According to the 370 IPC (A), the section is amended to include cases concerning kidnapping, rape, and trafficking. Approximately 60 cases so far were reported where it included the majors and the minors. There is the fast-track court ACJM, Session court which checks on the heinous crime of trafficking. Within 90 days, the trial period has to start, firstly, the camera trial, meaning the statements are recorded with the help of camera recording. At times, lawyers come over for negotiation of the trafficker which is denied and sometimes the convict changes the statement. Once the case is registered police takes the matter seriously be it a minor or a major. Many communities/Samajs like Rai Samaj, Limbu Samaj etc come forward and report missing cases along with the NGOs.

According to her, there was a case from the tea garden in Doars where a love affair led to elopement and which was followed by trafficking. When minors are reported missing, the CWC (Child Welfare Committee) is informed within 24 hours, and the Child Welfare Officers are updated on the missing case. There are a lot of outreach programmes taking place, especially in the tea gardens, along with speeches and power point presentations. Schools and colleges are also being exposed to the issues related to trafficking. One such awareness campaign was held in Venus more along with NGOs. There are ladies police personnel dressed in plain clothes, they have been trained (in Kolkata) to check on these issues as well.

### **3.2 Difficulties faced by the Police**

Firstly, during the time of rescue from the destination place, that is other towns and cities to which the victims have been taken from the place of origin that is their actual hometown, assistance from the NGOs of those areas are equally needed. If the same is not there then it proves to be very difficult.

Secondly, according to the police, there is not much cooperation seen from the public when it comes to giving out information, could be out of fear and also avoiding the long ongoing court cases where the person has to be present every time when called upon.

Thirdly, the public demands quick action from the Police.

Fourthly, Police do not have proper and enough equipment which could be helpful for investigation.

Fifthly, sometimes cases are brought in by the NGOs which become false cases, meaning they inform the Police that it is a case of trafficking but which is not so in reality. Hence, confirmation is very much needed to differentiate a missing case and a trafficked case.

Sixthly, the Police have to bear all the expenditures as funds are not given T.A. (Travel Allowance) is given but other expenses are not given. At times, the parents of the victims accompany the police. If they are from a poor background, the police have to bear their expenses as well. Going to a far-off place is not very easy especially with accommodation issues. Police quarters are not available and staying in a hotel becomes expensive.

Seventhly, Police face major problems when at times lawyers come over for the negotiation of the trafficker, where even the victims change their statement. Once registered the Police takes the matter very seriously but sometimes it becomes very difficult especially when the victims change their statement.

Eighthly, girls in the brothels have already been abused mentally, physically and they have no trust in anyone. It becomes very difficult for the Police to rescue them from the brothels into which they have been sold. Police have also noted that as soon as a girl is rescued, she has to be separated immediately so that she is not influenced again.

In case there is any political pressure it becomes difficult for the police to act and cases will be left pending.

After the rescue, the victim has to be separated immediately but since police have only one car it becomes difficult and within that short span of time the statement of the victim gets changed. The victims are threatened by the traffickers as both the trafficker and the victim are brought in the same car.

### **3.3 Police Report**

In 2014, 14-18 girls were missing, major girls who were missing were recovered as cases of elopement and a few minor cases were handed over to Bal Suraksha who after counseling helped them reintegrate with their families as was reported by SI Dawa Sherpa, from Kalimpong Police Station.

Sarita Pariyar, Circle Inspector of Siliguri Police Station informed that many girls from Nepal were rescued from Pune who had been trafficked and sold in the red light areas. Most cases were of minors below 18 years of age.

SI of Darjeeling Police Station, Rohita Lama stated that missing cases have been registered along with rape and molestation but trafficking as such has not been registered.

According to Sujit Lama from Mirik, the exact figure of trafficking cannot be determined but the missing cases reported are 15 and 3-4 case were related with minors but cannot say that they were trafficked. Usually, the vulnerable age for trafficking is from 14-25 years, before being posted in Mirik he was in Ghoom Jorebunglow Police Station where he had rescued two major girls, one was from Ghoom aged 23 years, who was rescued from Bengaluru, the other girl was also a major 24 years old who was rescued from Dubai with the help of the Indian Embassy there. These were two cases handled by him in 2012.

Sub Inspector, Suraj Thapa from Kurseong Police Station stated that the exact number cannot be determined and the information has to be kept confidential also.

According to SI, Shiksha Singh Sarki, Pradhannagar Police station, Siliguri has dealt with three cases related to trafficking, apart from the missing ones from 2015- till March 2017, the girls were of schedule tribe category from Wasabari. According to her, the age group from 13-30 years are trafficked more.



**Table 1: Cases Rescued by Police from Trafficking (2011-2017)**

Year	Name of the Police	Cases rescued from/Ps	Major/Minor	Convicted	Reintegrated or Not
2011	Sarita Pariyar, Inspector of Police, Thana More, Siliguri.	05 (Pune) from Siliguri PS, Thana More	Minor	No	Since girls were rescued from Nepal, they were sent back home.
2012	Sujit Lama, OC Mirik PS	02 (1 from Bengaluru & 1 from Dubai) Jorebunglow Ghoom PS	Major	No	Yes (Both the girls were from Darjeeling with the help of Indian Embassy, the girl from Dubai was rescued and reintegrated.
2013				No	
2014	Dawa Sherpa, SP of Kalimpong PS	02 From Haryana Kalimpong PS	Minor	No	Rescued with the help of Bal Suraksha Abhiyan, NGO in Kalimpong district.
2015	Shiksha Singh Sarki, SI, Siliguri, Pradhannagar PS	03 From Siliguri Siliguri, Pradhan Nagar PS	1 Minor, 2 Major	No	Girls were from Wasabari Tea Estate, with the help of NGOs CINI And KUK
2016				No	
2017				No	

*Source: Fieldwork.*

Rohita Lama (SI of Darjeeling PS) stated that in 2016 a missing case was brought by an NGO. The missing girl was a class XII student, but the police found out that it was a false alarm raised by the organization.

The Police forces have been working together with the NGOs as well as the railway forces, which are classified under two categories: Railway Protection Force (RPF) and the Government Railway Police Force (GRP) The Railway Protection Force (RPF) and the Government Railway Police (GRP) have different functions. The RPF is a security force directly under the union government's Ministry of Railways and its primary responsibility is to safeguard and protect railway property including rolling stock, and station or yard premises from damage or sabotage,

and to investigate incidents of vandalism, theft etc. of Indian Railways assets and property entrusted to it.

### **3.4 Information obtained from Railway Protection Force**

Railway Protection Force (RPF) and the Government Railway Police (GRPF) are the forces that do monitoring at different railway stations and check posts. Along with the city police, they equally play a vital role in combating trafficking. There are some very easy transit points in the cross border areas where there is hardly any questioning about people entering or exiting from one nation to the other like from Nepal into India or from India to Bangladesh or even from Bhutan to India. This automatically increases the risk of women and girls trafficking.

Some interviews were conducted with the Police Personnel of Railway Stations of Ghoom-Darjeeling Police Station, Police Station of Siliguri Railway Junction and also the Police Station of New Jalpaiguri Railway Station. According to the Railway Police Personnel's, the main causes of human trafficking/women trafficking are migration, where some are taken as maids and baby sitters and often abused, exploited and trafficked. Unemployment, illiteracy, ignorance, poverty, fake marriages, big families, closing of tea gardens all contribute towards the menace.

In case they come to know about some suspected traffickers and victims, they interrogate and they stop them from travelling. NGOs are called and in case if the trafficker is caught, section 359,373,370,370 (A) will be implemented on the trafficker. Railway ASI, Kishore Kumar Sarkar, from Darjeeling, Inspector Ranjan Kumar Shil from Siliguri Junction, ASI Dhruv Lama from Siliguri Junction, ASI Dibyendu Chakraborty (GRP) from New Jalpaiguri Station and Inspector Biplab Majumder(RPF) from New Jalpaiguri were interviewed.

#### **3.4.1 ASI, Kishore Kumar Sarkar, Darjeeling Railway Police Force (RPF)**

According to ASI, Kishore Kumar, from Darjeeling Railway Station, human trafficking/women trafficking is caused due to some factors like poverty, illiteracy, fake marriages and backwardness. There has been no case of trafficking in connection with the toy train, Darjeeling's heritage but they make sure that the passenger's safety is their main priority, so even the rail staffs accompanies them especially when there are only ladies in the train for security reasons. If in case they know about a trafficker they will definitely intercept and inform

their higher authorities in Katihar North Front Division where the case gets registered and then the Police and NGOs too will be informed. CINI an NGO had come from Siliguri to Darjeeling for an awareness programme, so upon request RPF gave full co-operation to organize the programme.

In case of any problem, they are ready to approach the city police as well and other NGOs working for the cause. He stated that West Bengal has the highest number of trafficking cases. Trafficking needs to be uprooted as it disturbs the equilibrium of the society.

### **3.4.2 Inspector Biplab Majumder, New Jalpaiguri Railway Station (RPF)**

According to RPF Inspector, Biplab Majumder, the RPF have very limited powers in comparison to the GRP. In case they suspect a case of trafficking they have to inform GRP, as they cannot take action by themselves. They can just observe and wait for the arrival of GRP personnel. RPF does not have any record and neither any missing reports as the major action and activity is played by the GRP. He stated that the tribal girls are mostly targeted due to the closure of many tea gardens. The age group 16-18 years is the most vulnerable. He also stated that Bodo girls and women are beautiful as well as have great physiques, they are either taken as domestic maids or exploited or sometimes even become victims of fake marriages. CONCERN is another NGO that is working against women trafficking.

According to the Railway Force, they get information from the NGOs sometimes, and even from the public. To make the people aware stickers are pasted in different train compartments about human trafficking and even the Police helpline numbers are displayed there. So in case, the passengers feel something unusual they immediately call and report. They have a good relationship with the city police, so in case of any help needed they immediately contact them.

### **3.5 Information obtained from Government Railway Police Force (GRPF)**

The GRP on the other hand is a police organization under the control of the state government in each state and its primary mission is the maintenance of law and order and ensuring passengers 'safety on board trains and on IR property. Thus, the GRP concerns itself with robberies or other criminal incidents on board trains or on railway premises, missing persons, injuries or deaths in connection with the railways and has police powers in each state to arrest persons, register

criminal cases etc. Such police powers for enforcing local law and order are constitutionally not available to any body acting under the control of the union government.

### **3.5 Information obtained from Government Railway Force**

#### **3.5.1 Inspector Ranjan Kumar Shil, Siliguri Junction (GRPF)**

According to him the main factors for trafficking are poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, closure of tea gardens etc. In case they suspect any person as a trafficker, they interrogate and stop them. The trafficker will be charged with section 359,373,370,370(A) under the IPC Act. Information is derived from various sources where people do come forward and report. Stickers on human trafficking awareness and police helpline numbers are pasted in different train compartments. In case passengers suspect something unusual they call and report. If needed, they seek the assistance of the city police. So far there have been no trafficking cases because in case suspicion arises, interrogation is carried out and through the NGOs they are handed over to their parents and family members before being trafficked like minors are taken by CWC (Child Welfare Committee). There are shelter homes in and around Siliguri like Korak Home in Jalpaiguri, Anandabhawan in Berhampore (Murshidabad district) and Shubhalaya in Balurghat (Dakhin Dinajpur) where the girls are kept, counseled and later rehabilitated. There have been a lot of missing cases where girls have been rescued by the NGOs. West Bengal is the state having high rate of trafficked victims.

#### **3.5.2 ASI, Dhruv Lama, Siliguri Junction (GRPF)**

According to ASI Dhruv Lama the causes of trafficking are migration, unemployment, poor background, poverty etc. If a trafficker is suspected, he is immediately interrogated and if minors are present then Childline is called. In case of major, it is reported to the NGOs who call in the parents and hand over the ward. Sections 370A, 372, 373 under IPC are implemented on the trafficker. Stickers pasted on the train compartments have been very helpful as people can call in case of any suspected behaviour of individuals around them or any disturbing problem arising in the compartments.

According to him, Siliguri district actually for railways extend from Malda till Coochbehar so the exact figure cannot be determined but sometimes four to five cases occur and sometimes it is nil, but these cases too cannot be stated as trafficking, like some suspected to be trafficked were interrogated and handed over to their parents and mostly in case of minors the CWC (Child Welfare Committee) is contacted. If the victims are majors then NGOs contact the parents and hand them over.

There has been good cooperation so far from the city police as well as from the NGOs. Sometimes, 4-5 cases come but are rescued at the earliest mostly in the case of minors. From West Bengal it is mostly the tribal community and also the Muslim community who are easily targeted. The vulnerable age groups are from 10-18 years.

### **3.5.3 ASI, Dibyendu Chakraborty, New Jalpaiguri Railway Station (GRPF)**

He stated that the factors of human trafficking/women trafficking are illegal gains, where people get entangled in fraud, cheating for easy and quick money. In case of any suspicion related to trafficking of an individual or group, they are interrogated. Information can come from various sources like common people, sometimes photos are circulated, through WhatsApp (social media) and even NGOs inform the police. So far, city police have not informed such matters, but if the need arises where their assistance is required, then definitely help will be taken from them.

Many a times, even when there is a trafficker, people fail to give their verdict for the fear of court cases which is a prolonged ordeal. They dismiss it then and there, so hardly any case has come up regarding trafficking. Sometimes, those rescued cases are sent to shelter homes for safe custody till the arrival of their parents and then they are handed over. Most of the cases seen are from Bihar and Nepal via Siliguri and Jalpaiguri. In case minors are found they are handed to the CWC (Child Welfare Committee). Legal procedures take a long time, so people fail or ignore to register or to lodge a complaint against the trafficker.

According to Dibyendu Chakraborty, there is no case of registration in regard to trafficking, as in case of any suspicion, they interrogate and try finding out the cause of their travel. They try to find out destination place as well as their place of origin if minor their families are informed so they come and take their wards. Sometimes, when there is no response shown from the families the NGOs and CWC take the children for counselling. In most cases, parents refuse to lodge a

complaint, they do not want to be involved in long delaying court cases, so in no time the case is dismissed. Minors are kept in CINI shelter homes. In case if major is suspected to be trafficked, there is interrogation done but in case if they say that it is on their own will that they are travelling then GRP cannot do anything. According to him, the most targeted state is Bihar, and the targeted nation is Nepal.

There were no case reports from the Railway Protection Force or from the Governmental Railway Police Force. According to the interviews it was stated that if they sense trafficking of women and girls from these railway stations both the Police Protection Forces would interrogate and rescue them along with the NGOs and hand them either to their parents or to the shelter homes located in Siliguri and Jalpaiguri.

#### Data collected from DCRB (District Crime Record Bureau) Darjeeling

**Table 2. Statistical Record of Missing Women and Girls**

	Police Station	Female Adult (Above 18 Years)		Female Minor (Below 18 Years)		Total			
		Missing	Recovery	Missing	Recovery	Missing	%	Recovery	%
Darjeeling	Sadar P.S.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Pulbazar P.S.	9	4	3	2	12	4%	6	5%
	Rangli Rangliot P.S.	11	13	2	0	13	4%	13	10%
	Lodhoma P.S.	5	5	0	0	5	1%	5	4%
	Mirik P.S.	27	10	0	0	27	8%	10	7%
	Sukhia Pokhari P.S.	16	2	3	2	19	6%	4	3%
	Kurseong P.S.	34	10	10	7	44	13%	17	13%
	Jorebunglow P.S.	35	26	10	9	45	14%	35	27%
	Naxalbari P.S.	17	5	1	0	18	5%	5	4%
	Kharibari P.S.	34	4	0	0	34	10%	4	3%
	Phansi Dewa P.S.	21	6	8	6	29	9%	12	9%
Kail	Kalimpong P.S.	63	13	6	1	69	21%	14	11%
	Gorubathan P.S.	10	5	2	0	12	4%	5	4%
	Jaldhaka P.S.	1	0	2	0	3	1%	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>283</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>100%</b>

(Source: District Crime Record Bureau 2016)

The table shows that the highest percentage of missing cases from Darjeeling District, (Both major and minors) were reported from Jorebunglow Police Station with a percentage of 13.6% followed by Kurseong Police station 13.3% and Kharibari Police Station with 10.3%. The highest recovery of cases reported were seen from Jorebunglow with 26.9%, Kurseong 13.0% and Rangli-Rangliot 10.0%.

The highest missing cases (both major and minor) reported from Kalimpong District was from Kalimpong Police station 21%, followed by Gorubathan Police station 3.6% and Jaldhaka Police station with 3%. The recovery record shows that the highest recovery cases were recovered from Kalimpong P.S. with 10.7% followed by Gorubathan Police station with 3.8%.

**Data collected from DCRB (District Crime Record Bureau) Darjeeling**

**Table 3. Statistical Record of Missing Women and Girls.**

	Police Station	Female Adult (Above 18 Years)		Female Minor (Below 18 Years)		Total			
		Missing	Recovery	Missing	Recovery	Missing	%	Recovery	%
Darjeeling District	Sadar P.S.	43	0	7	0	50	19%	0	0
	Pulbazar P.S.	20	6	2	0	22	9%	6	9%
	Rangli Rangliot P.S.	9	7	0	0	9	3.5%	7	10.2%
	Sukhia Pokhari P.S.	6	5	1	0	7	3%	5	7.3%
	Lodhoma P.S.	6	2	0	0	6	2%	2	3%
	Jorebunglow P.S.	23	15	0	0	23	9%	15	22%
	Kurseong P.S.	28	8	5	3	33	13%	11	16.1%
	Mirik P.S.	14	4	1	1	15	6%	5	7.3%
	Kharibari P.S.	32	5	1	0	33	13%	5	7.3%
	Naxalbari P.S.	27	6	1	0	28	11%	6	9%
	Phansi Dewa P.S.	18	3	1	0	19	7%	3	4.4%
Kalimpong	Kalimpong P.S.	8	1	0	0	8	3%	1	1.4%
	Gorubathan P.S.	4	2	0	0	4	1.5%	2	3%
	Jaldhaka P.S.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: District Crime Record Bureau (2017)

The table shows that the highest percentage of missing cases from Darjeeling District, (both majors and minors) were reported from Sadar Police Station with a percentage of 19.4% followed by Kurseong Police station 13.3% and Kharibari Police Station with 13.3%. The

highest recovery of cases reported were seen from Jorebunglow with 26.9%, Kurseong 13% and Rangli Rangliot 10%.

The highest missing cases (both major and minor) reported from Kalimpong District was from Kalimpong Police station 21%, followed by Gorubathan Police Station 3.6% and Jaldhaka Police Station with 3%. The recovery record shows that the highest recovery cases were recovered from Kalimpong Police Station with 10.7% followed by Gorubathan Police Station with 3.8%.

**Data collected from DCRB (District Crime Record Bureau) Darjeeling**

**Table 4. Statistical Record of Missing Women and Girls**

	Police Station	Female Adult (Above 18 Years)		Female Minor (Below 18 Years)		Total			
		Missing	Recovery	Missing	Recovery	Missing	%	Recovery	%
Darjeeling District	Sadar P.S.	0	0	0	0	0		0	%
	Pulbazar P.S.	17	5	0	1	17	6.8%	6	6%
	Sukhia Pokhari P.S.	21	9	1	0	22	8.7%	9	9%
	Rangli Rangliot P.S.	16	5	2	2	18	7.1%	7	7%
	Lodhoma P.S.	8	1	0	0	8	3.1%	1	1%
	Jorebunglow P.S.	39	26	0	0	39	15.4%	26	26%
	Mirik P.S.	10	4	1	0	11	4.3%	4	4%
	Kurseong P.S.	29	6	7	5	36	14.2%	11	11%
	Naxalbari P.S.	38	12	4	1	42	16.7%	13	13%
	Phansi Dewa P.S.	21	8	1	1	22	8.8%	9	9%
	Kharibari P.S.	32	14	6	0	38	15.1%	14	14%
	Kalimpong District	Kalimpong P.S.	0	0	0	0	0	0%	0
Gorubathan P.S.		0	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%
Jaldhaka P.S.		0	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%
<b>Total</b>		<b>231</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: District Crime Record Bureau (2018)

The table shows that the highest percentage of missing cases from Darjeeling District (both majors and minors) were reported from Naxalbari Police Station with a percentage of 16.7% followed by Jorebunglow Police Station 15.4% and Khari Bari Police Station with 15.1%. The highest recovery of cases reported were seen from Jorebunglow with 26.0%, Kharibari 14.0% and Kurseong 11.0%. There was no record of cases reported neither recovery cases from Kalimpong District.



### **3.6 Conclusion**

In conclusion, the role of police administration for controlling women trafficking in Darjeeling Hills remains a pivotal one. The different engagements include maintaining public order and safety, enforcing the law and preventing, detecting and investigating criminal and illegal activities. The law enforcement authorities have been trying their best to rescue human trafficking victims and prevent possible cases of such trafficking. However, myriad challenges make their mission difficult to be fulfilled. Situations are different at different parts of Darjeeling Hills with respect to possible cases of trafficking. The socio-economic conditions prevailing at the particular places influence the extent to which the law enforcement authorities are able to address the situation. Much more is yet to be done at the police department's end to implement strategies that are aligned with the changing nature of the human trafficking practice. The government must be providing all the support needed to the law enforcement authorities to alleviate this pressing human rights violation practice.

## **CHAPTER -4**

# **CASE STUDIES ON THE VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING**

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CASE STUDIES ON THE VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING

#### 4.1 Introduction

In the realm of research, a case study is defined as the research strategy and an empirical inquiry for investigating a certain phenomenon within the real-life context as case studies are noted to be resting on an in-depth investigation for exploring the causes of the underlying principles. Case studies hold special importance in research in the field of sociology. A case study is where the sociologists are able to investigate in great detail a group or an individual as opposed to trying to collect a representative sample from a particular target population. Under normal circumstances, a case study would be featuring methodological pluralism, and have the researcher revisiting the case on a regular basis over a certain time period. For the present research, an in-depth study on the cases of victims of human trafficking in the Darjeeling area of West Bengal was carried out. The rationale is that case studies enable the researcher to gather primarily qualitative data as well as needful quantitative data also. In the present research, the chosen methodological approach of case studies was successful in capturing a wide range of perspectives. This gave the researcher the opportunity of gaining a greater understanding of the subject matter of human trafficking in Darjeeling hills. Ethical considerations are important in all forms of research. But in the present case of research with case studies, ethical considerations became more important since they involved human subjects. This added significance was due to the close association of the researcher with the research participants and access to their personal information.

It is noteworthy that the researcher-participant relationships play an important role in the research outcomes for sociological research. Beyond the ethical dilemma that is associated with drawing interpretations of narratives outside the social and temporal contexts, case studies have the risk of exposing participants' identities in an inadvertent manner. In the present research, the identities of the participants are not disclosed. The final reports have the participants' names changed. The researcher has thought carefully about when and how to incorporate the ethical standards while maintaining the integrity and quality of the data. The in-depth interview with these girls and women who opened up after a few interactions bring in-depth knowledge about

the status of trafficking in Darjeeling hills. While collecting these case studies, the researcher had to maintain a boundary where she could not make the informants feel over-exposed and traumatized about their past. The researcher has succeeded in maintaining this.

As it is known women trafficking is unacceptable in society, many of the victims were lured and trafficked and then exploited in every possible manner. Some were raped, gang-raped, drugged, some left hungry without food for days, and physically abused. There is a wide range of physical effects on victims of human trafficking. The physical effects may differ depending on the age of the victim and the type of work that a victim is forced to do. If a person is forced into sex trade, that person can come in contact with some very serious diseases. The most life-threatening diseases in the sex trade include HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Even if victims of the sex trade are released, their bodies might be so affected by the abuse they receive that they may never be able to have children (Hart: 2009, pp.32-34).

A stigma has been tagged and usually, the society does not want to be associated with these ‘tagged victims of human trafficking which could be categorized under CSE commercial sexual exploitation and bonded labor. Very few cases had the support of their families and acceptance from society. The researcher could understand that the family too was in an enigma due to what the society would come up with. The women and girls who had been rescued from a brothel were very unenviable to be accepted in the family and society but those who were rescued before being trafficked were easily accepted by the family as well as the society. So, it is really very challenging for the NGOs to not only rescue the victims but also help them in re-integration into their families as well as their society.

The present chapter has two parts i.e. Part I and Part II. Part I provides the case studies of the victims of trafficking who were rescued later. Rescued victims are from Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Kurseong, Mirik and Siliguri. These case studies have been recorded and provided along with a summary in this chapter. Part II presents the demographic and socio-economic profile of the respondents (rescued victims) in brief.

**Part I**  
**Case Studies**

**4.1.1 Case Study - 1**

**Name:**Reena (name changed)

**Age:**40 years

**Marital Status:** Married

**Income:**Rs 5000/month

**Address:** Kalimpong

**Trafficked to:** Kuwait

**Category:** Schedule Tribe

Reena is a beautiful lady, having 5 Feet 3 inch height, a fair complexion and good health. She is very friendly in the neighbourhood and liked by all. She was married three years ago. She does not have any children. Her husband is a driver who takes good care of her. She runs a small shop on the roadside. Her family of orientation was not financially strong. Her mother and father used to sell mutton. They had seven children and Reena was their youngest child. Due to the poor economic background, she was not sent to school and neither were her sisters, only two brothers did the basic primary education but they did not continue with their studies as they were not interested and presently both are working as taxi drivers in Kalimpong. All her sisters were married and have their own families. Many of them live nearby within Kalimpong whereas only her eldest sister is residing in Gangtok (Sikkim) who went there after her marriage.

She recalls that day when she was at home her mother came up and told her that there was a good offer from an agent. She could go abroad and earn handsome money for herself as well as for her family. She had been informed that individuals even with no education and qualification, could earn big money by going abroad. It was a matter of great pride for her as rarest of the rare used to go abroad, and she being uneducated felt that surely this is her greatest opportunity where even it would mean a big dream coming true.

As we started the conversation she opened up by saying that she hates recalling those days when she had opted to go abroad in search of a job as a housemaid. It all happened in 2010 when her mother came across a lady in Kalimpong, Bagdhara, who was the so-called agent; she had

promised her mother a better life for her daughter as well as for their family. They had to pay some amount for transportation and health check-ups. She could not recall the exact amount she paid for that purpose. After the payment, her passport was made via the Nepal agency, where she had travelled as a married woman having a husband and children. Her photograph had been pasted in the passport which she calls '*black/jalee* passport' (fake passport) was given to her. A contract was made with her for two years. She along with the Kalimpong lady agent travelled to Mumbai where she was asked to go with a Nepali women agent from Nepal who was waiting for her. There was only one ticket so she had to fly alone to Kuwait where some people would come to receive her at the Kuwait International Airport. Her feeling at that time was horrible as she was uneducated and had never travelled alone, i.e., going abroad. However, she remembered the words of the agent that it was for her good and for the good of her family so she decided to move on. She had a tough time on the counters as she could not communicate in English. So with sign language, she somehow managed her way at the counters. She could not even sign, so she had to give her fingerprints. She somehow managed to reach Kuwait all by herself, and then at the airport, she met a Filipino lady waiting for her who took her to their office and kept her in a room with two more girls. In other rooms boys and girls were kept together, they too were brought from different places; she did not interact with them. The lady asked her to call home and tell them that she had reached safely. So after she called home, her passport was instantly seized by that lady.

Next day, they were all asked to be ready and lined up in a room, she did not understand why nor dared to ask the lady. To her amazement, she found a group of Arab Sheikhs who were there and the girls were literally being auctioned like cows and goats. They would come and check the physique, whether they would be efficient for the household chores or not and the girls went off. Reena was taken by an Arab family. She also came to know that the agent from Kalimpong had sold her to the Nepalese agent who in turn had sold her to the Filipino agent. She was like a product, before being bought she was scrutinized and a market value was tagged on her. There were many Nepalese agents as well working along with the Filipino, with very strong networking. Before she left for work she was told that she shouldn't try escaping as the law of the land was very strict and once in the hand of the police, they could never be freed. They instilled fear in them, threatened of the consequences as well.

She went with the Arab to his house. Thankfully, she found them as a small family who did not have any children. The husband used to go to work and the wife used to be at home. Reena had to wake up at 5 am till 12 midnight where she was continuously on her toes. Since she did not know the language and neither could she speak in English, she used sign language for work. Though she was given proper food the work was very harsh, and she could hardly go out. When the couple went out, they would lock her from outside so there was no chance of going outside on her own. She was their property and they could do whatever they liked, that was their attitude. There was hardly any bond between the neighbours. She states that in Kalimpong it is like the whole neighbourhood is one big family. People keep dropping in from door to door and if any special delicacies are prepared, it's shared by all. In Kuwait it was not so, people used to go to work and used to be locked in their own houses. Even if someone cried out for help, there would hardly be any person who would come out and offer a helping hand.

Next to their house, there was a Filipino girl working as a housemaid for another Arab family. Due to some reason, she was pushed from the terrace and Reena saw her lying on the road. No one even bothered to go and check on her. Reena's owners too did not allow her to go and check on the girl. She also told that girls from India, Nepal, and the Philippines are brought to work but even if they are murdered it is all kept quiet, with hardly any trace.

After working for six months she ran away from their house, as it was stated even after working for six months she was just given two months' pay and her four month salary was taken by her Filipino agent. It was very humiliating, her monthly salary was 20 Dinars almost Rs 7000/- INR. It was summer month with the temperature soaring, she had no other option but to leave the house. As she ran barefoot there were sores all over her feet and it hurt her very badly. Just then she saw two Kuwaiti ladies who seemed very friendly and tried interacting since she was scared to approach the Police. These ladies took her to their house. These ladies were more than happy to appoint her as they did not have to pay any amount to the agent. Reena convinced them that she wanted to get through to the Nepali agent as she could communicate to them, and gave them the number which had been written on a paper and handed over to Reena initially by the Nepalese agent: She was told that in case of any emergency she could contact them. But these two ladies were not even trying to contact her agent. She came to know from one more Bangladeshi maid who used to share the room with her told her that the lady had thrown the

paper bearing the number in the bin and she had been lying to Reena about not being able to contact. She decided to run away from the second house again as she was not given her salary, so with the help of a Bangladeshi maid she managed to escape from there and came across a driver, whom she pleaded to make a call from his phone, she contacted the Nepalese agent, who asked her to come to her office on her own, Reena was crying that she did not have money so the driver somehow dropped her there without charging any money as he had understood her situation. Nepali agent allowed her to stay at her office and gave her rice with no curry as they did not want to spend anything extra for the workers.

The following day again she was sent to another house to work as a nanny. She went there but she wanted to return home at any cost. She did not have her passport. She met a girl from Darjeeling who told her that there could be a provision for a black/duplicate passport, where it would take a month's time. She was taken to the police station on the base of not owning a passport, where she was kept, but to her surprise, the police were not as bad as had been told to her by her agents, she got to stay in the police station till her passport was made, doctors visited her on a daily base, there were many women from different places who had come some even had children with them but they too were in the jail waiting for their passports. Reena was there in Kuwait Jail Immigration lockup for almost a month, she had to pay 50 Dinars to the police, it is also a tradition there that the police used to help by sending people from Kuwait, back to their nations if they were having problems they could approach them especially during the festive time of Ramadan.

So, finally, she could come to Delhi but from Delhi, she had to go to Kathmandu airport as the previous passport record had shown that she was basically a citizen from Nepal and also a married lady. She later realized even when going she had taken up a false identity as arranged by her agent. Though there was questioning in the airport she somehow pretended she did not understand and was left free. She reached Kathmandu and had to halt for a night but she did not have money even to pay for her stay. So somehow she had to run away from the hotel in which she had checked in. She says she still cannot remember how she got back home.

Presently, she has been running a grocery shop. She has been married for the last three years, even though her health is good, due to her late marriage she has been having a lot of complications for conceiving. On a regular basis, she along with her husband has been visiting a



doctor in Siliguri. She just prays to Lord Buddha that she can conceive and her womb is blessed, she tells that there had been a cyst in her ovary which was diagnosed and she underwent surgery before her marriage. She had a love marriage, where her husband before marriage had come over to Kalimpong from Bhutan. Presently, her husband works as a driver and is very supportive. She does not wish for anything more than having a baby.

She has good bonding with the people in the neighbourhood and when the researcher was there at her shop, she appeared very busy as people kept flocking to her shop due to her friendly nature and generosity. She is loved by all. She wanted to send a message to all, through this interview that individuals going abroad have to be very smart enough to check on the immigration certificate and not go on a tourist visa if going for work. A work permit is required, and she has informed many but she says that they do not believe in her words as they feel that she is trying to stop them from going abroad.

#### **4.1.2 Case Study - 2**

**Name:** Sabita

**Age:** 40 years

**Marital status:** Married

**Income:** Dependent on her husband

**Address:** Kalimpong

**Trafficked to:** Bihar

**Category:** Schedule Caste

Sabita is a fair-complexioned tall lady with sharp features, and she is 40 years old. She is a mother of two children, one son and one daughter. Both studying in Class XII and reside at Rajadhara, Kalimpong. Her husband who is 44 years is a driver and a very simple man. They appear to be a happy family until eight years back in 2009 when she was trafficked by a known person from the same village. A man named Munna (name changed) near about 35 years then, became very familiar with their family who was known to her husband. Munna addressed him as ‘*Daju*’ meaning elder brother and he addressed ‘*Bhowju*’ to Sabita meaning sister-in-law, though she was only 32 years old at that time and younger than him. He had become a frequent visitor to the household, used to joke with the children. They considered him to be a jolly person and was

well attached to all the family members. He did not have a fixed job but was always ready for any kind of job and was very helpful in the neighbourhood.

One day in 2009, he came to their residence when she was alone. Her children had gone to school and her husband had gone for his duty. He requested her to accompany him to the hospital as his sister was having severe abdominal pain, and there was no one at home who could help them. Seeing the stress and reading the situation, she hurriedly got dressed and came to the roadside which was at a little distance from her house, where a white Maruti van was parked. She saw that there were two ladies quite elderly around 38-40 years already in the van. They were well dressed and one seemed quite sober and soft-spoken the other elder one had a loud voice but Munna lied that there was no one to assist them. She got inside the van and inquired about the ladies there. He replied that he had met them while waiting for her in the car. They also happily gave her a place to sit in the Van. He and one of the ladies took the patient inside for a check-up and returned immediately, when asked he stated that few medicines has to be given and it is just gastric pain stated by the Doctor. Driving through the main town, he asked the driver to stop in one of the medicine shops so that he could collect the medicines.

There was a long wait and finally, he came with some medicines and two bottles of cold drinks. He asked Sabita to have one bottle of coke as the day was pretty hot, but she did not want, again he forced her, so finally she drank. In no time she felt very dizzy, her head started feeling very heavy and she became unconscious. She could not remember anything after that incident.

When she opened her eyes, she found out that she was in a very big *havelli* type of house. But it was quite dark, with no lights. It must have been evening by then when she opened her eyes. She tried recalling how she had reached this unknown place. Her head was still hurting, and she tried getting up. But her hands and feet were tied up with ropes, looking around the place nothing seemed familiar, but it was a big room, almost like a hall, and the ceilings were very high. In the hills, houses are more like cottage types. She could just hear the birds chirping and no sound of vehicles, she started shouting for help loudly. The door was locked from outside, though she tried opening her hands it was too tight, and there was nothing in the hall except a chair and a small table. There was one big window which was sealed with some wooden planks and even the ventilation was very high so she could not even peep from there. On hearing her continuous cries and her bang at the door with her body, finally, two ladies came and opened the latched door.

They were the same ladies whom she had seen in the Maruti van. They seemed to be smiling at her; Sabita understood that these ladies were behind this. She asked where she was, why had they kidnapped her and where was Munna? To that, they replied that she was in Bihar. It was located in a very remote place where hardly any houses were around, so even if she screamed for help, no one would hear her.

In tears, again Sabita inquired about Munna, the elderly lady told her that she had been sold off by Munna and he had taken the money and left. She was shocked and she could not even speak and started crying again. The elderly lady told to the younger lady to talk to Sabita and make her understand that she had been bought by them and that she has to do obey them. She could not escape as there were men who were kept as guards. Sabita tried peeping out of the door but she could just see a passage and nothing more. The younger lady told her that it was a plan which they had set and that she had been drugged after consuming the coke. She told them they supply girls to different cities and Munna is an agent who helps them in getting girls from different places whom they sell to other agents. She pleaded her to let her go as her husband and children might be worrying about her, but she was slapped and beaten by the younger lady, and also warned if she continues to disobey then men would be sent to calm her down. She then walked off and locked the door from outside.

After some time another lady around 30 years came over with some '*rotis*' and '*sabjis*' and asked her to eat as the next day she would be sent to Delhi. From there she would again be sent somewhere, Sabita totally refused to either eat or drink. Sabita asked her to help her and that she has a family but the lady did not answer. The lady was about to leave, she called her and told her to open her hands and legs as she wanted to go to the bathroom, the elderly lady came in and asked the lady to untie her and escort her to the bathroom which was at the end of the passage. From the bathroom window, she peeped and saw that there were no houses around but some people were moving in their cycles at a distance. There was a big bang on the door and the voice of the lady asking her to hurry up. She got out from the bathroom and was again taken to that hall where she was forced to eat two *rotis* and a little *sabji*. Though she did not want to eat but inside her, she heard a voice saying "eat so you can escape from here". She was taken to another room behind which was something like a storeroom, it just had ventilation. She was kept there, locked from outside, there was a small wooden bed. She had been wearing the same pair of

clothes that she had worn before. So next morning she was told to go for a bath and the young girl who had come with food gave her clothes to Sabita. Though she did not wish to wear the clothes, she had no option left. She again tried talking to the young girl as to why she was brought but she refused to answer. Then Sabita asked her how she could go home to that the girl answered that she too had been sold and brought to that place and that it was very difficult to escape from there. She told her that after a few days Sabita too would be sent to Delhi. Sabita hearing this started to panic even more.

She was praying to God to save her and was trying to think of many ways to escape from the place. She had neither seen the route in which she was brought nor could remember any landmark. She could not even see any landmark outside when she peeped from the bathroom window. At home her husband was trying his level best to locate her, he had already lodged a missing complaint and finally, he got some information from around that she was last seen in a white van along with Munna. He further went to investigate which Munna tried denying at first, but when he mentioned the witnesses, he agreed. There was something in him which sounded a bit fishy in his story, so along with the help of some village individuals he started tracking his whereabouts and finally Munna was arrested and he took the police to Bihar where he had sold Sabita. It was right on time that she was saved. She was about to be sold to another party in another city, everything had been fixed, price too was negotiated, the two ladies were the pimps and Munna was the agent who was supplying girls from different places but luckily because of her prayers and also her husband's constant search saved her from being sold into a brothel. These ladies and some men there had known about the arrival of her husband and the police, that they had already left the place and fled. Munna had been arrested.

Presently, she has moved out from that village to another place and lives in a wooden two storied house. She has given the ground floor on rent. She also has some poultry and a kitchen gardening. She had been working in Singapore as a domestic maid. Her owners were very nice but now she has come back to her own village in Kalimpong as her children have grown big and soon they will be taking admissions in colleges. Her children tell her that once they start working they will not allow their mother to go anywhere for work. She will be in the home and they will provide everything to her. She tells that they were small when this happened, but they know about it and take much care of her. Her family is a small and happy family now. Her husband is a

driver in a school. He gets a monthly salary, and with their income, they had built their two storey from where the monthly rent comes regularly.

Even to this day when she thinks about it, her eyes are filled with tears and she fears that every day, if not be her husband's undying love and constant search with prayers she could never have been united with her family ever again. God is GREAT! She says, "I have been saved". Though she had been counseled and now she stands confident and ready to face any challenge in the world. She warns youngsters to be careful of people like Munna, who are waiting for an opportunity to take advantage of women and girls from the village, trafficking them to different cities/countries.

#### **4.1.3 Case Study - 3**

**Name:**Neeta

**Age:**24 years

**Address:**Kalimpong

**Trafficked to:** Pune (Maharashtra)

**Marital status:**Unmarried

**Income:**Rs 3500/month

**Category:** Schedule Caste

Neeta, a very attractive young girl, used to live with her mother who did not take much care about her daughter as she had remarried and was staying with Neeta's stepfather who was a labourer. Sometimes he used to go to work and other days he used to be at home. Neeta's mother was very hard working as she used to carry vegetables to different areas and sell them. Neeta was a neglected child as her elder siblings were already married off, one brother and one sister who had settled in Sikkim. They were busy with their families so hardly they would come over. With just a little income coming into the family, their daily life too had been a form of struggle where they had to skip off one meal in a day. She never got the opportunity to go to school and neither did her siblings, so they got married off before reaching 18 years.

Neeta's nature was very outgoing since her childhood days. She liked making new friends and chatting. At one of her friend's birthday parties, when she was 17 years of age, she met a boy, elder to her, who had come from Assam, so they started talking after being introduced. She found him to be very caring and loving, very soon they fell in love. Within a few months, the boy

approached her for marriage, to which she happily accepted. He then took her to Kolkata, saying that he has an aunt living there, after marriage it becomes customary to go and introduce the new bride to the family and relatives. She trusted him more than herself, that there was no questioning. They reached Kolkata, but on reaching there, he said that his aunt had gone to Pune for some work. So, he said it would be better if they went directly to Pune, the very next day they started their way for a long journey to Pune.

On reaching Pune, he took her to a place, where there was a lady, whom he introduced as his aunty. They were taken to a room, where she kept her luggage and went to freshen up. He told her that he would go out for some time to get some requirements for his aunt and would be back soon. He did not return, Neeta started panicking and asked the aunt about her husband's whereabouts. She told her mockingly that she is neither his aunt nor a relative, but that she has been sold by him already and he would never return. So, she had to obey her and do whatever was asked.

On hearing this, she felt that she had been betrayed and thrown off from a cliff where there was no way out. The next morning two girls came over with some skimpy clothing and forced her to wear it and told her if she doesn't wear then the situation could go worse. To this she opposed and did not wear, she became violent and tried running away, but was caught by the '*dalals*'. She was locked inside the room and beaten mercilessly by the lady and two men who had caught her. She was again asked to entertain clients to which she reacted violently. This made the lady more furious so she sold her off to another brothel owner. Then again from the second brothel owner, she was sold to a third brothel.

When she was in the third brothel, an investigator of Rescue Foundation, Pune disguised as a client had come to investigate whether any new girls had been brought and also to check if there were minors. This was the only method that could be used to track down a minor brought in a brothel. He came and spoke to Neeta and introduced himself as a member of an NGO. He was from Nepal working in Pune so he could understand the Nepali language spoken by Neeta and could easily communicate with her. So, he asked her where was she from? To this, she answered from Kalimpong. He did not waste time in informing his acquaintance who immediately informed Mrs. Yuden Bhutia, the Project coordinator of the Anti-Trafficking Programme, HSWS (Hill Social Welfare Society) about Neeta's case.

Mrs. Yuden Bhutia along with Neeta's mother and one more police constable from Kalimpong had immediately rushed to Pune along with the team of Rescue Foundation, the reporters, along with help of police officials there and raided the brothel. Neeta had been hidden in a large plastic tank that had been covered with thermocols. There were two other girls squeezed inside with her. But luckily the three of the girls were rescued from the brothel. Neeta was then kept in a government-run shelter home in Pune for some time and then shifted to Sanlaap, a shelter home for girls at Kolkata. From there she ran and came to Kalimpong as she was not treated well. She was then taken to CINI home Siliguri, she was going through mental trauma, so was admitted to a mental hospital at Siliguri for three months. Then, she came back to Kalimpong, rigorous counseling was provided to her by Mrs. Yuden Bhutia. She also tried her level best to help Neeta lead a normal and respectable life. But at present Neeta got back with her old associate into the profession of a sex worker. She is happy with her life though, she says it is difficult as society looks at her differently, some have accepted her but still, some draw their lines, which does not matter to her, now as she has to survive in any way possible. She is earning and also taking care of her mother. She being a survivor of trafficking has become very alert and careful from being a prey of such traffickers. She has also made her peer groups aware of being trafficked by the traffickers. In this way, she has helped many of her friends from being trafficked.

#### **4.1.4 Case Study - 4**

**Name:**Ganga

**Age:**25

**Present Marital status:** Married

**Income:**Dependent on her husband

**Address:**Darjeeling

**Trafficked to:** Pune

**Category:** Schedule Caste

Ganga, a very bubbly young girl resides in a tea estate of Darjeeling. Her parents worked in the tea garden as daily wage labourers. They used to go early in the morning to pluck the tea leaves and work in the garden. Ganga and Jamuna were non-identical twin daughters of their parents. Ganga was five minutes elder to Jamuna. Ganga was outspoken, friendly and loved by all. She was interested in making new friends, cooking, and taking care of the family. She had dropped

out of school after being detained in class VIII. Both the sisters had been studying in the same school in the village. Jamuna was very reserved and less spoken compared to Ganga. Jamuna preferred staying at home rather than going around during her holidays and she continued studying. Ganga had many friends in the village and her best friend with whom she shared everything was Sunita who was also her classmate, and she too was a dropout candidate. She was their neighbour who frequently visited her house and also shared meals with them.

The family background in terms of finance was not very good but Ganga's parents tried to fulfill all the needs of their daughters. It was in 2012, Ganga's father had bought a new Nokia phone. Ganga was very excited about the new mobile phone, and she used to spend her time playing brick games, snake games etc. She used to have fights with her twin Jamuna for using the mobile. Most of the time the mobile phone used to be with Ganga when her parents left for work and Jamuna left for school. She also spent her time cooking at home, watching television, where she enjoyed watching Bollywood movies, music, and dance. Sometimes she also visited Sunita's place and both of them used to spend long hours chatting.

One day, Ganga saw a missed call, but she did not call back, after an hour the same number called her again. She received the call and spoke to the unknown person on the other end. He wanted to know the area (locality) and inquired about a person named Shyam Kumar, who was not available in the village. The next day, the caller called again when Ganga was all alone at home. He said he liked making friends, gave his introduction as Raju, from Thimpu (Bhutan) and said it was good talking to her. She too started liking the person and gave details about her family, her likes and dislikes and shared with him about her village over their telephonic conversation. Slowly the phone calls became more frequent, and it became a regular routine. Their telephonic conversation led to the next level of a love affair between the two. The boy, Raju, wanted to meet her at the earliest. Ganga had shared about this relationship with Raju with her best friend Sunita. It had been 3 months that they had been talking over the phone. He decided to come over and convince her parents to marriage. Ganga informed her parents about Raju who would come over to meet her parents.

The day came when Raju, arrived at Ganga's home as promised. He came with a lot of gifts like dresses, sarees and shirts for everyone. Ganga's simple parents were overjoyed to meet Raju, who stayed with them for a week. Within a week in the village, he was taken around and shown



different places in and around Darjeeling. He said that he came from a business family and had been staying in Bhutan for a long time since his birth. Ganga invited Sunita to her place and introduced her to Raju, who seemed to be outspoken, friendly and had a good personality etc. They shared a good conversation and in no time, they bonded very well. People in the hills are simple, very welcoming, hospitable, and take the best care of their guests.

After a week stay at Ganga's place, Raju decided to go to Siliguri for a week and requested Ganga and Sunita to accompany him. Ganga compelled Sunita to join them just for a few days. Sunita was not ready as her mother would be all alone. So, Ganga went and requested Sunita's mother so much that finally, she allowed Sunita to accompany her to Siliguri. They reached Siliguri, where Raju took the two girls to his apartment which was situated on the outskirts. The building was massive and Raju took utmost care of the girls, they were taken out for shopping, movies and also a mobile phone had been gifted to Ganga. The girls were given complete makeovers in the beauty parlours. Raju had spent Rs.22,000/- to Rs.30,000/- in Siliguri. When Ganga enquired why he had been spending so much for them, he replied that he loved her and soon he would be marrying her.

Four days had passed, and it was time for the Girls to return home, but Raju seemed very sad and told he could not leave Ganga. So he requested Ganga and Sunita to accompany him to Kolkata. Sunita was hesitant to go in the beginning but again she thought Ganga would be alone, so, she agreed. The next day, they left for Kolkata and was kept in a hotel room. Raju seemed very busy meeting people with appointments. Raju said that they were his business clients. After his meeting, he would come and take them out for sightseeing. A week had already passed, and he had already spent Rs.40,000/- to Rs.50,000/- for them. Both the girls wanted to return home after two weeks of touring and spoke to Raju about it. Raju then informed the girls that he had received a call that very afternoon from his aunt in Pune, she was suffering from severe illness, and he had to move to Pune. The next day again he requested the girls to go with him to see his aunty and return soon. Ganga also told Sunita since his aunty was ill they had to help him in all way possible. Soon the girls left for Pune.

On reaching Pune they found out that his aunt was not having any severe health problem as stated by him. It was minor giddiness and joint pain; they seemed to be a very nice family with two sons. Aunty lived in a big building on the first storey. The whole building belonged to her,

but there were other people too which Ganga assumed to be the tenants. In the cities, people hardly have time to communicate or interact, as they are so busy with their jobs. Four days had already passed, now it was time to return home but the family kept insisting they stay. On the fifth day, Raju told Ganga that he wanted to buy some special gifts for her before their marriage and he wanted to spend some time just the two of them. He wanted to take her to some very special place. He also went and requested Sunita if she could stay for some hours without Ganga, and they would be back by evening. Since his aunty was good, she easily agreed but she had never thought what would unfold next.

The next moment Ganga recalls that she was in a car going to someplace and the car stopped in front of a building that looked totally secluded. There she was introduced to one lady who seemed above 40 years old. She wore a saree which did not look decent enough, she had a rose on her hair which was rolled into a bun, quite heavy makeup and was chewing pan (beetle leaves). The room seemed to be all decorated as if preparing for some upcoming party. The lady was introduced as Mimiji, she was dark in complexion, fat, huge and fully adorned with accessories. She ordered Ganga to stand and she scrutinized her from head to toe, Ganga did not understand and asked Raju what it was, to this Raju replied he had arranged a beautiful dress for her and she wanted to check which type would suit her well. She also saw other girls, all staring at her as if she was an alien. The lady instructed her to go inside with one of the lady escorts, while Raju would hold some conversations with Mimiji, Ganga saw Raju receiving some money but she did not understand why, since she was asked to go inside with the other lady, the building was big and she saw girls, ladies from different places, the dresses which they were wearing and the words which they were exchanging seemed that it was not the right place to be in. She sensed something was not right and started running towards the door, but she was nabbed by three men, whom she had not seen before. She was caught and put inside one room which had big windows, she cried and requested to let her go but no one would listen. She tried to open the window but was sealed. She saw from the window that Raju was going in the same taxi which they had hired leaving her alone. She screamed at the top of her voice, but it was all soundproof, indeed the whole building was made in that way. She could not understand what was happening to her. It seemed like a dream, she pinched herself, but it was real. After a few hours, the door opened and in came Mimiji with two men, the same men who had caught her when she tried running away.

Mimiji spoke in Hindi, saying that she had bought Ganga from Raju at Rs. 11 lakh 50 thousand and she was in a brothel (*kothi*), and she had to serve her clients from that very night, as many had already booked themselves for her. Ganga could not believe that Raju had betrayed her and sold her in a brothel. He had played with her emotions, and she was deeply hurt. She told Mimiji that Raju had promised to marry her, and he had even met her family back home, to this Mimiji laughed and told that Raju had brought many girls for her from Darjeeling, Siliguri, Sikkim, and Doars and had taken a lot of commission from her. She thought of Sunita and just hoped that she too had not fallen into the same place as hers. She thought of her family, her village and felt that she had made the biggest mistake of trusting Raju.

Clients started coming inside her small room, but she totally refused her client who was an old man, she thought of running but the door was locked from outside, she was already so hurt that her frustration came out when she started beating the man and started scratching him and hurting him. Then came Mimiji and other men who tied her hands and legs and one man injected her, in no time she felt drowsy. She could see men coming one after another and raping her, she tried to free herself from them, but she was drowsy and could not retaliate. The injection became a daily routine for her because she still had not given into the work. After a month she became so demoralized that there seemed no other choice for her so finally, she gave up, she was given Rs50 per day and the rest of the money would be taken by Mimiji. She had to entertain 20-30 customers in a day. It had been 4 months already, her parents were searching for her, and finally, in the fifth month, some police along with people from some organization from Pune came and rescued her. She was then sent back where the organization in Siliguri, KUK (Kanchanjunga Udhar Kendra) helped in bringing her back and she had to undergo police interrogation, counselling and medical examination, which was conducted in the Government hospital, she was still worried about Sunita then she heard from the organization that Sunita too had been rescued and brought back one month before.

Till date, she blames herself that she trusted a person who sold her and her friend into a brothel. Her family was very happy to have her, the society too accepted. It took a lot of time to get over the trauma which she faced. Now she is a married woman with children and has moved away from the village. Her husband is a driver and is very supportive and takes care of the family.

#### 4.1.5 Case Study -5

**Name:** Priya

**Age:** 38 years

**Marital status:** Married

**Income:**Rs 3000/month

**Address:** Kalimpong

**Trafficked to:** Singapore

**Category:** General

Priya is a shy and beautiful lady, with a bright *sindoor* (vermilion) on her forehead. She is 5 feet tall, wearing a salwar suit. The researcher met her at her shop which she has been running for quite some time. Before taking the interview, the researcher made her feel relaxed and comfortable and explained to her the reason behind the interview. She was much at ease and started opening up. She said she had been a resident of Bagdogra, Siliguri before her marriage, but after marriage, she had moved with her husband to Kalimpong as it was his hometown. Her husband is a daily wage labourer who is now 44 years. They have one son who is 18 years and studying in class XII and a daughter who is 12 years, studying in class VII.

Due to their poor family background, she had thought of going abroad and supplementing the family income. She came across an agent in Novelty (Kalimpong) who was sending people overseas for various purposes. She met one agent first who advised her to meet another agent at Pedong, who was known as Chalisa alias Radha. She asked Priya to come over for an interview when she had finally decided to go abroad. There was an interactive session with the agent who gave her advice, which she felt was necessary for her. Though, the interview was just a formality or confirmation which was being taken by Radha. Thereafter, Priya was asked to pay in a sum of Rs.40,000 which was paid by her husband by taking a loan from a co-operative bank. It was on the 4th of November 2015 that she was taken to Kolkata and from there she was flown to Singapore. Though a bit nervous she was very much excited about her new work, she had carried her mobile so that she could talk with her family members as well as her children whom she missed the most.

She reached Singapore where she was received by a person from Radha Agency who was standing there carrying a placard. She was then taken to the agency office and kept there for three days there she was taken to an owner's place on the 9th of November 2015 at Serangoon,

she was delighted when she heard that she would be working for South Indian owners, at least she could converse in Hindi as English was unknown to her. As soon as she reached her place of work, her passport was taken by the agency. She was asked to do all the household work. The family consisted of husband, wife, son and mother. She was asked to make *Rotis* and vegetables (*Sabji*), and other South Indian dishes. She was made to sleep in the store room which was already crowded, she was provided with a very thin mattress. Though the house had a big hall, she was not permitted to sleep there. She felt suffocated but was helpless. She had to wake up early in the morning at 4 a.m. and work till midnight. She had to keep herself working the whole day. The house had 17 fitted cameras so once the owners went out, only the grandmother used to be home but all her activities used to be monitored by the owner through her mobile from her workplace. Sometimes she used to be so exhausted that initially had taken some rest in the kitchen but later that evening she was slapped for being lazy. The only option was she could take a rest in the toilet whenever she was exhausted.

She had to take permission even to drink water, as in Singapore water seemed to be very expensive so she could not drink more than a glass per meal. She was just given one roti and a bit of *sabji* for breakfast or sometimes two spoons of oats and for lunch just a little rice and no second helping. The owners used to ask her to prepare non vegetable items, but it was never given to her. For breakfast when they had boiled eggs they never took the yolk, but it was neither given to her also. It was nicely packed in a polythene bag and thrown in the dustbin, even if they had extra food remaining it would be thrown away. She was given separate rice, which was 5 kg, she had to manage it for three months. She used to recall her food prepared at home and how everyone ate together. Before it was said that only household work would have to be done but later, she was asked to wash the car and do other outside work as well. It became very difficult for her to stay there as she had also lost weight from 66 kg to 39 kg. She felt very weak and dizzy but none of them cared nor was she taken to the hospital.

While working once she cut her finger, but she had to wear plastic and continue her work. There was no sign of humanity which existed in them; they treated her like their property. While cleaning the fridge one day she spotted some grapes in a bunch, she plucked one and ate it, later that evening her ma'am came over and slapped her for eating one grape as she had counted it there were 26 and she had eaten one, everything in the house was counted and measured. Few

days later, her ma'am asked her to give massage to her son who was 22 years old she said that she would not do, she was mercilessly beaten with a stick. When things started becoming very difficult, she told her she wanted to go back home but her madam would not let her. She secretly called the agency and told that she could not stay in that house and it had already been three months of tolerance for her, but unfortunately, her ma'am heard her, came over and snatched her phone broke the sim card and beat her up again. There was no chance of escaping from there. She then thought of her next-door maid who was a Filipino, she had heard that her work permit had expired so she had to go to the embassy to renew it. Priya somehow begged her to call the agency and with her help, she again informed the agency. The owner was very angry and started complaining since she was to be paid \$450 per month which came up to Rs.22,000 but she was just given \$20 for the last month. She was exploited by the employers.

The agency came and took her, but the agent was angry that she could not adjust to the house. Then she was sold to another agency, the agent sent her to another house for work but that too became very difficult for her as she found it very difficult to communicate in their language, the family was a small family with husband, wife and a child. They gave her a lot of work from early in the morning till late at night, taking care of the baby and the housework. So she worked there for another three months and finally made up her mind to come home but even these owners did not allow that. Finally, she called home and asked her husband to tell her that her father-in-law had passed away and she had to be home. The agency too was informed and with a lot of difficulties and even the amount which was supposed to be given to her was not given. The agent also took more than their share as they had bought her from the previous agent but after begging them her passport was handed over.

So, finally, on the 2nd of June 2016, she spent all the little money she had after being taken by the agent. She somehow managed to pay for her travel and escaped from there, she could not bring any money home, but she felt she would have died there as she had become very frail and skinny. Having big dreams, she had flown to Singapore, thinking that she would be able to help her family live a better life and above all she had thought that her children could be provided good education which she lacked in her childhood. But she did not realize that the greed for more money could also take her life. She had to face all sorts of exploitation, humiliation, and torture. In the end, she has to tell everyone that even if we earn little at home it is better than going

overseas and working especially when one gets an owner who is hardly humane and treats his/her domestic maids like a commodity which is purchased.

Presently, her children are studying well, and her husband also is very supportive he too promised never to send her away. He tells her that he will work extra and earn money for his family but will never let the same thing repeat. She runs a small shop and has a *pukka* house on the roadside, with two slabs and six rooms, which is neat and tidy. They depend on the *dhara* for their drinking water which they have to go and fetch not very far. They have a television, mobile and basic requirements. Her neighbours are very good, and she has had no problem till date.

#### **4.1.6 Case Study -6**

**Name:** Jeena

**Age:** 27 years

**Address:** Kalimpong

**Trafficked to:** Coochbehar

**Marital status:** Married

**Income:**Rs 3000/month

**Category:** Schedule Caste

Jeena a young lady from Kalimpong. She is married and has a small and happy family. Her husband is a daily wage labourer. Her son is in class 1, who is very smart and stands first in his class. She has a shop where she sells vegetables. She does all the household work. It has been eight years of marriage for her. She started by saying that in life she has seen all the bad phases but now God has been kind to grace her with a beautiful home, a supportive and caring husband and a loving son.

As we spoke, she opened up by saying that when she was 16 years old, her family background was not very stable. She came from a broken family where her father was an alcoholic and a very violent man, who used to beat her mother as well as her regularly at night after coming home drunk. So, it was a compulsion for her mother to leave her father and move to another place. She started looking after her daughter by selling vegetables and working in the tea garden. Though the household was functional due to the poor income, sometimes, even two times a meal was not possible. So, her daughter seeing the state of the family felt she should also start working and

bring home some income to support the family. Jeena was sent to work as a domestic maid in a house in Gangtok by one of her neighbour. The owner seemed to be very good; the family which consisted of husband, wife, son and daughter also treated her like one of the family members. The owners were Government employees. She was given proper food and clothing. She could cook and eat whatever she liked. Her housework was very light as she had to clean the house and do a little cooking and when her owners came home after work she had to look after their requirements. The whole house used to be left to her when they went out to work.

Very close to her building was another building that was under construction, there were many labourers who were working at the construction site. These labourers were from the plains, so whenever she used to go up to the terrace to dry the clothes, she used to see one of the young carpenters looking at her and smiling. He seemed to be a very attractive and charming person. As days passed, even she being a teenager started getting attracted towards this boy who seemed to be 21 years old at that time. He was from Coochbehar. They started having an affair, and since she too used to be alone at home after her owners left, they used to meet up every day and talk between his breaks and sometimes for hours. In those days there were no mobile phones which would have made their conversations easy.

After six months of working there in Gangtok, she eloped with her lover. She was brought to Coochbehar. The owner had called Jeena's mother and informed her that Jeena was missing. They had searched for her everywhere but there was no trace of her, and all her belongings had gone. They informed they had also lodged the F.I.R., the mother started crying, pleading for help from everyone she knew. There was no sign of her daughter, and neither was anyone able to track her down. At Coochbehar, after two months her husband's activities started changing where she would be ill-treated and she was asked to bring money or else she would be killed or sold off. After two months Jeena's mother got a call where she heard her daughter's voice she was crying and pleading with her mother to send Rs.50,000 as she had eloped with a lover who had been demanding her money. Jeena apologized for not informing her and asked her mother for money or else she would be forced to drink poison or would be sold in the city or would be killed if she did not get the money. She would never be able to return home nor see her mother again. Her mother was totally shocked. She also mentioned over the phone not to inform the police authorities. Jeena feared that she would be sold as her mother would never be able to



provide the money. She had heard them talk about sending her to some other place where a deal was being made. The person would be coming to take her. Jeena's mother had approached the social worker from Hill Social Welfare Society, Kalimpong Mrs. Yuden Bhutia, who further advised her to inform all these matters to the police. She hastily came over and informed the police who tracked down the number to Coochbehar.

A Non-Governmental Organization at Coochbehar was alerted along with the help of the Police the location was traced and with much difficulty, they succeeded in rescuing her. Jeena was rescued and kept at a shelter home after being presented in the CWC, so after 15 days she could be taken home. Now, she is remarried, runs a shop and her husband supports her.

#### **4.1.7 Case Study - 7**

**Name:** Mala

**Age:** 40 years

**Marital Status:** Married

**Income:** Dependent

**Address:** Siliguri

**Trafficked to:** Kolkata

**Category:** Schedule Tribe

Mala is a tribal lady from a tea garden in Siliguri. Her parents died when she was very small. She can hardly recollect memories with them. She had five siblings out of which she was the third one. The work she used to do when she was small was to collect firewood from the forest and work at others field especially during the time of planting paddy. She did not have a normal life as other fortunate children as she was exposed to hardships and struggle at a very tender age. Her elder sister and brother used to run the house and in return, she used to babysit to her two younger siblings, her brother and sister. She did not get the opportunity to study and neither did her siblings. She tells the researcher that the birds in the sky also have not suffered the way she has.

Being a tribal girl, her chest and hands are beautifully adorned with tattoos. She says it was done when she was very young. She also tells that in her community different tribes have different patterns of tattoos which signify to which tribe they belong to. As we started conversing in

Hindi, she told the researcher when she was around 15 or 16 years old which she cannot exactly remember, she had gone to the forest to collect firewood. There a boy, six years older than her caught her hand and wouldn't let go. She begged and pleaded with him to free her but he replied saying that he has liked her after seeing her and wanted to marry her. It was a practice of 'Marriage by Capture'. It is a unique practice found among the tribals since he was from a different village; he swept her away in no time to his village. Her siblings could not do anything for her as once taken is considered gone for them.

After her marriage, she had to accept her husband and mother-in-law though she seemed to be a good lady but her husband was an alcoholic and used to be very violent at times. He was a daily wage labourer and usually came home drunk and used to beat her up. She sometimes wanted to run away due to the physical torture. Their village is comprised of a mixed community. There was one Bihari person who was friendly with Mala's husband as well as with their family. Mala had given birth to a daughter, when her baby was ten days old; she had a fight with her husband. The reason for her fight was that Mala mistakenly broke an earthen pot, which was used for cooking. Her husband being furious started verbally and physically abusing her. In no time this fight got intensified and he snatched the baby from Mala's hand and sent her away. Though she pleaded he would not give her back. Mala had to breast feed her baby but her husband kicked her out of the house. She took shelter at her neighbour's house. After two days her daughter died due to starvation as only *khajur kataree* (juice of jaggery) was being fed to the infant, which was not enough, she was not given mother's milk which is highly nutritional and is a necessity for the baby. She was so depressed that she went and challenged her husband but again she was beaten and sent away. The Bihari man named Bablu came over and tried comforting her with soft words. She recalls how Bablu showed her one flower and looking at the flower she was hypnotized that she started following him, wherever he went. She tells it was neither a drink nor food item, but it was a simple flower which overpowered her. She tells that the hypnosis could be because of some magic that he might have been used on her.

Next, she remembers when she gained consciousness, she was in a room with almost ten men sitting next to her, and they were of different communities. Amidst them, she saw Bablu sitting and looking at her. He came over and told her that he had brought her away from the village so that they could marry off peacefully and those men around were his friends who had come over

for the occasion. Sometime later, he would go out along with his friends and get some utensils. She asked him not to leave her alone there, to which he said some '*ektu ranna korte lagbe*' meaning we need to do some cooking as well. But after that, she never saw him again. She did not even know that she had already been sold into a brothel a red-light area of Kolkata.

Her room had been latched from outside. She yelled asking the door to be opened; one lady came over and told her that she had been sold and that she has to do whatever asked. She was totally surprised as she did not know anything of this kind of trade. She was all awake at night, just could not figure out what was happening or was it just a dream. The next morning two men came over and put her in a sack with hands and legs tied and also a cloth was put in her mouth, she was taken to a dark place underground where hardly she could see anything. Later she understood that the *kothi* had been informed about a raid which would take place that time, so bringing a new girl would also be a problem as police would take them. So, the madam was successful in hiding Mala underground. After the raid was over, she was taken out from the sack, she was suffocated and was panting for breath. She was given a glass of water and was shifted inside the *Kothi*. When new girls are brought, they are not directly taken inside, first they are kept in the single room outside and then later taken inside where they meet their clients, Mala too was shifted to the inside cubicles, and locked from outside. She was continuously crying to let her go home but no one would listen to her cries. The room was very small with just one bed inside. She was just 18 years at that time, soon a man entered inside the room who was introduced by the madam. As a person entered the room, the madam asked that man whether Mala was ok. And also added that she was a new girl, Mala felt that she was a property owned by the madam and was forced to do things that her madam desired. She was very scared she ran to the corner and closed her eyes and told him not to come near. Since the room had been locked from outside, she had no means of escaping, the man told her to undress but she covered her eyes so that she did not want to face him. The man undressed her, she became like a log and tears rolled down her cheeks. She would be sold off in this way. She had been betrayed and now she was being exploited. She wished she could escape from there but with the watchmen around it was very difficult.

Days, went by, one day, she was not well so she did not entertain any of her customers. She was beaten up and no food was given to her. There were many girls some were Bengalese, Nepalese,

Biharis, Muslims but she was not allowed to interact with any of them. Even during breakfast, lunch and dinner, the girls used to take their food go to their own rooms and eat in silence. She could hardly hold any conversations with them. The money which the clients gave were all taken by the Madam and sometimes the clients used to give her some tips Rs 100, Rs 200 sometimes Rs50 which she used to hide it, but in case if the client told the madam that he had given her some tips the madam would barge in and take away the tips too. Clients were of all categories, some were drivers, labourers, old men, married men, foreigners, police, some were young school boys who visited in their school uniforms, and people from all walks of life visited the brothel. Girls had to adorn themselves with heavy makeup so to attract their customers.

Some customers were alcoholic they used to come drunk, during this time the girls used to steal their valuables and money. She recalls how she too had stolen some money from an old man and the man had called in the Police but by then she had hidden it in her pillow which she had cut using a blade and after that she had stitched it so there was no chance for anyone to track it. Police came and took her madam who was put in jail for one night, she tells the owner had two wives who were the madams of the *kothi*, each madam had 20-25 girls and more also and she belonged to the first madam. Next day after paying some money the madam was released. She was so angry about the incident that after returning she came and checked Mala's room thoroughly, but she did not find any money, she slapped Mala, but Mala was happy that she did not find her stolen money. She also tells that for her clothes she had to buy on her own. During Durga Puja and Holi all the girls are provided one set of clothing and good food other than that ranging from cosmetics to other items they have to buy themselves which leaves them to steal from the customers. She also recalls one incident where a young boy had come from far off place so he had just Rs 100 in two 50 rupees notes, when he entered the brothel one girl agreed for Rs50 to provide service to him but in the end she took both the 50 rupee notes. He was furious and had brought a big stone to throw at the girl because she had stolen the money and he could not even go home. Finally, he had to surrender as the watchmen stopped him and chased him away.

She informed almost everyone is infected with HIV, almost 80-85% of the girls have HIV as the clients refuse to use protection. There are many NGOs who have provided condoms in the brothel but due to the client's refusal, it is very difficult. Female condoms too have been

introduced which could help save many lives. She has seen many women who died as HIV patients. Life inside the brothel is of just the four walls where the girls are not allowed to go outside, as the toilets are situated outside the *kothi* at night the girls are not allowed to come out, for the fear that they would escape from the brothel so within their cubicles there are small concrete raised platform with two bricks on either side which is used as a toilet for them. Many of the girls who tried running away were tracked down and beaten up by the Dalals, locked in a room for days without food, and were asked to entertain 20-25 clients in a day.

The bitter reality of the brothels brings tears as the exploitation continues. She told sometimes the girls are forced to give service also during their monthly cycles there is no consideration when the demand for the girl comes from the clients, the madams just look at the money and clients just want to fulfill their lust and hungry desires. Small and young girls are more preferred, as the rates are pretty high compared to the older ones. She tells that beauty is important; the figure is demanded by the clients where they are ready to pay if their desire is met. Some clients also used violence they like to give more pain by beating up the girls and also by burning the thighs, hands and chest of the girls with cigarette buds, some are like animals who just pounce on them. She also mentioned some clients seemed to be good where they used to come and share their stories as to not having a good relationship with their wives or some just trying to experiment, some used to ask her why she had come and when she shared her story, they used to give some '*Bakshis*' or tips.

She recounted she had been in the same *kothi* from 18 years up till 36 years when she was diagnosed with diabetes, high blood pressure, eye problem and even her first madam passed away due to some health problems, she was kicked out of the brothel, as she was already ageing. The second wife of the owner did not want to keep her as her market value was low and taking care of a diseased person was an added burden for her. Mala had nowhere to go she was just moving from one street to another, begging. Somehow she managed to come back to Siliguri, where she was spotted crying by one of the social workers. When Mala told her that she had been thrown away from the brothel by her second madam, the social worker took her for a medical check-up and took up the responsibility to look after her. She did a lot of counseling on Mala, she kept her in her own house and took every single care of her.

It has been four years that Mala has been living with the social worker. She is happy and a changed person. She says she does not know about her siblings and neither her husband but over the years she had heard all her siblings had passed away and just one elder brother and younger sister are living with their own families. She does not wish to go back, as she is happy to be here with the social worker. Before Mala did not have any religion, they worshipped nature and used to practice whatever the neighbourhood followed as it was a mixed community. Recently, Mala has accepted Christianity and keeps praying. She tells that through prayers she has been able to overcome all her grief and her bad phases of life. She has also been baptized and goes to church regularly. She has also given her testimony in the church where she tells that the younger generation should not suffer the way she has suffered and having Christ in her life she tells it's all totally a new experience for her. Before she did not want to live, tried to hurt herself by cutting her hand with a blade but after accepting the Lord, she wants to work more for the people in the society in whatever way she can. When inquired about any documents that she has, she says that though she is a tribal lady when she was sold in the brothel the madam had changed her name and her title to Sarkar. She tells once inside that no one is called by the original name. They are given different names and these names are registered as who are willing adults ready to take up the profession of a sex worker. So even during raids conducted by the Police, they are not rescued. She tells me now she is living as a Sarkar with a different name and a different title and is thankful for her changed life where even society has accepted her.

#### **4.1.8 Case Study - 8**

**Name:** Sunita

**Age:** 25 years

**Marital status:** Married

**Income:** Dependent on her husband

**Place:** Darjeeling

**Trafficked to:** Pune

**Category:** Schedule Caste

Sunita a simple village girl of 18 years old narrates her woeful incident of being unknowingly trafficked due to her companion whom she shared and trusted more than herself. She landed in a brothel in Pune which was a nightmare for her. She comes from a tea estate region in Darjeeling. Her family consisted of her mother and herself. She had failed in class VIII, so she chose to drop

the idea of continuing her studies. Her mother worked in a tea garden as a labourer. Sunita used to assist her in plucking the tea leaves.

In some villages, the people are very united and are always willing to help one another. Likewise, Sunita too had one very close friend in the village, her name was Ganga. She was also her classmate and since both of them had failed so both had planned to discontinue their studies. They used to help in the tea garden sometimes. One day in the year 2008, her friend Ganga introduced her to a boy with whom she was in a relationship. The boy was from Bhutan of Nepalese origin and was 22 years of age. They had not met before but they were in a telephonic conversation.

One day he decided to come over to Darjeeling and meet her family, as he seemed to be very keen on marrying her. She too invited him over to Darjeeling to stay at her place. He came alone and stayed with them for a week. He had come over with lots of gifts for her and for her family. Ganga's mother seemed to be very happy as he seemed to be a good person and suitable to be a good son-in law. He had also approached her mother for Ganga's hand in marriage. Since he seemed to love her a lot, her mother too was happy. Within a week in the village, he was taken around and shown different places. He was pretty excited to visit the country since he was mostly travelling to cities like Kolkata, Delhi, Pune, Bengaluru etc. He came from a business family.

During this time, Sunita had been invited to her friend's place where she was introduced to the charming bachelor. He seemed to be outspoken with a good personality. He wore a classy watch on his wrist with a big dial and also carried an expensive mobile. They had a nice conversation since he was a jolly person. Everyone was fascinated by his talks. In the villages, people are simple, hospitable and are great hosts to their guests. They would rather sleep on the floor but would offer the best bed and food to the guest. The guests are always provided with the best. The boy was even given a grand welcome where special non-vegetarian dishes were prepared for him. They had decided to go to Siliguri for a week, and Sunita was compelled by her best friend to accompany her for just a few days and that they would return together. Sunita was not ready as her mother would be all alone, but Ganga came and requested her mother, she allowed Sunita to accompany her to Siliguri. Sunita had visited Siliguri just a couple of times and had not much idea about the place.



After a week's time, three of them moved to Siliguri in a bus and after two and half hours' drive, they reached Siliguri junction. From Siliguri junction, they were taken to his place in a reserved auto. She had seen the boy talking to the auto driver, two girls were asked to wait at some distance. So, after the negotiation three of them got into the auto and left. The auto driver took some narrow lanes which became very difficult to identify and twenty minutes later they stopped in front of a three-storied building. The luggage was taken, and the girls were asked to follow him inside. The building had a massive hall at the entrance with a very high ceiling and big glass window panes. The sitting room was so beautiful that it looked like in movies. They were given room to stay with a big television set and all the requirements. They were taken out for sightseeing and a lot of shopping was done for both girls. Sunita felt shy to accept the gifts as it was way too expensive but since Ganga insisted that she accepted the gifts, dresses, accessories from him. They were also given money for spending it in the beauty parlour where a total makeover was done for both girls. They were so fascinated by their haircut and the way they looked, both of them thanked him. Sunita then asked Ganga that her mother was alone at home and she had to return home as it was already a week she had left home and that she had come just to reach her till Siliguri. Ganga informed that since they had never been to Kolkata, he begged them to accompany him as he wanted to spend more time with Ganga.

Again, after a week, they went to Kolkata, where he arranged for all the transportation, accommodation and food. They were kept in a hotel and all the expenses were beard by him. The girls were having a great time, in Kolkata. He also gifted them with costly mobile phones, took them out for shopping and movies. They seemed to be overwhelmed with his generosity and care. Sunita also mentioned to Ganga that she was very lucky to have such a wonderful person as her life partner. They were given new sim cards too and they could make calls at home. They told their parents not to worry as in a few days they would be home and that they were having a great time in Kolkata. This was the last phone call they had made home. He seemed quite busy in Kolkata where he had many appointments made and most of the time he went out and the girls waited for him in the hotel room. He would come and then take them around in the evenings. It was already six days they were there, and this boy was very good at making excuses and with his words, he could easily lure any girl. Sunita now pleaded to go back home. As it had already been two weeks away from home.



To their surprise, he told the girls that his auntie's family lives in Pune and is not keeping well so they have to go visit her just for two days and return at the earliest as possible as he too has an important business meeting to attend in Bhutan. Sunita insisted that she would go back on her own, but Ganga compelled her to accompany her as she would be all alone without her and even he forced her to join them just for two days more. So, finally, they agreed and started for Pune by train from Kolkata.

As they reached Pune it seemed the place of her aunt was quite far from the station. They hired a taxi, and it took them almost an hour to reach his aunt's place which was called Bhudhobarey where they were welcomed by a Tamang family, husband of 40years, wife of 36 and two sons who were of 10 and 12 years respectively. The lady whom the boy referred to as aunty complained of giddiness and some pain in her legs at times, but she seemed to be alright and very happy to see them. They were a good and loving family and what Sunita felt was even in a big city like Pune, she could at least find someone whom they could look up to in case of any emergency. She helped the lady in the household work and the husband used to go for his duty. The sons used to go to their schools. Two days passed and Sunita felt they had to move as his aunty also seemed to be fine. To this, they insisted they stayed back for some more days. Four days passed and on the fifth day the boy said that they had got the railway tickets but could leave only after two days and before this, he was making excuses as there was no availability of tickets and even Tatkal would be quite expensive so they would have to wait for the confirmed tickets. Just a day before leaving, the boy told Sunita that he wanted to take Ganga for a date where he would get some time with her before they parted. He also told her that his aunty and family were very nice so she need not worry about her stay. Sunita agreed to his request as she felt they wanted some time together. Ganga and the boy did not return, and the next day his aunt's behaviour started changing. She was taken to the ground floor and there was a big cupboard, she did not understand why she was taken there. The aunt asked her whether she liked the cupboard to which Sunita replied yes, as she said yes she rotated the cupboard and pushed her inside. It was very surprising that when she was pushed inside there was a big hall and it was totally different, she saw men and ladies who were dressed in scanty clothes and in very awkward obscene positions. Next to the big hall, there were small cubicles or '*kothi*'. She was totally lost, as she had never imagined that in the same house something else was going on.

She could see the gazes of men and women on her. Then one of the ladies took her inside and kept her in one of the cubicles. She asked the lady why she was taking her there and she had to return home, her rail tickets were for the next day. To this, she laughed loudly and said that she had been already sold for a sum of Rs.1 lakh 50 thousand by that boy to the lady who he addressed as his aunty. The lady told Sunita to start working as she had to satisfy her clients. Sunita started begging and crying and pleaded to go home as her mother was alone at home. She was threatened that if she did not comply with the work they would hurt her mother as they knew that she had only her mother at home. She was locked inside the cubicle, where there was no chance of coming out. Soon one of the ladies entered her room and asked her to wear a very skimpy short dress which she denied. She was slapped by her and asked to do what she was ordered and there was no denial. So, she had to give in, she was just given Rs.20/- per day. She tells all categories of people had come, even policemen, and they had a very good relationship with the brothel owners. They would also warn them in advance about the raids. Since, Sunita was a Christian girl, who used to go to church regularly, her mother had approached the church authorities, who along with political help and higher authorities and the organization Kanchanjunga Udhar Kendra (KUK) from Siliguri was successful in bringing back the girl along with five others from Pune brothel. One girl was from Nepal she did not even know her address in Nepal, so the organization took her. The other girl was from Sikkim who had completed her B.Sc., an educated girl; two minor Adivasi girls were from Dooars and then it was Sunita from Darjeeling. All these girls had been sold off by Raju, some had been lured for the job, others had been on the pretext of a fake lover and for Sunita, and she had trusted him for her friend's sake. As she came to NJP (New Jalpaiguri Station) the organization members, Police and her village members had gone to receive her. She did not know what to speak and they too seemed quite understanding of the fact. A medical test was conducted and then sent to Darjeeling. She had to go to the Police station the next day for some interrogation which was done by a lady Police and some statements were recorded.

Presently, she is married and is living in Darjeeling. She has a son of two years. She has moved on in life and would like to warn youngsters about the easy fake love affairs which happen in no time and end in no time.

#### 4.1.9 Case Study - 9

**Name:**Bunu

**Age:** 22 years

**Present Marital status:** Divorced

**Income:**Dependent

**Address:**Siliguri

**Trafficked to:** Malda

**Category:** Schedule Tribe

Bunu a young tribal lady of 22 years from Siliguri, living in a mixed neighbourhood with Bengalis, Nepalis, Muslims and tribals in a tea garden area. She is very versatile and multi-lingual. She had lost her parents when she was very young and she cannot remember what age she was at that time. Both her parents used to be tea garden labourers. After their death, she was looked after by her grandmother, from her mother's side (maternal). She did not receive any education due to poverty at home. Her grandmother too was a tea garden labourer and did not earn much income to take proper care of Bunu. Sometimes they slept with just one meal a day. She had a lot of friends in the locality. She had married a boy from her village, an arranged marriage, where the groom was much older than her. He was an alcoholic and used to beat her up, in no time she divorced him. She came back to her grandmother and started staying with her.

One day Bimla, her neighbour, a Nepalese lady, who was around 30 years old came from a nearby area suggested Bunu work as a housemaid, in the outskirts of Siliguri. She thought it was not very far from her place and she could go home anytime whenever she wished to. Bimla also told her that she was earning six thousand per month and if she wished she could be an earning member in helping her grandmother. Bunu became very excited and wanted to be independent. She felt she could provide proper help for her sick grandmother. Since Bimla had come in for a week, her family which consisted of her husband and two children, one daughter and one son were very happy seeing her home, as well as her earning, was helping her family as her husband was also a tea garden labourer. So, within that week Bunu had to decide and let Bimla know whether she would be joining her or not. Bunu spoke to her grandmother, who did not like the idea as she did not want Bunu to go out from the place. She was the only guardian of Bunu, who was responsible for her whereabouts. But finally, she succeeded in convincing her grandmother about going to work. Bimla had told her that her owners were Bengalis and were very good and

the lady of the house had sent Bimla to bring one more helper from her village to work at her brother's place. She had also told that her work was not very hectic as the children used to go to school and the owner was working parents so they went for work in the early hours, Bimla would be home alone the entire day without much work left to do. There were no restrictions imposed on her, she could eat whatever she wanted, she could take rest also during the day and was given food and extra pocket money at times. She had been working there for eight months already. On hearing this Bunu too wished to find a family/owner of this type.

As soon as she reached the location, she was taken by Bimla to her owner's house. The Lady of the house seemed nice, she welcomed them and told Bunu that she could stay that night but the next day she would be dropped at her brother's place. So, the next day she was taken to her brother's place which was an hour and a half drive from Bimla's place. The lady's brother was around 55 years, he lived with his family, his wife and one son. She was told that she too would be paid the same amount as Bimla and she could collect it every month. So the lady left after dropping her off. She was now supposed to work at her brother's place. To her surprise, it was a different story. Late that night the brother told Bunu that she was supposed to go to Malda to work in one of his friend's houses. So he would be taking her to Malda, there was no means of communication and neither could she inform her grandmother. He told that he would let Bimla know about it, who would soon, in turn, inform her grandmother.

They boarded a train for Malda the very next day. On reaching there she was taken to a hotel saying that they have to travel to some interiors so it would be better if they stayed in the hotel for the night. She was kept in the same room with him and at night he tried to molest her and asked for sexual favours to which she denied and was beaten up by him. She cried a lot and refused to work anywhere and told him that she would go back home. In actuality, he was an agent who had already sold her off to some other client in Malda as agreement had been made over the phone but since they had not arrived, they had to put up in the hotel room. But he was adamant to sell her off, as Bunu too had heard about the negotiation through his conversation though she could not figure out as to how much she was being sold off for. But Bunu made up her mind that she would straight away head back home or escape from the hotel but the next day she did not know as to where he was taking her. So, when they came out of the hotel she cried a lot in the public place and attracted the public where people saw her and she did not want to

move along with him. He asked her to remain quiet and promised to take her back home. Finally, as they boarded the night train and when he had gone to the washroom, she raised an alarm and alerted all her co-passengers who in turn informed the police, the man was beaten up by the Public inside the train itself and Bunu was rescued and taken to the Police station. She was interrogated and the media was approached. A charge sheet was filed against the man. Bimla too was called, who was ignorant that Bunu had been taken to Malda, she was surprised even her owner did not know about this. Thankfully Bunu was counseled by Tiny Hands India an NGO in Siliguri and finally, she reunited with her grandmother. She will not trust anyone from henceforth that's what she says. She knows that the man has been freed. In the Police station, she was asked to give her thumb impression in the paper which she did not understand what was written as she was illiterate. She feels that rich and powerful people can easily escape from all these illegal activities.

#### **4.1.10 Case Study - 10**

**Name:**Binita

**Age:**30 years

**Present Marital status:** Married

**Income:** Dependent

**Address:**Darjeeling

**Trafficked to:** Dubai

**Category:** Other Backward Class (OBC)

Binita a young lady of 30 years old hailed from a remote village of Darjeeling. She lived with her mother and one elder brother and his wife. Binita had completed her H.S. (Higher Secondary) and had appeared in various competitive examinations. She had also been called for an interview in Police Department but unfortunately, she says that she did not have any backing so she could not get through. She was at home for quite some time. She recalls an incident that took place a few years ago in 2014 when she was asked to go to the town to fetch some groceries where she met her sister-in-law's brother who took her to have some tea and sweets. Since it was getting late, he volunteered to drop her home on the way. She seemed very happy but when they reached her stop, he did not agree to stop the vehicle instead took her to his place. It was a form of forced marriage and since she was just 17 and a half years she still could not figure out what was happening. She had been married and within one and half years she gave birth to a daughter.

But their marriage did not last for long, so after two years she separated from her husband but did not get anything from him.

During this time she was depressed and in need of money to look after her daughter. She had heard about one person named Mohan in the village, who along with his wife would send people from Darjeeling to other countries for work. They had an agency in town. Binita had a discussion with her family and finally made her decision to go abroad and work. She contacted the agency again who demanded a sum of Rs.40,000/-. Binita requested to decrease some amount and it was agreed for Rs.35000/-. The wife of the agent seemed to be a pious lady one could not even suspect that she could say or do any harm to any other person. When handing over the money Binita had inquired about the payment receipt to which she had said things could work only when they trusted one another and did not hand her any receipt. Binita was then asked to go for her medical check-ups where a blood test and x-ray was done. She was to leave Darjeeling and head to Bagdogra airport where she would be accompanied by two other women to travel to Dubai.

She was informed that she would be working as a baby sitter in one of the Arab Sheiks home. This owner was politically influential and Binita was told that she would be paid Rs.26,000/ Indian currency per month, along with free food and lodging. Toiletries would be provided to her. She would also be given free hours in the afternoon where she could also work part-time.

She started her journey from Darjeeling on 28th May 2016. She was told by the agent that she would be accompanied by two more girls, one from Kalimpong the other from Siliguri. She had to meet both of them at Bagdogra airport. So, Binita was dropped by her elder brother and his friend. Though all three had come from three different agencies the agencies had a common connection where all girls were to travel together. As they checked into the airport they were stopped by the officer who noticed the girls were being sent on a tourist visa. On questioning they could not answer his queries, so immediately their agents were called and they were returned to their hotels. They were warned about the problems which could befall them without a work permit.

So, again their agents asked them to pretend that they were girls going for a vacation and were on a tourist visa so that they would be allowed to fly. Then the agency fixed another day/date

which was at a very odd timing, at 2 a.m. in the morning. They were asked to move to the airport, this time there was a different customs official who without any enquiry allowed them to board the flight to Dubai. Binita says that there could be some cordial relation between the agent and the officer because there was hardly any checking conducted.

They were told that once they landed in Dubai, the agency would come over and pick them up. Once, they reached, the agency men had come to pick them up, they were taken to the agency office, where they were asked to take rest for two hours in the office. They also met a lady from Teesta Valley (Kalimpong) who warned them about the ill fate and the atrocities which were being faced by them. It had already been 15 days of her stay without work. As they were preparing to take rest they were called in by the lady also known as Maya. She asked them to make short calls to their families informing them they had reached safely. The phone was snatched and disconnected after that. Their passports were taken away, Binita was taken to Maya's house but the other two girls were kept in the office. After that, she never met the two girls, might be they were sold elsewhere.

The next day, she was again taken from Maya's house to the office which was an elongated hall with small cubicles, it was an international business trading centre where agents from Ethiopia, Nepal, Philippines, Indonesia and other nations were present. The girls were brought to the office at 9 a.m. and kept there till 2 p.m. Within this time they were auctioned as the highest bidder would take them away as their prized possession. They were asked to be very simple without makeup and all their clothing should be well covered over their body. Then they were given rest for two hours and again sent to the office at 4 p.m. till 1 a.m. She was kept for five days at Maya's place, Maya's son had tried molesting the girls. Binita along with four other girls were kept in a room that had no door, the attached room was of Maya's son. Binita and one girl from Sandakhphu (Darjeeling) were young and three other ladies were matured. So once while sleeping she felt hands on her body and when she woke, she saw it was Maya's son, so both the girls kicked him out of their room.

After five days, she was sent to Maya's sister and brother-in-law's place who were worse than animals. They used to beat up the girls in a line without any reason, like for instance if they were not taken by any Arab (sold off) the husband of Maya's sister used to literally kick the girls and beat them up with his belt and hands. She met a girl there from Sandakhphu who had been sold by

her agent to Maya. She was sent along with Binita to Maya's sister's place. There were 25 girls at Maya's sister's place. This girl from Sandakphu was taken by an Arab but was returned after five days. It was just during the time of the festival when the work load was heavy, she was made to work for long hours and after the cleaning part, she was returned, as she came to Maya's sister's place she was beaten up by the husband because she was returned. Many girls were from Nepal they were compelled to work for them. Some of them were aged like 50-55 years old. Binita was again taken to the office for the auction, there came an Arab lady who asked her whether she could look after her seven cats to which Binita had agreed but Maya's sister outrightly rejected that she would not go. Binita could not understand why she was not sent again the next day the lady came and asked Binita if she wanted to go, she was ready to go but her ma'am again came and stopped her and instead sent a girl from Nepal. Later that day she had heard her speaking over the phone to some people that there are some young pretty girls from Darjeeling who would do whatever they asked for, Binita had understood why she had been stopped twice and there had already been some planning that girls would be sold somewhere else which she assumed was not a good place.

Binita felt she had to do something to escape from there, she had one more phone which the agency did not know about. One had been snatched at the very beginning and the other was with her, but sadly she could not make calls with that number. She had to get a new registered sim card from there. There was one elderly lady around 40 plus who used to work for them, she too was from Nepal, and she seemed good and had understood the exploitation which was happening. She was allowed to go out and fetch the groceries. Binita pleaded with her if she could get her a sim card so that she could contact home, seeing the tears in her eyes this lady agreed and bought her a sim card to which Binita paid 1500 in Indian currency. After ten days she was able to contact home where she told everything about how she had been sold by the Darjeeling agent to Siliguri agent from there to Delhi agent and again at Dubai to Maya, a Nepalese agent who had been exploiting girls. The girl from Sandakhphu also had contacted her parents so through the embassy, they were able to track her and return her home, but she did not help any other girl even Binita. When the embassy contacted Maya's sister she was totally panicking as to how the girl had contacted, so they came over and started body checking. Binita had carefully hidden her mobile under the sofa and sim card she had inserted inside the sofa there was a small slit which was a good place for hiding it. They could not locate it. Thankfully,



Binita again called home and asked her brother to take her out from there as she had been exploited. The brother contacted a person from the health department who further contacted the embassy along with some other influentials. MARG an NGO from Darjeeling was contacted as well. When the embassy contacted Maya she told that Binita could be returned only after payment of Rupees 1 lakhs 50 thousand, from where her air tickets would be booked. Maya's sister would not allow her to go, as some planning had already been there for her. So she purposely allowed her to leave at 9 p.m. when her flight was at 10.15 p.m. She missed her flight. It was so well planned. The driver received a call from Maya saying that she could go to Arjun's (Maya's friend) place which was nearby so that she could take the flight the following day. As she reached Arjun's place there were more than 33 women kept. He was also an agent, the next day the embassy people came to Arjun's place for Binita. Arjun had warned her not to open her mouth about the exploitation, so embassy people took her and arranged her flight from Dubai via Doha to Delhi which was a 14 hours flight on 1st of July 2016.

Finally, she was home, her brother had come to receive her. She was very emotional while sharing this history as she had gone through a really bad time with people exploiting her and she was being bought and sold. After reaching home she also spoke to the agent but he would not listen to her at all and instead he and his wife spread false rumours that the girls who had gone to Dubai were into drugs and since they could not work due to their habit they were kicked out from the agency.

Presently she is at home and has remarried. Her husband is a driver and takes good care of her and her daughter. Her mother too stays with her. She says that her daughter is in class VI and is very good in her studies, she takes pride in that and wants to provide the best education to her.

#### 4.1.11 Case Study - 11

**Name:** Meera

**Age:** 35 years

**Marital status:** Married

**Income:** Dependent

**Address:** Kalimpong

**Trafficked to:** Oman

**Category:** Schedule Caste

Meera is a married woman of 35 years from the outskirts of Kalimpong. She looks very frail and sickly probably due to the situations she had experienced. As she started her conversation, she mentioned that her family consists of her husband who is 55 years who works as a carpenter, and two sons. The eldest one is 18 years and a dropout, and her younger son is 16 years and is studying in class X. She was married at an early age. It was in November 2017, that she was offered to go to Oman by her own eldest sister's son, who is working in Delhi. Since she had no basic education but had dreams to build a better house and to provide a better lifestyle for her family, this offer indeed seemed a big opportunity for her and her family. She was told that she would be provided Rs 25000/- per month where she was supposed to do only the household chores and look after the house. She was very nervous as she did not know how to speak in English and her Hindi too was not fluent. Since it was her sister's son Rohan who was pursuing her to take up the offer, she had a family talk where her husband enquired again whether it would be safe for her to go out and work. He took the assurance that nothing wrong would happen to his *Chema* (aunt). He also convinced them saying that she would be given an Indian owner with just one child, where she could easily communicate in Hindi. Before leaving he asked her to pay Rs.10,000 but she told him that she did not have money to pay and could give only Rupees 1500, which she paid to Rohan.

On the 14th of November 2017, she started from Kalimpong and reached Delhi, from Delhi she took a flight to Dubai, her sister's son had come to see her off, she reached Dubai on 19th of November, her driver came to pick her up and she was taken to the agency office, from there she was given to another agent. She had been taken on a tourist visa, so she was kept there for 12 days and there Dubai agency informed her that since she was a new worker she had the visa for Oman, so first she had to be sent to Oman, she was sold to an Oman agent where she was told

she would be given 90 Rihal which comes to Rupees 13,000 in Indian Currency. The means of communication was very difficult, she was taken to a house where the owner was an Arab, they had 6 sons and 3 daughters, and they had a huge house two-storied, with 10 rooms. She had to wake up at 5 a.m. and work till 11 p.m. She was very much exploited with work pressure and physical torture. Within six days she told them that she could not work, food given to her was very scarce. But she was not allowed to leave. She also told them that it was very difficult to communicate in Arabic or English. She also had given a call to Rohan and told him everything and that she wanted to move out from that house. To this, he said he would inform the Dubai agency and would send some members to take her out but after that, his mobile was always switched off. So, after working for a month, she was returned to the agency office in Oman by her owner. In the office she saw one girl who was from Nepal, so she started a conversation with her. Seeing this, the Arab agent became furious and started beating both of them mercilessly and even threatened to break their legs or kill them if again he found them talking. The agent also told her that she could not leave the place for two years as she had been sold to them by the agent from Dubai. She was made to sleep on the floor with one Nigerian lady who used to constantly monitor them. Even if she died she would not be allowed to escape from there. She was again sent to another house which the agent stated was a good one. So, Meera started working there for three months, it used to be more of sign language for conversation. Here, in this second house, she was just given 80 Rihal which comes to Rs.12,500 (IC). After three months the second owner himself returned her to the office due to communication problem. Though she requested him a lot and he told her he could not communicate at all. She then told the agency that she wished to go home as it was being very difficult for her to be there. But still, the agency would not allow her. She called home and pleaded with her family to call up the embassy and take her home. She thankfully got through one of her neighbours, who is a primary school teacher, she opened up everything to her and that she wanted to get back home. The agent was informed by the Nigerian lady about the phone calls as well as some checking that had already started for the agency from the Embassy. He understood that some message had gone out through her and he started beating her again in the office and also broke two of her mobiles. He also tried throttling her with the wire of the rice cooker, there were bruises all over her thighs sometimes he would even kick her. She was at her worst she felt she had been betrayed, humiliated and she would never be able to go back home but her inner voice told her that even for her children she had to

fight and escape from that place. She had understood by then that Rohan too was an agent who had been successful in selling his own *Chema* (Aunt). She had known about agents sending women abroad to work as domestic maids and had never given in, but knowing and trusting her sister's son Rohan was the biggest mistake she had ever made.

There was a lot of pressure made by the NGO (MARG), who had been informed by Mrs. Yuden Bhutia, a social worker from Kalimpong who had in the past rescued many girls who had been trafficked from Kalimpong to Pune, Coochbehar and other places. There was a constant networking update where the message was passed and then it was channelized to higher authorities as well. The Arab agency understanding the problems which would sooner rise, set up a plan to get rid of Meera, so they handed Meera's passport to a bus driver and told her that she had to travel by bus and go to a different owner who would come to pick her up at Selala. She started at 7 a.m. and reached Selala at 10 p.m. She was crying on the bus as she just wanted to escape from there and go home, she had been so hurt, abused and betrayed. On the bus, when she was continuously sobbing, she was spotted by two men who looked like they were from Rajasthan, so she spoke to them in Hindi and came to know they were Pakistanis. They inquired as to what had happened, so she told them that she was being beaten up by the agency and she just wanted to go back home. They allowed her to use their mobile phone to make an emergency call, they were all ready to provide help to her in every possible way they could. She quickly dialed her neighbour's number with whom she had confided everything so far and also updated her as to where she was being taken and she would have to go to a different owner, and she pleaded her to rescue her. The neighbour who in turn informed Mrs. Yuden, who immediately informed the organization. Due to the fast networking, the location was tracked; the embassy too called the person and took more details. The proper landmark was not provided to the embassy earlier since Meera could not give proper directions. When she reached Selala the authorities (One Punjabi person from Indian Embassy) had already reached due to the help offered by the two Pakistani men, by allowing her to make the calls and finally she was in safe hands. Meanwhile, the new owner too had come to receive her, but he returned as the embassy person started to inquire about Meera, so he escaped saying he did not have any information about the situation. Meera's passport too was handed over by the bus driver and she was taken to the immigration office which was like a jail. She had to stay for two more days for further enquiry and after that, she was sent home. She says that she is very grateful to MARG NGO, Mrs. Yuden

Bhutia, the Embassy, Darjeeling DM, and SP, who made every effort to bring her home safely. She also tells not everyone is lucky enough to be rescued in this way, but she wants all the youngsters and especially womenfolk going outside to other nations as domestic help or for any other work to have a proper work permit and not to travel on a tourist visa which is given just for three months, this brings a lot of difficulties. Proper verification is needed and a letter of approval from the immigration office will save individuals from various loopholes and misbalances in the work sphere.

#### **4.1.12 Case Study - 12**

**Name:** Kumari

**Age:** 28 years

**Marital Status** -Unmarried

**Income:** Rs 3500/month

**Address:** Darjeeling

**Trafficked to:** Pune

**Category:** Schedule Caste

Kumari is the youngest daughter of her parents. Her mother had been working in Pune for many years and would go to meet them once in two years. She had two elder sisters who were studying in class VIII who was 16 years and the other in class VII who was 14 years old. They were looked after by her grandmother as her father had passed away a few years back when she was eight years old. Her father was a very nice person and was loved in the village. Though, she has very little memory of him. He was a carpenter and used to go from place to place for work but he never let the family face any type of problem. After her father's death, the responsibility fell on Kumari's mother Kali, as she was a homemaker. To look after her three daughters was a great challenge for her. In Darjeeling, there is not much scope for employment if you are not educated. So Kali became determined to move out from Darjeeling. She met a man from her village who suggested she could work at Pune, as her earnings would be more, so she landed at Pune and started working. She had informed at home, that she was working in one of the clothing stores as a salesgirl, it had been more than four years already.

Kumari was very much pampered at home; she was the talkative one out of the three siblings. She used to miss her mother a lot though, her grandmother (Kali's mother), took extra care of all

of them. Kali used to send money home, every month. One day Kumari's mother called her eldest daughter to work with her, but she refused to say that she would continue with her studies and then would work. Kali then asked her second daughter but she too was not interested. In the end, Kali asked her youngest daughter Kumari to come over and that she would be admitted to a nice English medium school. Being the youngest, Kumari wanted to be with her mother and was extremely excited to be with her, so she agreed. Kumari was just 12 years old when she came, and she had beautiful dreams in her eyes to grow up and become a successful person and help people in her village. She had an ambition of becoming a nurse in future as she had seen many people in the remote village dying as they could not be reached to the hospital on time. Many deaths had taken place, one of them being her father. He was a healthy person, but she recalls once when he complained of severe chest pain, he could not be rushed to the hospital on time which took his life. So, coming to Pune, Kumari felt that she could get a good education and become a nurse and help cure sick people of her village. When she came to Pune, she saw that her mother had taken a small rented room in a slum area. She could see that the people around were not as she expected. The first few weeks went off well, and Kumari also spoke to her mother about the school as she was in class IV. Her mother suggested that the new session had not started, and she had to wait for a few more months. She did not see her mother going to work as well, Kali told her that she had taken a few days to leave from her duty. During this time, she took her too many places and bought her new dresses. Kumari was very happy to be with her.

One day she was taken by her mother to meet her friend who lived not very far from her place, 5-7 minutes by walk. She saw that there were many girls standing at the entrance welcoming them. They seemed to know her mother. They went inside and her mother introduced her to a lady who seemed nice. She offered some chocolates to Kumari and told Kali that there were some clients waiting for her. Her mother then asked her to wait for some time and she disappeared. Later that night, she told Kumari about the job that she does not work in the clothing store and that she had lied to all of them. She told me she had not been able to disclose to anyone, but then, since she was ageing, the clients preferred young girls. She had neither been able to make money, nor had she been able to send money home. Kumari was a good alternative.

She urged Kumari to help her by taking up the same profession. She, being just 12 years, understood and disagreed with her mother. Kumari was against it, she wanted to go back to her

home because she had come over to meet her mother with a lot of expectations and better dreams. Her mother was one lady who had become so cold even in her own blood relationship that again she forced her 12-year-old daughter to continue with her profession. She tried hanging herself when Kumari refused, seeing this Kumari stopped her. Her mother started to blackmail her every now and then. Finally, she had to give in to the flesh trade. Her mother Kali was the happiest and took her out and then again to her madam's '*Kothi*' where she herself used to work. Kumari understood that her madam paid some good amount to her mother. Her own mother had sold her into the brothel. After receiving the money, she was overjoyed. Kumari was sent to one room the next day and there was a line waiting for her 10-12 men. There was a very high demand for a virgin. She was all in tears as she recalled her home, her grandmother who did not know anything of this incident. All age groups of men, young and old lined up for her. There was an old man who was ready to pay a very high amount for her as she was a virgin girl, and it was a type of auctioning body. She had heard that he had paid a huge amount to the madam. He was 50 plus, he had come in and forced himself on her she was all in pain but there was no one whom she could count on, sometimes she had to entertain even 15 men in a day. Young girls were highly demanded. As they were vulnerable and would do whatever the clients demanded, Policemen also used to come, and they were in good relation with the brothel owners. Different categories of people came every day; some clients would just pounce on her like a wild animal tearing her apart. Whenever there was a young minor girl brought, they would immediately keep her underground in hiding, undergrounds were made in such a manner that an outsider would not be able to locate it. Sometimes it was covered with trunks and carpets, underground openings were very small and narrow just a lean person could only fit in.

She also tells men mostly want young girls, good looking and having a good figure. She tells one of her friends who was quite dark complexioned never used to get the proper price so always she had to offer herself at a very low rate. On asked whether she was spared during her menstrual cycle days, she says those days also she was not spared as she tells the whole bedsheet used to be covered in blood, but they would not at all be considerate. Clients totally refused to use condoms which she says would be a risk factor for her even though the madam's husband used to supply condoms, they used to bring it inside but did not use she tells those were the days which were worse than hell. Some used to come drunk and would force themselves on her. Some used to be as stinky in sweat and as if they had not bathed in days. Some used to be very violent, she tells

once one client used cigarette buds on her as she failed to do what he demanded. But she screamed and the matter was reported to the madam who warned him that he would be thrown out of the brothel if he did it again. She tells she used to just lie like a lifeless body. The greatest regret in her life is why God has brought her into the world through a woman who is not fit to be called a mother. She tells mother is someone who radiates warmth and protects her little ones; mother is a precious gift of God but not in her case. She tells after many years her sisters too came to know about her condition and they have drawn lines from their mother. There is no contact with her and even Kumari has been left by her family. She tells she was just a child whose childhood was taken away by her mother where she had to spend her entire years in the small rooms of the brothel instead of going to school and playing with dolls and with her friends. She has been brought out from the brothel two years back as she has been infected with HIV and undergoing her treatment. Currently, she has been working in a social worker's house who takes immense care of her and has been living with her. She is paid a monthly income of rupees 3500. She still has a dream of getting married to a nice man who would love her with no expectation, and she wishes to have a daughter with him whom she wants to make a nurse and fulfill her childhood dream of wanting to become a nurse and contributing to the society.

#### **4.1.13 Case Study - 13**

**Name:** Tina

**Age:** 18 years

**Present Marital status:** Unmarried

**Income:**Dependent

**Address:**Darjeeling

**Trafficked to:** Delhi

**Category:** O.B.C

Tina, a school going young teenage girl of 14 years was studying in class VIII. She lived with her father who was a driver and her grandmother. Tina had lost her mother when she was eight years old and her father was an alcoholic, who had started drinking after her mother's death. He used to come home late at night drunk and used to beat her up. Her grandmother used to side up for her but it seemed useless as he would not listen to anyone. She used to be forced to sit on a wooden chair with her hands and legs tied with a rope against the chair and he used to start beating her up with his leather belt and sometimes with a stick for hours. Her pleading and



crying would be unheard by him. Her father whom she looked up to as her idol had turned into a monster. She used to be a very talkative girl when she was small but she had gradually started changing as she grew. Her physical abuse and torture at home had been having a negative impact on her both physically and mentally. She had developed a phobia, whenever she used to see her father she used to run away and lock herself up in her room. She did not interact much with her neighbours, and she seemed to be quiet at home as there was no one who could help her come out from this situation. She had two close friends in school but she was afraid to tell them about what was going on.

One day, one of her friends introduced her to one boy named Raj. He seemed to have some admiration for Tina, so he had requested her friend to introduce him to her. They met in front of the school; the boy seemed to be older than Tina. Though Tina was not interested due to peer pressure, she agreed to talk to him. Over the period of time, the friendship developed into a love affair. Tina had started changing as she had confided a lot in Raj, who was there for her at all times. One day, Raj said he would be going to Delhi as his uncle lived there and he had invited him to come over. So Raj left for Delhi, Tina started missing him and they used to have long telephonic conversations. Ten days passed, Raj invited Tina to Delhi but she was hesitant in the beginning, as she had never travelled alone. But Raj requested her so much that she finally told yes. He told her not to tell anyone about her trip to Delhi. Tina gained confidence from Raj and asked for some money from her grandmother saying she needed to buy books in school and pay her tuition fees. With almost three thousand, she left for Delhi.

It had been a week that Tina was missing; her grandmother and her father were out searching for her. Her phone was switched off. They alerted the police and a missing complaint was filed. They had heard that NGOs would be able to help them find Tina so they went and approached MARG, an organization that works for combating Human Trafficking. MARG tried understanding the situation and started investigating by visiting her school. There, they understood that she had not attended school for almost a month, the father and grandmother had no information about this. They also spoke with her classmates who informed that she had been seeing a boy called Raj and both of them had not been seen for a month.

After a week of reporting to the police, the grandmother received a call from an unknown number. It was from Tina, she seemed to be panicking and asking for help but before she could

ask anything the line got disconnected. Her grandmother immediately went to the police and informed the matter. The number and the location were traced to Delhi. So, Delhi police were alerted and finally with the help of MARG and police Tina was rescued. She told that as she reached Delhi, Raj had come to pick her up at the railway station and had taken her to his uncle's place. When he introduced her to his aunty and his cousin brothers, they all seemed to be very happy seeing her. They inquired about her journey and her home. The next day, Raj had some work so he went out with his cousins never to return. Tina started panicking and did not know where and what had happened to Raj. She was crying, aunty came overtook her inside one of the rooms and locked her from outside. She could not understand what wrong she had done as aunty seemed to be more furious not like what she had seen in the beginning. Then she came over after an hour and told her to be ready for the night as some clients would be coming to see her. On inquiring about Raj, she told her that he has been an agent for a long time and has sold her; she just could not accept this was happening to her as she had loved Raj and trusted him. But the reality was that he had sold her for 1 lakh rupees. Both young and old men started coming but she fought with them and did not allow anyone to touch her. She had bitten one old man who was rough and trying to pounce on her. She was then locked and beaten with no food and water for almost three days. Then all of a sudden when she was still locked there was a raid in the house early in the morning and luckily she was rescued by the Police and was sent for counselling and finally after two weeks she was sent home. Though her father was a brute man who was an alcoholic and used to derive sadistic pleasure by beating up his daughter, now after rigorous counseling, he too has become much sober. Her grandmother is always there by her side and very supportive. Though she did not continue schooling she is determined that she will complete her education from distance learning. She wants to be independent and she wants youngsters to stay away from men like Raj in the society who are trying to trap young innocent girls in their illegal rackets and ruining their lives by playing with their emotions.

#### 4.1.14 Case Study - 14

**Name:**Biva

**Age:**21 years

**Present Marital status:** Unmarried

**Income:**Dependent

**Address:**Kalimpong

**Trafficked to:** Delhi

**Category:**O.B.C

Biva used to live with her family, which consisted of her father, mother and younger sister. Her father was a driver while her mother was a homemaker. Biva was a school dropout as she failed in class VIII after which she did not go to school again as she did not want to continue her studies. Her younger sister was presently in XI and 17 years of age. Daily life was a big struggle for them as her father was the only earning member of the family.

There was a need for Biva to start some work but since she did not have much confidence in herself, she kept delaying. Sometimes, she used to give tuitions to the nearby children from which the groceries could be purchased for her home. But this too was not on a regular basis. She had a very close friend who stayed nearby and she too had been a dropout. They used to spend time together, going out, checking out new places etc. They had a very close bond which also made their families bond stronger. One day, Biva's friend met one man from their locality, who was an agent who used to send girls abroad especially to the Middle East countries or the Gulf countries where the salary would be almost Rs.35,000 IR. They had to work as housemaids and the man also spoke about the different facilities that would be given with some extra pocket money and clothing. The girls were very excited to go abroad, so the dates were fixed, their passports ready. The man had assisted them in all their preparations to go abroad. He seemed to be in his late 30's and seemed very gentle and soft-spoken. In this avatar no one could doubt him to be a fraud, anyone would trust him. He had great convincing skill. Biva, though hesitant was convinced that she could earn big and help her family by earning. The man's comforting words and the assurance made her take a firm decision of going. It was during the early march of 2018, they were supposed to go to Dubai. The man volunteered to drop them till Delhi from there the other agent would come and pick them up. They started their journey from Kalimpong bidding farewell to their families. They reached New Delhi. As they were waiting on the platform for one

person to pick them up, some people approached them and started inquiring as to where they were going? They found it quite surprising and strange to see people coming and asking about their whereabouts. So, Biva answered them saying they had come to meet their cousin which had been taught to them. On further interrogation, Biva's friend replied they had come for work. But the group did not seem to be satisfied with that answer, even the agent was asked, to which he replied that since they were from the same place and these two girls were going to Delhi he had volunteered to escort them.

On asking as to why they were interrogating, the group introduced themselves as members of the NGO and their work is to question people in a very simple way as to where they were travelling to. They asked Biva who told them that they were there for work purpose. The NGO members started asking for the appointment letter which could not be provided. Then her Friend was asked separately as to where they were heading to, to this she replied they were going to Dubai for work and that the man was the agent who would be dropping them. The agent on hearing escaped from there when he understood the situation. The NGO members informed the Police but by the time the Police arrived he was nowhere to be seen. So the girl's passport was just for a tourist visa, and even the girls were not informed as to whose house they would be working in. The girls unknowingly had already been trafficked. They had been already sold to the agent in Delhi and they were made to wait on the platform so that the new agent could come and pick the girls. The girls were sent for counselling and their families were called in and handed over. Their families too were counseled. It was also understood from other sources that the man had been sending girls to the Middle Eastern Countries, they were being sold from one agent to another but these were not known to the girls who were ready to be sold to other agents in Dubai. Thankfully, because of intervention by the NGO members both Biva and her friend were saved.

#### 4.1.15 Case Study - 15

**Name:**Ranjana

**Age:**28 years

**Present Marital status:** Married

**Income:** Rs 4500/month

**Address:**Kalimpong

**Trafficked to:** Delhi

**Category:**Scheduled Caste

Ranjana, a very hardworking and sincere lady, came from a small village in Kalimpong. She used to earn her living by working as a housemaid in a primary school teacher's house. Her husband had died recently due to tuberculosis. She had admitted him in Kalimpong hospital where he was already at his later stage and chances to get cured was less. Initially, when he had been diagnosed, some medicines had been prescribed for him, sometimes, there was no money at home to buy the medicines and other times he did not take his medicines regularly. His health started deteriorating and he threw up blood from his mouth. Thereafter, he was immediately rushed to the hospital again but the doctors could not save his life, he died.

Ranjana was left with a son of 9 years and a daughter of 6 years. After her husband's death things started to change, she had to work for more hours as she was the only breadwinner of the family. There was a huge responsibility on her shoulder. Her health too was affected due to overstress. She met a lady who was her neighbour, who assured her of a good job in Delhi where she could earn better to look after her family. She had no option but to take up the job which was a housemaid job, so she left her children with her mother and headed to Delhi with the lady. The lady on reaching Delhi took her to a place which she stated was her far off relative's home. But, they were many members from different places, she could not even understand in which language they were conversing. It did not seem like a family, as there were many girls (approximately 5 to 6) and males too, who looked like some paying guest or something. At night time she was told by the lady that she had some appointments so she would meet them and come back soon but she disappeared. Then, one of the ladies came and told her to get dressed for the night as clients would be coming. She was surprised and asked her about the other lady, the answer she got was that she was an agent who had bought her for 1 lakh rupees from the other lady. She did not believe her and said she would go back home. She was stopped by the men, the

ones she had seen in the house. They were actually the 'Dalals'. The madam had gone somewhere and had returned, she was very rude. She became very angry with the men asking them why they paid so heavy amounts for the married women. Finally, after a long debate, she came over to Ranjana and told that this was a call girls operation from home, so she had to get ready. Ranjana refused and pleaded to go home but was denied. She was locked in a room and men were sent one by one. They too beat her up with rods when she resisted, she was raped for a week by many men. In Kalimpong, the lady had reached the village. Ranjana's mother did not have a phone so she went to meet the lady and inquired about her daughter and pleaded if she could connect her with Ranjana but the lady refused. This led Ranjana's mother to approach an NGO who started questioning and finally she had to give in and take them to Ranjana who was rescued after a month of her imprisonment in that house, where she had been sold, trafficked and exploited both physically and mentally.

Finally, because of her mother, she was rescued and a lot of counseling was given to her. She is back home. She has remarried and her husband supports the family also. She is living for her children, even when those incidents keep haunting her. She has started her work as a housemaid. She has learnt to deal with life and do her best for her children. The lady was taken into custody as well as the building in Delhi too was raided by the Police.

#### **4.1.16 Case Study - 16**

**Name:** Daisy

**Age:** 23 years

**Present Marital status:** Married

**Income:** Rs 4000/month

**Address:** Darjeeling

**Trafficked to:** Haryana

**Category:** Scheduled Tribe

Daisy a young girl of 23 years old from Ghoom Jorebunglow, Darjeeling was the only daughter of her parents. Her father was a driver and mother, a homemaker, who had opened a small shop and both mother and daughter used to run the shop. Though, their earnings were very less it helped in the house. Daisy's mother though uneducated was very talented. She used to do a lot of knitting and used to sell small knitted, woolen baby suits and mufflers. People used to come

over and buy the products to gift anyone in and around the village if any new baby was born. Daisy too used to help her mother by sitting in the shop and knitting.

One day, a well-built man visited the shop and wanted to buy some chips and sweets from the shop. He seemed to be a non-localite, and not very familiar with the place. He started asking Daisy as to the house of a jawan named Manoj Singh, but there was no one who belonged from that place. So, he introduced himself as a jawan from the army and that he was very close to Manoj. He said that he had come over searching for his friend as it had been long, both had taken early retirement and had not met. The only thing he knew was that he was from Darjeeling. He said that he would take down her number and gave her his number so that in case of any information about Manoj he could be informed.

The next day the jawan came to the shop again inquiring about Manoj and requested her to inform if they received any information and promised to stay in touch, as he would be returning. They were in touch over the phone and that he had a fondness for the simplicity of the people from hilly terrains. After two months he came over and asked her for marriage. Though Daisy did not know what to say she too developed feelings for him and wanted to get married. Though the man seemed to be in his mid-30s for her age it did not matter. So he was warmly welcomed and within his stay, for two weeks the marriage was conducted. Her parents too were very happy as he was a very witty and humorous person. He had come with his uncle as his mother was not keeping well so his father had to stay back to look after her. She was taken to Haryana after her marriage. When she reached his place, things were totally different. He was not an army man, he had lied. She could not use her mobile. She was not treated as a wife but treated worse than a maid as she had to wake up early in the morning, do the entire household work, washing, cleaning, cooking etc. Her husband's attitude started changing and the father of the house and the brother also forced themselves on her. After a week's time, she was sold to another old man for some thousands, that's all she knows. She was taken to another very remote area in Haryana, she was not able to contact home at all. His wife had died so to take care of his three children she was bought there as his wife. In Haryana, the ratio of females is very less in comparison with the males because of female infanticide, as a result, they have to bring brides from other states like Assam, West Bengal, Bihar etc. One day, when the old man was not well and was sleeping, she

ran away from his house and reported to the nearest Police station. Later NGOs were contacted who helped in bringing her back home.

#### **4.1.17 Case Study - 17**

**Name:**Shyna

**Age:**25 years

**Present Marital status:** Married

**Income:**Dependent

**Address:** Kurseong

**Trafficked to:** Bengaluru

**Category:** Scheduled Tribe

Shyna is a very simple and good-looking girl from the tea garden, Ambotay of Kurseong. She had her parents who were both working in a tea garden. She had one younger sister and one younger brother. The income was too less to educate all the three children. So, Shyna had to move out of the house in search of a good job. Though, she was not educated she would not be getting a proper or secured job but had to work so to help her family. She met one lady in Kurseong town who told her she would get better opportunities if she went to Bengaluru but for that, she had to undergo training of three months in Siliguri. The job was to work in a beauty parlour. As the lady stated that there is lot of money in beauty salons, not like what it is in the small towns. She said that clients give huge tips if they are satisfied.

She did not have money to pay for the training. She refused the job as neither she was educated, nor could she give the amount of Rs.25,000 for three months course. The lady said that though the beauty parlour was not hers it was her friends, so she would speak to her about some negotiation of the training fee. After two days she met the lady again who told her if she could give Rs.10,000 and the rest of the amount could be paid once she started practicing. She tried asking her friends and relatives and finally, she could make it to Rs.6,000 and not more than that. She again requested the lady if this could be accepted and later, she would pay it together. So, finally, it was accepted. Shyna became very happy. She pleaded with her parents as she was very interested. They allowed her to go but to keep informing them about her whereabouts. They did not have a landline or a mobile but one of her friend Lali had in the neighbourhood. So she



promised she would call Lali's number and inform them. Lali also kept the lady's number. This lady was a stranger, Shyna had met her in a shop where they were buying some eatables and then the conversation had started. So she came to Siliguri where she was trained for three months in a very big beauty parlour. She also met a girl from Darjeeling who was training along with her, they became very good friends. So, after the training, they planned to go together to Bengaluru. They reached there and seemed pretty excited about being in such a big city. They felt that things would be good with lot of high expectations. The day when they reached, they were asked to take rest in a flat and there was a proper food arrangement for them. Even the madam seemed to be very kind and friendly.

The next day they were taken to the parlour which was a unisex parlour and they started off with the work. It seemed a very busy parlour as customers, both males and females, kept flocking. It was a very hectic day for them. They had been promised that starting they would be given Rs.10,000 and slowly according to their work there would be an increase. The girls who had come from a remote area where hardly they had any income, felt it was a great offer. The madam seemed good initially and also asked them to groom themselves, using makeup when they were servicing the clients and they were also given uniforms along with aprons. Everything seemed just fine.

After two months when they were well trained, the madam asked them to give spa treatment that is massages to the male clients. Even when there were the male co-workers, she insisted that the girls go to each of the cabins, which were very small rooms where just one small bed and one table could fit in. They hesitated because giving a massage to a male was not mentioned earlier to them. But the madam forced and blackmailed them saying that they had not even paid the whole amount for the training so she would inform the police that they were found stealing money from her drawer and would be put behind bars. This was the simplest way of blackmailing the girls and pushing them into illegal activities. Both the girls refused as they could understand her intention. There was no chance of escaping but one day, Police raided the parlour as they had heard about the illegal activities taking place. The girls were also taken into custody and when on inquiring they told how they were forced to give massages to male clients in the parlour, finally they were rescued and after counseling they were sent back home. She is married at present and her husband takes care of her.

#### 4.1.18 Case Study - 18

**Name:**Shona

**Age:**22 years

**Marital Status:** Married

**Income:**No disclosure

**Address:** Darjeeling

**Trafficked to:**Kolkata

**Category:** Others

Shona was from a small village in Darjeeling, they were five children of her parents who were daily wage labourers. So, managing a big family was a big responsibility. She was the second child after her eldest sister she had two younger sisters and one brother. She was in the village when she fell in love with a boy who lived in the same village. She had been dating him for many months then they decided to get married. After marriage, he brought her to Kolkata, saying his family, in-laws, stayed there, so he wanted to introduce her to them. She was just 15 years old then. He brought her and kept her in a separate room, where she was introduced to some members of his family. After two days her husband disappeared and on asking his family members they told her that they were not his family. But in actuality she had been sold in a brothel, she was told by the madam, who was also introduced as his aunt, that her husband was their agent who supplied girls to Delhi. She does not know at what price she was sold. But she realized that young minor girls are more in demand so she could have been sold at a bigger amount. She was forced into prostitution, (*Dhanda*) by the madam. Though she hesitated she was beaten up and kept in the darkroom without food and water until she gave in and surrendered to the wishes of the madam. It was very difficult for her initially but finally, she got used to it under compulsion and circumstances. By the time she was 18 years old she conceived, the customer promised to marry her, she gave birth to a daughter. After the birth, the customer who had assured her that he would marry her and take care of the child also disappeared. She now realizes that it was one tactic of the customer as Shona did not charge him, whenever he wanted to be intimate with her and even her madam did not charge him any amount as he would be marrying her soon, this was the practice inside the brothel. Shona understood that people were all selfish and wanted to take advantage of her. Even the baby was a caesarean baby, so she was admitted

to a private nursing home where she had to spend almost Rs.20,000. She had thankfully made gold necklaces and silver bangles which she sold off and gave to the nursing home. There was a lot of demand from the clients that even when her baby was one month old she had to leave her baby and go with her customer. They did not understand that she was still in her post-maternity phase, where she was breastfeeding her child with a heavy heart she had to give her baby under the care of the madams. Her madam was very happy that she had a daughter who was of eight months, as for them it is lucky to have a baby girl as they can earn more. She also told Shona that when she grows old her daughter will be there to earn and take care of her. These words really hurt her very much, as no mother would want her daughter to be a prostitute. She had been tricked, betrayed and sold off into a brothel where there was no chance of escaping. But she was really worried and did not want her daughter to take the same.

Girls were monitored by a lady guard inside the brothel to stop the girls from running away or when there were fights inside. Shona had won the confidence of the lady guard, so she could also go outstations as demanded by her clients.

She came to Siliguri with one of her clients, she shared about her plight that she would never want her daughter to be there working in a brothel. The client suggested that she could talk to a member of the NGO in Siliguri. Shona teamed up her spirit and for her daughter's sake, she approached the NGO member and pleaded if she could take her baby and look after her daughter. But legally it was not possible as the baby has to be handed over to infant shelter homes. There was a lot of running around as to who would be willing to keep the child but to her dismay, all the homes refused to keep an infant of nine months then and only five and above would be kept. So, finally after much crying and pleading one of the NGO members finally agreed to look after her baby at her own risk after the legal paperwork was made not for adoption but as a caretaker till she reached the age of 18.

Shona started missing her daughter so once in two weeks, she used to visit her daughter, within this time she met one Bihari man, her previous client, whom she had met years back. So when he came to meet her again, she requested that he take her away. Both of them managed to run away from the brothel as she had built trust from her madam who was of the surety that she would not run away as her daughter was in Siliguri so the keys were given to her. Morning at around 3.40 am, she had asked for the key saying that her customer had to leave early, so both of them had

escaped from the brothel. Though ‘*Dalals*’ were all around searching for her she had already left. The man is a tailor by profession, who accepted her knowing the fact of her past life. He also introduced her to his family and now they are happily married. She is now working and helping her husband in his shop. She is very skilled in making different embroidery designs on clothing like in dupattas, kurtas, shawls etc. She keeps in touch with the NGO member though she cannot take her baby she has to wait till her daughter is 18. But she is very happy that she has a very loving husband who has accepted her, his family and also her daughter. She wishes to do everything she can to take care of her daughter, especially for her education.

#### **4.1.19 Case Study - 19**

**Name:**Kakoli

**Age:**17 years

**Present Marital status:** Unmarried

**Income:**Dependent

**Address:** Siliguri

**Trafficked to:** Kolkata

**Category:**Scheduled Caste

Kakoli a class X student, studying in Siliguri. She came from a middle-class family. She was interested in art, painting, writing poetry and making new friends. She was a bubbly girl and very interactive. Kakoli’s father was a L.I.C (Life Insurance Corporation) agent and mother a homemaker and Kakoli was their only child. Both the parents did their best for her. She was in one of the best schools, she had also been admitted to the dance school, she was a trained classical dancer and for her singing, her teacher used to come and teach her at her home.

She used to go for her tuition after school and her mother used to escort her every time. She was very much loved by her family and friends. In other words, she was a pampered child. There were many students who used to bring mobiles to school, though there was a rule that mobile phones were not allowed inside the school, some of them used to hide and bring, so even Kakoli had developed the interest of possessing a phone as she had heard that through social media she could connect to many friends all across the globe. In the past, she had heard about pen friends where they used to write long letters to one another and used to wait for days excitedly waiting

for the letter to reach. But at the present it was instant, they did not have to wait for days for the reply. She too longed for friends through social media as she had heard her friends talk about their new Facebook friends. So, she happened to open a new account and she got a friend request from one boy Prasenjit who was from Kolkata. He seemed good looking and with no second thought, she accepted the request. They started chatting and it seemed the boy was very understanding who used to listen to all her problems as well as give her advices. She had not mentioned this to her parents. Their friendship started to grow in no time. Within two months of friendship, he came over to meet her in Siliguri Junction. He had requested her not to tell anyone, not even her best friends. So she got down from the school bus at Junction and went rushing to meet her Facebook friend. On seeing him, he was not the same person as in his profile. He was a different person much older but not that bad looking also. So, she inquired as to why his photo was different, he said it was a surprise for her and he wanted to check whether she would continue her friendship or leave him. She told him she would never leave him for friendship's sake. They went for tea and then he requested her if she could come with him to Kolkata, to this she denied. But after much pestering from his side, she finally agreed but promised to return the very next day after reaching Kolkata. Next day, she was ready for school in her uniform but instead of going to school she went and met Prasenjit, both of them seemed very excited and happy about their togetherness and friendship. They were ready to leave for Kolkata but were spotted by members of Tiny Hands Society (NGO) they suspected something unusual as the girl was a minor in her school uniform. On questioning, the boy stated that he was her brother and that her mama (uncle) was not keeping well so both of them were going to see him. The girl seemed to be quiet, so they were separately questioned but there was a mismatch of all the answers. The members warned the girl to spill the beans before it was too late and that they would be handed over to the Police, to this the girl started crying and then relayed the entire story. The boy was handed over to the Police. The girl had already been sold into one of the brothels, she did not know that she was being trafficked. The monitoring and intervention of the NGO members had saved her. Her parents were called, they had no idea of what was happening as she had never informed them. She was taken home by her parents and before that the members of the NGO also counseled her as to what could have happened to her and what has happened in the past to other girls. So, this way she was rescued from the grip of trafficking.

#### 4.1.20 Case Study - 20

**Name:** Shabnam

**Age:** 35 years

**Marital status:** Married

**Income:** Rs 4000/month

**Address:** Kalimpong

**Trafficked to:** Delhi

**Category:** Others

Shabnam was from Kalimpong but had been staying in Siliguri for many years as her family had moved in for better job opportunity. She was a young girl when she was lured by a married man from Siliguri. So, by the age of 14, she became his second wife. His first wife too was living with him and from her he had three children. He was from a Muslim community where polygamy is allowed. Her husband was almost 36 years at that time of marriage. He was a tailor, who used to take care of both his wives. But it was not sufficient for both of them. They started looting people in the trains by offering food to strangers and making them unconscious and then looting money, gold, silver, watches, bangles and valuables etc. and this way they made some extra income for themselves.

After two years at the age of 16 she gave birth to a son and more income was required due to the extra expenditure after the birth of the child. Though her business was to make people unconscious in the trains and take their valuables and before the passengers came to their senses she, her husband along with his first wife would get down at the next platform before they could be caught. They had hired the workers of the train as well who would provide information as to which party had more valuables. They never got caught, she tells that mostly they would target honeymoon couples or newlyweds going for their vacations. She says that the dresses and their attitudes used to reflect on the valuables they had. It had become a great source of income-generating medium and they used to divide the valuables between themselves.

Over the years, she met a person who promised her a great job in Delhi, after her husband passed away. The first wife started working in Siliguri but for her and her son she had to find a good job as just looting in the trains were not sufficient. She left her son with her mother and came to Delhi, but she did not realize that the man had sold her in a brothel there and disappeared. She did not understand that she was sold, she was just 25 then. There was no chance of escaping from

the brothel, she was forced into prostitution. She was a very attractive lady with big, beautiful eyes, a fair complexion, and smart. Her madam started trusting her and finally offered her more money if she brought girls from her village. She then accepted and contacted some of her friends in Siliguri who would send girls to Delhi, and she would go to receive them. She too had become an agent. This went on for five months where young girls and women were promised jobs in Delhi, and they were brought by Shabnam and put into the brothel. She had known a local auto driver from that area who was hired for picking and dropping the ladies. She started getting a good commission from this activity. But after five months, someone had informed the Police that she was an agent who was trafficking girls, so she was being tracked, which she did not know. Once when she had come to Siliguri to take some girls, she was caught red-handed boarding two girls into the auto and she was convicted and sentenced to 7 years of imprisonment. There was no chance of escaping even by offering money. So, after 7 years of staying in jail, she was released. She continued the work as a sex worker and came back to Siliguri. Now it has been two years that she has given up that profession and has joined an organization which provides handicraft skills, which also gives her satisfaction when she makes ponchos, pajamas, necklaces, earrings which are sold. She is happy with her earnings, though, she earns just Rs.4000 per month it gives the immense happiness that she has been trying to forget her past, she had done things where she would never be forgiven. She had been sold, trafficked and she herself had also trafficked girls from the remote villages and sold them into the brothels. She regrets her past but she just prays and asks for forgiveness from God and prays not to put her into those types of situations again where she had suffered a lot physically and mentally.

She is remarried and also thankful that her son is a grown-up boy now and working in a mobile shop, who earns almost Rs.7000 per month. He takes good care of her, and they have everything at home from fridge, television, washing machine etc. They live in a rented house.

#### 4.1.21 Case Study - 21

**Name:**Punu

**Age:**26 years

**Marital Status:**Married

**Income:** No disclosure

**Address:**Siliguri

**Trafficked to:**Pune

**Category:** O.B.C

Punu was from Siliguri, both her parents had passed away when she was very small. She cannot recall when, so she used to live with her aunt, who was her father's sister. She had her own family and Punu had to do all the household tasks, she was never sent to school. Her auntie's two children used to go to school. She was scolded for every petty work she did, so one day when she was 14 years old she ran away from her auntie's house, she did not know where to go, so she met an uncle '*Dalal*' who was from the same village so she requested him to find a job for her. The uncle told her there was a great opportunity in Pune and sold her at the red-light area there.

She says that she was forced into prostitution, almost every day she was raped by the customers. By the age of 16, she was pregnant with her customer's child, and she soon gave birth to a daughter. She feared that her daughter too will be exploited and used by others which she did not want. She had also seen how small girls by the age of 12 were injected and given medicines so that their bodies developed quickly and could be traded for flesh for generating more income. Fortunately, one fine day there was a raid in the brothel and she along with many girls were taken to the Police station, though, her madam and her bodyguards had threatened them not to open their mouth if they were ever caught by the Police. Punu fearing for her child approached the NGO member who had accompanied the Police in the raid. She was rescued and after much counselling she was sent back home. In Siliguri, she met a member from an NGO whom she requested help especially her daughter who was already five years by then. So, her daughter was handed over to a children's home and looked after well and given proper education. She was very much pleased with her decision but for herself, she had no option but to give into prostitution. Her madam kept insisting on bringing her daughter back as when she grew older her daughter would look after her. Punu was determined never to bring her child back to the brothel, though she went to visit her regularly.



Punu had been staying with a man, her boyfriend, who was very close to her but he too had been infected with HIV and he passed away. There was more pressure from the madam to get her daughter after the death of her boyfriend. She started going to Gangtok, where she used to halt at hotels, sometimes at Namchi, sometimes at Jorethang and earn for herself. She was a Flying Sex Worker wherever she was called she used to go. Slowly, it started with more Police raids in the hotels, at one time she was nearly caught by the Police but due to the warning from the hotel staff, she managed to escape. She tells that once taken to the Police station they have to pay money to the Police as demanded by them, so it became difficult for her to even take up hotels. She met one lady who advised her to take up the work as a roadside construction labourer and that even ration would be provided free of cost from the Sikkim Government. She agreed and took up the work immediately. There she met a young Nepali boy, who was also a construction worker and fell in love with him. Soon they were married, after a few years he became very serious with tuberculosis and almost at the dying stage but she took care of him and finally he recovered and now she is working in a shop and doing very well. Her daughter is 10 years old and living with her. She goes to school and is in class IV, she is very happy with her family and they have built their own house. She tells she never got the loving care and protection from her parents but she tells she will always be there for her daughter; nothing can come in between them. Her daughter too is very caring and understanding, she has understood what her mother was into and how she was forced to do certain things which she disliked. She says that she will become a teacher and will never let her mother down and will take care of her entire family.

#### **4.1.22 Case Study-22**

**Name:** Chinni

**Age:** 29 years

**Marital status:** Married

**Income:** No disclosure

**Address:** Siliguri

**Trafficked to:** Bihar

**Category:** Others

Chinni is a young girl from Siliguri, whose father was a farmer and mother a housewife. They had three children since they could not look after them due to poor financial condition, they

thought of going to Bihar and settling there. Chinni's father came across a man who suggested that they go to Bihar as he had some known people who could help him find a job. On reaching Bihar, they found accommodation in a slum area. The next day they went to meet the person who was supposed to help them find jobs. This was a young man who took Chinni's father to meet one of the madam's, on having a talk with the madam she suggested if his wife was ready to entertain clients then she would pay him well. She totally brainwashed him into accepting her offer. With no further discussions, he agreed to keep her in the '*Dhanda*', where he was paid Rs.30,000 by the madam. Chinni's mother was forced to become a sex worker, as she was beaten up by her husband when she denied it. She finally took up the profession after being threatened by him. The entire family depended upon the money she earned from her clients. She did not want her children to follow her. Chinni had one younger sister and one brother. Chinni's father started working as an agent where he used to lure young girls and sell them from Bihar to different cities by promising to provide them good jobs. He had also brought in his sister in law and had sold her in a brothel, he had become so commercial in his thinking that relationships did not matter to him at all. He was making good money with this illegal business.

After four years of stay there, he thought of returning to Siliguri and came over and settled in Khalpara, a red-light area in Siliguri, where they continued their profession. Chinni was growing up, due to the surrounding, as all age category of men used to visit their place, one day her father found her inside the room with one boy who had come over as a customer. Actually, Chinni was just having a conversation and sharing some jokes but her father took it in a different way and forced the madam to put Chinni in the '*Dhanda*' along with her mother. When Chinni and her mother heard this they refused and a big fight rose between the father and the mother.

The father being very dominant did not want to listen to anything more he instead threatened that if Chinni did not start then he would put the younger daughter into the '*Dhanda*'. Out of so much threat and compulsion finally, Chinni was sold and she started her work as a sex worker, she was 14 years old. Chinni then got married to one of her clients and had a son when she was 21 years, but the client went away leaving her alone to take care of the child. She went to different places where she could earn more money as Flying Sex Worker.

Over the time her father died as he had contracted HIV and was suffering from other diseases as well. He was an alcoholic and also into drugs. He never opened up about his health issues. Her

mother too was caught by the Police as she had started working as a trafficking agent and luring minor girls from Bihar and selling them into the brothels. She was put in jail for seven years. Recently, in 2017, she was released. She continues with the same profession and mostly as a Flying Sex Worker, she goes to Asansol and brings money.

Chinni has two children both from her customers, elder son who is 5 years old, goes to a nearby school and a younger daughter is just a few months old. Chinni says that she has now left the work as a professional sex worker as she had got into a project offered by World Vision, which is salary-based, she has to work as a part-timer taking care of little children from around her area. This school has been opened by the organization to impart education to the children from the locality. Tuitions are provided by World Vision Organization for the children. She tells more children from the brothels have to be educated so that they do not indulge in this profession.

She tells that her childhood was not very good but she wants to provide the best to her children. Her second husband, who was also her client has agreed to stay with her and take care of her children. He is a Driver and earns Rs.7000 per month. She tells that she wants to have a very happy family just like any ordinary family. She says if good projects come her way, she would continue working and does not want to go back to the profession. Regarding her health, she had a caesarean baby and usually has pain in her stomach and joints. She just wishes life to move on in a better way.

#### **4.1.23 Case Study - 23**

**Name:**Raima

**Age:**38 years

**Marital Status:**Married

**Income:**Rs 4000/month

**Address:** Kurseong

**Trafficked to:** Delhi

**Category:** Others

Raima was from Kurseong tea garden area, when she was very young she was lured by her cousin sister who promised her a good job in Delhi. She stated that it would be for a housemaid, where she had to manage the household chores. She also told that it was her owner's friend who had demanded a housemaid so she had thought of taking Raima along with her. Her sister also

promised her security and nothing bad would befall her. Her father was a tea garden labourer and a daily wage earner; her mother had died when she was very young. Her cousin had built that confidence in Raima's father that she would take care of her. She had a way of touching both her eyes with her hands as a sign of promise that whatever she was telling was true. Since she was her cousin, they did not even suspect her.

Her sister took her to Delhi and kept her in one lady's house for a year as a housemaid. She was 12 years of age when she had come from Kurseong. It was not for long that Raima realized that her cousin was not working as a housemaid, but she was a sex worker as well as an agent for bringing girls from different places and selling them into the brothels. When she reached 13, she was sold into the brothel, she understood that it was just a way of bringing up the young girl so as to make her fit for the business trade as demanded by the clients. She was taken inside the *Kothi*, by a madam whom her cousin had introduced earlier. She had not understood as to why many girls were standing at the gate scantily dressed. She was asked to get inside one of the tiny rooms which had been arranged for her. After some time, there was a Punjabi man who came over and locked the door, told her that he had paid a large sum of money for her and that she had to do whatever he demanded. She was tensed and worried seeing the man, she could not understand what he was talking about, and then the man tried forcing himself on her. She pushed him hard, and he fell down on the bed, she started crying and asking for help but there was no one who would come forward to help her. He was a huge man, he caught hold of her and forced himself on her. She tells it felt like a nightmare, where she kept telling herself it was only a bad dream. She was bleeding and was in severe pain, she could not walk, the madam came over and gave her some medicines to which she denied, she kept it and went away. But the pain was so severe that there was no option left for her, so she had those medicines. She later understood it was a contraceptive pill and a pain killer. She was then given rest for a few days and after that, she was forced to become a sex worker. Her cousin also was there entertaining her clients. She was very angry with her for throwing her into this. On questioning why she had betrayed her, she replied that there was no other way for her to earn money. At home, they did not know that she had been working as a sex worker.

At present, her cousin sister has become blind. In the past, she had made many promises by touching both her eyes. She lost her vision in spite of consulting many eye specialists, there was

no hope for her to get back her sight. She says it is something like believing in Karma whatever we do comes back to us. Raima came to Siliguri after eighteen years of staying in Delhi, as she was not much demanded due to her illness she had been infected with tuberculosis, though after proper medication she has recovered. Presently, Raima has stopped working as a sex worker she has two sons from her clients. Both the sons are employed one has completed his class XII and the other has graduated. They are working as a salesman in one company. She has all the facilities in her rented room from television, table fan, laptop, refrigerator, washing machine and so on. She has joined an organization and is engaged in making handicrafts. She earns Rs.4000 per month but she says that she has her mental peace, her sons are very supportive and caring. She does not wish for anything more. She has bought land nearby. Soon she plans to move out from the rent and stay at her own landholding. She is married and is supported by her husband.

#### 4.1.24 Case Study - 24

**Name:** Mariam

**Age:** 26 years

**Marital Status:** Married

**Income:** No disclosure

**Address:** Kurseong

**Trafficked to:** Coochbehar and to Siliguri

**Category:** Schedule Tribe

Mariam was from Kurseong and was from a less fortunate background. Since her parents were both from tea gardens, their income was very less for survival. But with the closing down of the tea gardens, it became a more serious issue for their family to struggle for the daily meal. So, a person (*chachu*) from their village who was also a tribal man suggested he could help them if Mariam could be sent to work in Coochbehar as a housemaid. Parents were offered money along with ration and other requirements. Mariam was then brought to Siliguri by her *Chachu* (Uncle), from the same village. He was actually an agent who brought her and sold her to the madam, took his commission and disappeared. She was 12 years old when she was brought from her home. She was sold to a madam in Khalpara, a red-light area in Siliguri, first, she did not understand what she was expected to do as she was given so much of care and concern. She did not even feel that she was away from home as her madam had kept her in her place which was a

little away from the brothel. The house was very big and beautifully decorated. There were many workers who were assigned specific chores. Her madam had given instructions to other maids to take extra care of Mariam, to monitor her activities. As days passed by into months, and months into a year she was then shifted from her madam's house to Khalpara. She was 13 years, and she was to entertain clients who wanted to be with her. Her madam had been making a lot of arrangements as there was a high demand for a virgin girl. A large amount was given to her, so her madam seemed very excited.

She sold Mariam to a rich businessman of Coochbehar. She was taken there and raped by the old man. Mariam begged and pleaded with him not to force on her but he would not listen as he had already paid money to the madam. She was forced by the old man for many days and locked in a room which seemed to be situated in an isolated place. She was senseless and she could not remember anything after that. When she came to her senses, she saw there were other girls who were sprinkling water on her. Her stomach was paining she could neither stand nor walk. She understood that the man had returned her to the madam at Khalpara, Siliguri. She was given rest for three days then she was put in the '*Dhanda*'. She had to accept this profession as she had no other choice. There was no chance of escaping as well as the madam had many men guarding the place. They had also threatened that if anyone tried escaping their family would be hurt so no one had been able to escape as her men would track them down and they would be cut into pieces and killed. She also got pregnant and gave birth to a child.

After the birth of her daughter, she thought she could be away from these at least for some time. It was not so, it had been just 15 days after birth, where one afternoon she had placed her daughter outside in the sun as she was applying some oil over her body, a customer came over and approached the madam, on asking as to whom he wanted, he pointed at Mariam, knowing the fact that she had just given birth. Her proper recovery too had not taken place, so she had to leave her child with the caretaker and go with her client. Some clients were so violent some used to be alcoholics, who used to use a lot of violence at times, but she too learnt how to deal with these types of clients. She tells men of all walks of life used to visit the brothel, some were the rich class, the policemen, businessmen, students, auto drivers, rickshaw pullers etc.

Her daughter is in class VII and studying in a government school. Mariam vows that she will try her best to make her daughter an independent lady. She has married one of her clients. She is still

working as a sex worker, though she feels that one day she will come out of this and move to a different place.

#### **4.1.25 Case Study - 25**

**Name:** Naima

**Age:** 18 years

**Marital Status:** Unmarried

**Income:** No disclosure

**Address:** (Darjeeling)

**Trafficked to:** Siliguri

**Category:** Others

Naima comes from a family where they are four daughters. Her father was a labourer, he used to go to work sometimes and other times when there was no work, he used to be idle and stayed at home. Naima's mother was a housewife but taking care of a big family with six members was not so easy, since her father's income was very low. So, her family decided to come to Siliguri for better opportunity. When they came, they took a small room for rent. Without earning, life was a big struggle. Her father then sold her mother into a brothel on certain agreements made between the madam and him. Her mother refused to go but he started beating her up and threatened to put his daughters into the profession. So finally her mother gave in and started earning for the family.

It was a very relaxing time for her father as he showed no interest in searching for a job as he used to be home the whole day and wait for his wife to bring in the money. With his wife's money, he used to go and drink alcohol. Sometimes he used to fight with others and used to come home bleeding and injured. It was very difficult for her mother to look after four daughters and the household. Naima was the eldest daughter, she told when her mother used to go with her clients, men were coming to her house sometimes they tried taking advantage of the children but Naima was firm and she used to fight with them. It was not long when she too had to give in to the profession as the income was too little for the family to survive. She tells how she had wanted to study and had spoken to a member of the organization as well but it was her mother who did not allow her to study and stated that it was a total waste of time. It was her own mother who sold her into the brothel. She too became a sex worker. She was only 14 years old then. She was forced by her own mother to become a prostitute.

During this time, her three sisters used to be with her father at home when Naima and her mother used to go with their clients. One day her second sister started complaining of some pain in her private part who was of 9 years old. They found out that she was being raped by her father since she was 7 years old. He used to take her wherever he went, he had threatened her that if she opened her mouth he would kill her mother as well as all her sisters. So she was very scared to tell this matter to anyone. No one could even suspect that her own father had done this to her. They kept the matter confidential but the very next day, during the daytime when he was caught red-handed by Naima along with some members who raised an alarm and all the neighbours came and thrashed him in front of the public. He was handed over to the police and the daughter was taken to the hospital for treatment. She was very scared to open her mouth but after much counselling she revealed how she used to be given a pill and she did not feel anything, she used to feel very heated from inside and she could not understand what was happening. She was psychologically broken and then after few days, she was handed over to one of the organizations.

Naima told that she was so angry and would never forgive her father for doing such an inhuman act which was not expected from her father. She wishes that he dies a terrible death. The very next day, her mother committed suicide in the same rented room. Before she died she had been psychologically disturbed as people kept asking her whether she knew that her husband had been raping her daughter. In actuality, it was understood that Naima's sister had complained to her mother several times about the indecent act which her father made her perform. But she always tried to keep her silent and not to open her mouth as he would kill all of them. So, taking all the guilt, in her she ended her life by consuming an overdose of sleeping pills at night.

All the responsibility now fell on Naima for taking care of her two siblings. She had to be extra protective of them as she did not want them to be sex workers. After a few months, she handed them over to the NGO that would take better care of them. Once in a while, she goes to meet all three sisters. She continues working as a sex worker. Sometimes she goes to Jalpaiguri and sometimes to Asansol where she has more clients. She has become a Flying Sex Worker now as she says the business has gone down in Siliguri. Her health is fine and does not have any health problems. She also has a boyfriend from the locality with whom she wishes to get married and settle down.



#### 4.1.26 Case Study - 26

**Name:**Meena

**Age:**24 years

**Marital status:**Married

**Income:** No disclosure

**Address:** Darjeeling

**Trafficked to:**Siliguri

**Category:** Scheduled Caste

Meena was from a very poor background, her parents worked in the fields. She did not get the opportunity to study though she wanted to study. She was married to a milkman who used to sell milk around the area where Meena used to stay. He was older than her, she was in her teenage years, 14 years old probably, and she cannot remember her exact age back then. Her husband was an alcoholic and later stopped working and sold his cows; he used to stay idle at home. His parents used to provide just the required ration and the groceries. Later, they stopped giving and asked him to find a job. Her health was down and so was her husband's. Within three years of marriage, she had three children but all died due to miscarriage. She was very traumatized and had lost weight and was very malnourished.

It was becoming very difficult for her and her husband to survive as he had been habituated to drinking and he could neither work nor was he bothered about her. One day he took her to a brothel and forced her to work by entertaining the clients. She was caught and locked inside the '*kothi*' by the men who were the guards there. She was not given food for three days and was beaten up, finally, she had to surrender. Her money was taken by the husband directly, but later on, she started demanding her money and stopped giving it to her husband. She was a professional worker where she was high in demand.

Then one day a member from an NGO visited her locality and asked her whether she would be interested in selling handicrafts made by the members of the organization for which she would be given some percentage in the form of monthly salary. Though, she agreed for a few days after that she did not feel like continuing as she had already been habituated to earning more money and this was too meagre for her to fulfil her requirements. So she left the job and continued with her old profession. She used to go out with her clients, One day she had gone to a hotel with a married man, from around her area. So when she returned, there was a huge outcry people had

gathered outside her room and was threatening to kill her. The wife of the married man demanded she confronts her as she was all equipped to kill her. She somehow managed to escape from there with some of her known members. She could not return back to her room so she approached a member from the NGO for help. The member guided her and took her to a shelter home for counselling and rehabilitation.

But there were a lot of hardships that she faced in the shelter home; it was not like what she expected. There was a lot of pressure, strictness and rules beyond her imagination. She relays some incidents where she was restricted to using hands while eating which was already a habit for her, food was very scarce at times. She was also not allowed to use cream powder and makeup and was not allowed to adorn herself with accessories. There was a lot of verbal abuse which was worse than the brothels. She found the brothel to be better than the shelter home. She was made to work day and night and given only Rs.800 per month out of which Rs.500 would be deducted for her food so just Rs.300 was given to her. Her chores included washing, cleaning, taking care of other children. Almost everything had to be managed by her.

After a year of stay, she requested her shelter owner to allow her to go home for a few days. She had no desire to return, she understood that her life was worse than being in a prison with so much of restrictions imposed on her. She came out from the shelter home and worked in a beauty parlour for some time. Then she got back to the same old profession of a sex worker. She has a son and a daughter from her clients. She is taking care of both her children. She is happy with her job and does not want to go to a place where she is not accepted. She has her own house with two rooms. She keeps going around wherever she is demanded as a flying sex worker.

#### 4.1.27 Case Study - 27

**Name:**Ling

**Age:** 38 years

**Marital status:**Divorced

**Income:** No disclosure

**Address:**Darjeeling

**Trafficked to:**Mumbai

**Category:** Scheduled Tribe

Ling was from Darjeeling from a very well to do the family background. Her brother was a Pastor and her father was working in the village, her mother was a housewife. Over the years she met a boy from the same village and fell in love with him. Though he was a Hindu, he accompanied her on Sundays for church services as well. He seemed to be a very caring and loving boy. Her parents had no objection to her choice as there was liberty given to the children to make their own choice. They were ready to tie the knot as Ling was 20 years old and the boy was 22 years. Her wedding took place in the church with all family and friends coming over to bless them. After six months of marriage, Ling's insisted that he would take her to her In-laws place and keep her there for some days. Since the boy had been staying there with some of his relatives and he had told that his family lived in Mumbai. She was taken to Mumbai and kept in a rented room where they had to pay Rs.1500 per month to the madam but there was no sign of his family. He told that he felt very uncomfortable to mention it to her parents as his parents had died when he was young. So, overlooking this, Ling continued staying with him. She had been pregnant by then, her husband started demanding that she work in order to bear the expenses for the child. Her husband sold her to a madam in the red-light area and forced her to entertain customers. He used to stay idle and would take the money given by the customers. Soon, she gave birth to a daughter. The husband started drinking and became very abusive, he was no longer the same person whom she had met before marriage. He had sold her to the clients as she was beaten up if she did not agree to his terms and conditions. Clients used to come and pay her husband the amount. All the money used to be spent in alcohol and gambling. Once he attacked her violently as she refused a client who went away in anger. When she cried out for help others came rushing and then saved her. She was almost choked to death by her husband. She was then sold into a brothel by her husband. Ling then had a son with a customer, so she had to take care of her daughter who was five years and a son as well. Sometimes when customers used to come

she told that she had to leave her child in the hand of a caretaker, who takes care of the entire children of the brothel as well as does the cooking. She is paid by all of them as she brings the groceries, vegetables and sometimes meat. There is a common kitchen which is shared by four to five rooms and then she also takes food with them. She seems to be an elderly lady, who also had been trafficked and sold here in the brothel. Now since she has aged, she lives by cooking, babysitting for others who in return pay her some money.

She shares one of her frightful incident, where a man approached her for one night and agreed to pay her as demanded. She fed her children and locked them from outside and went with that man, she was taken to one of their houses and they were two other men. They started drinking alcohol and before sunrise she got up, dressed as she had to rush to her children whom she had locked from outside. On asking for the money, he started beating her up, tied her hand and choked her. She was almost dying but thinking about her children she built the courage to fight him off, she kicked him really hard and then she rushed out of the door, she only remembers him falling on the floor, she did not look back, and started running finally got into an auto and came to her room. When she reached she saw that Police had arrived since her children were crying inside the locked door. Others had informed the Police who had come to check. She cried and narrated how she had escaped from a man who had tried killing her. Her children were hungry and came crying to her when they saw her. Her clothes were all in tatters, she was bleeding from her nose. Her daughter begged her not to leave them alone. So, after that, she decided to return home. Though there would be no acceptance she was determined to bring her children along with her. Finally, she reached Siliguri and took up a rent but continued with her profession. Her daughter had started to understand things. She once went to a social worker and asked her to pray for her mother. She also narrated the difficulties her mother was going through. The social worker wished to provide help to the children by taking them out from the brothel. She contacted a children's home and admitted the daughter along with one more girl of her age from the same area.

Now at present, her daughter has finished her nursing training and will soon be appointed in one of the Hospitals. She has been offered Rs.20,000 initially, though she dreams of becoming a doctor. Her brother is studying in class VII in a nearby Government school. Most of the time when Ling is not around the caretaker takes care of him. She continues her work as a sex worker.

She plans to buy land and build a house soon. Her health is good, sometimes suffers from cough, fever, cold and she visits a nearby clinic.

#### **4.1.28 Case Study - 28**

**Name:**Baby

**Age:**38 years

**Marital Status:**Unmarried

**Income:**Rs 4500/month

**Address:** Darjeeling

**Trafficked to:**Jalpaiguri

**Category:**Others

Baby was from a tea garden area in Darjeeling. Her parents had died when she was very young. Her elder sister had told her about their death. They were three siblings, her eldest sister, Baby and her younger brother. Since growing up was a big struggle for them. Her elder sister used to work in the garden and look after both her siblings as responsibility had passed on her. In no time Baby too had joined her elder sister. Her elder sister got married when she was 16 years old. Her husband too worked in the garden as a labourer. Since her sister had to look after her husband's family as well, things started becoming very difficult.

One day Baby was approached by her neighbour, a lady who told her that she had a good offer ready for her. She also tried convincing Baby that work would not be as difficult as the tea garden work. Since her elder sister used to keep nagging her, she used to have fights with her. Many a times, she had thought of leaving the house and going out somewhere. When her neighbour gave her this offer she was more than happy to go with her as she would have to work as a housemaid and would be given a good sum of money as well.

Baby was 13 years old, so the neighbour informed her elder sister who agreed to send her sister to work as a housemaid as they trusted their neighbour. She was like their relative who used to come over every now and then. Sometimes, she would also give them food to eat and sometimes money to buy their groceries. They believed her and whatever she said. They started off from Darjeeling and reached Jalpaiguri, there she was taken to a house where a madam and her husband lived. Looking at her, madam was very happy and treated her well at least for the first

few days. Then she gave her a short dress which was way too short, but she insisted she wear it inside the house. She was asked to clean the house, like sweeping, mopping, cleaning the windows etc. She was happy doing the household chores.

After a few days, she was asked to apply makeup. Though Baby refused her madam kept insisting that she was very beautiful irrespective of her dusky complexion and with makeup on she would look more beautiful. Her madam herself started applying lipstick, powder, eye shadow for her. In no time there was a transition, she looked at herself in the mirror and she looked beautiful and much more mature than her age. She had to wear it for the entire day. Madam's husband used to go to work, she did not know what work he was doing, but her madam used to be home the entire day. So, after almost a week of grooming her, one day her madam told her that a guest would be coming over and she would have to take charge of looking after the guest. Then a huge truck pulled over in front of their place and out came a big Sardar with beard and moustache. He came inside the house and was offered cold drinks and then her madam pointed at her and told the Sardar that Baby was only 13 years old and a 'Kalee' as they used it in their terms to describe a virgin. Virgins are more in demand, and men are willing to pay any big amount. Then her madam told Baby to take the Sardar inside. As soon as she took him inside the room, he hurriedly latched the door and tried molesting her. She screamed and ran to the other corner of the room, he lay on the bed and asked her to undress. She became angry and told she would not do that in front of a man. He tried coming closer to her, she warned him not to come any closer she started screaming very loudly and beating at the door. The Sardar got angry and opened the door and told the madam to return his money as she was not willing. Baby complained to her madam that Sardar was trying to force himself on her. To this, the madam slapped her and told her that she had been bought by her from her neighbour and that the madam had full right over her. Hearing this, she was shocked, she had been sold and even her madam whom she was considering to be so good had bad intentions. She asked the Sardar to drag her inside the room. The Sardar being so physically huge and strong lifted her and took her inside the room, locked and opened his '*pagree*' and with his '*pagree*' he tied her hand to the bed and forced himself on her in spite of her resistance. She tells that it was a very painful and hurtful experience as he had pounced on her like a monster without even considering that she was a child. She started bleeding heavily and the bedsheet was all covered in blood. She was not even taken to the hospital, her madam acted as if nothing happened as she had already collected a

huge sum of money. She was given some pills and almost for a month she was in a bad state as she could not walk properly. She had severe stomach pain, fever, and while urinating there was blood drops. She tells that she can never forget that awful day, which she says was the worst day of her life. She even cursed her madam that when she dies let there be no one to offer water to her and have a painful death.

She regrets having trusted her neighbour, as she had cheated on her and had sold her off. She was again forced to sell her body to some more truck drivers who used to come over to her madam's place. After one more month of keeping her there her madam brought her to Siliguri and sold her at Khalpara area to another madam. She had no other option as she had to give in to whatever was demanded of her. So with all these betrayals, threat, abuses she had to give in to becoming a professional sex worker. So she continued being one, but after 22 years she gave up on this profession. She is presently working in a private clinic now she gets Rs.4,500/- per month. She also sells cosmetics and runs a small shop.

#### **4.1.29 Case Study - 29**

**Name:**Reshma

**Age:**22 years

**Marital status:**Unmarried

**Income:**Dependent

**Address:**Kurseong

**Trafficked to:**Bihar

**Category:** Others

Reshma is a simple and soft-spoken girl about 22 years of age from Kurseong. She had not been to school due to her poor financial background. Her family could not afford to educate their two children, Reshma and her younger brother. So, along with their parents, they too were lending a helping hand in plucking tea leaves and doing some labour work in and around the tea garden. Growing up was a big struggle for this family and both the parents were into the consumption of alcohol. Since they too were uneducated, they did not emphasize much importance of education for children nor impart them with life values.

Reshma had been at home doing household work and if anyone called her to work as a labourer in the field, she would go and work on a daily basis. Sometimes she would also go to the Tea Garden Managers house to assist in the housework. Reshma had a wish to buy a low budget mobile as she had seen some people using it to listen to songs through radio. She was very interested in singing so she saved Rs.1000 and bought a mobile for herself. She was very excited and used to listen to the songs while working. She had taken a new sim card as well. After a month or so, she saw that there was a missed call in her number. She seemed excited as she hardly received any calls so she thought of giving a miss call back to the same number. In no time, she got a call back from the same number. The person inquired as to who she was, the conversation was in Hindi and she admitted of giving a missed call as she had received a missed call first from that number.

The person introduced himself as Bikram Singh from Bihar and seemed to be very friendly through his conversation. Their phone talk became regular and it was a daily routine that they started talking. The fondness had grown from both sides and it went on for three months. They were eager to meet each other. Reshma had shared about her family to Bikram. Bikram had a mobile shop in Bihar and used to take care of his family. He had also told Reshma that since he was 25 years, his parents had started looking out for a girl. They wanted him to settle down and so there was pressure for his marriage. He told Reshma that he did not want to get married according to their arrangements. He wanted to make his own choice in selecting his mate. Bikram also told Reshma that he had been falling for her and there was no denial that he would want any other woman in his life besides her. He wanted to meet Reshma and get married to her soon. So, he requested Reshma to come over and meet him. Reshma told him that they belonged to two different communities and since they practice the dowry system, Reshma told him that her family cannot afford to pay dowry and this practice is not there in her community. Bikram tried consoling Reshma that would not be considered a problem as she was the one whom he wanted as a wife and he would convince his parents about this issue.

She was very excited about meeting Bikram and felt that she would bring him over to meet her parents as well. Though, this relationship had started from a simple missed call now it had grown to the extent of marrying each other. It was happening very quickly, she was also nervous about this relationship. She had not talked to her parents about Bikram. She was a bit panicky but as



advised by Bikram she did disclose their relationship. She requested him to come over to her place but he insisted she come over to his place. Then they decided on a halfway meet. So, finally, they decided that they would come to Siliguri Junction and meet up. It was in February 2017 that Reshma left her home with some money to meet her friend. She was a bit nervous and excited, she reached Siliguri without informing any of her family members. There was a direct bus to Siliguri, so she did not have a problem she had to wait for some time for him as his bus got delayed. He finally reached and met her, to her surprise the person seemed to be much older to her expectation and the age which he had mentioned was not matching with his appearance. He offered her to go to a hotel nearby for some refreshments and get some time to know each other. She was hesitant, but after much pestering, she agreed, as she had feelings for him which she had generated during the telephonic conversations. He wanted to take Reshma with him to meet his parents. She was not ready, but since he pleaded, she accepted that she would accompany him.

Reshma saw that he was getting a lot of phone calls and he was fixing some arrangements which she could not understand. He told her that one of his cousin sisters is getting married soon and he has a huge responsibility of arranging many things. So that evening they planned to leave for Bihar. They moved out of the hotel and headed to Bihar, next morning on reaching, she was taken to a hotel and asked to take some rest. On inquiring about his family and home, he told that it is in the interior so it would take them another hour. He had called two young boys to the room. He introduced her to them as his friend who would soon become their '*Bhabhi*' (sister-in-law). So Bikram told them to take her to his place as in the evening she would be returning. He would join her soon due to some arrangements for the wedding he would be engaged in for some time. She saw that these two boys were handing him some money which was in a sweet box. They opened and he counted sitting in a corner, saying that would be enough for the wedding. Reshma did not even suspect anything due to the upcoming wedding.

The two boys took Reshma to a place that was very much a slum area and kept addressing her as '*Bhabhi*'. It was a way of distracting her as to where she was being taken, they took her into a house and locked the door. She asked them if they were supposed to go to Bikram's house, to which they laughed looking at each other. She then asked them to stop laughing and to call Bikram, they did not, her mobile was already switched off from the time she met Bikram as

advised by him. Her parents had informed the police who were on the lookout for her. Those two boys grabbed her and took away her mobile, she was then told that she had been sold by Bikram for Rs.60,000/- She was very angry and told them that they were lying. She did not believe them, so they called Bikram and kept it in the loudspeaker where she heard him saying that they could do anything with her as she had already fetched him his share. Tears rolled down her cheek as she could not understand how she had trusted a man and even accompanied him to Bihar and that was her biggest mistake. The two boys locked her in the room and from inside she could hear them negotiating for money for one night with Reshma, they had many men in the house, she could understand from the noise. One man came inside and locked the door, he wanted to have physical contact. Even though she was lean she had strength, she attacked the man, and he ran off. Those two boys came and started beating her with a wooden stick, she was severely injured. So that night she managed to refuse, she was trying her best to escape from there. Somehow, she could not and for many days she was kept there and raped by men. One day she managed to escape at night as she sensed that her door was ajar, and the two boys were heavily intoxicated and were lying there like dead bodies. She tiptoed and somehow managed to reach for the door. She started running without looking back she cannot even remember what time of the night it was. She somehow came across one man and asked him for the nearest Police station, she reached and reported the matter. She was given counseling by NGOs. They tracked down Bikram too later with the call detail records and also the two boys. It seemed Bikram was an agent and had been luring girls from remote areas and selling them into brothels. Thankfully with her stern step, she managed to escape from there. Finally, she is at home with her family who has accepted her.

#### 4.1.30 Case Study - 30

**Name:**Sangita

**Age:**35 years

**Marital Status:** Married

**Income:** No disclosure

**Address:** Siliguri

**Trafficked to:**Bihar

**Category:** Schedule tribe

Sangita, of 35 years old stays at Tikiapara, which is a slum area in Siliguri, a place known for illegal activities, drug addiction and trafficking of women and girls. Sangita too had been trafficked to Bihar at a very young age around 12 years old. Since her family's financial condition was not very strong, she was taken out from her village by a neighbour whom she regarded as '*chachee ma*' or Uncle's wife. Though she was not her own aunt, they belonged to the same village, and she regarded her as an aunt in the village. Her parents agreed to send Sangita away for better opportunity. She had been promised by her '*chachee*' that she would be employed as a housemaid in Bihar. She was taken to Bihar and sold in a brothel. She does not know for how much she was sold to the pimp. She later understood that her '*chachee*' was an agent who used to bring girls to Bihar and sell them. They would be taken to different cities like Kolkata, Delhi, and Pune etc.

She had been forced into prostitution from the age of 14 years. She tells that many times she had tried escaping from there but had failed in every attempt. She was strictly monitored by the securities within the brothel, finally, she had to give in to the work. She tells how she had fallen in love with one of her customers who used to frequently visit her and used to bring gifts for her. She was 20 years then, she got married and gave birth to two daughters and two sons. Her youngest son is physically challenged as he has a problem with his left leg and cannot walk properly. She had consulted the doctor but they were not able to give a proper diagnosis. Her husband was also infected with HIV; he too had been an agent supplying girls. It was a big struggle for her to raise her family.

Her husband knew very well that time was running short for him, and he would die any moment as he was already in his last stage. Sangita insisted that they moved to Siliguri. Her husband too had wished that his children be safe. Their whole family shifted to Siliguri, where he heard about

an organization that would take care of homeless children. He begged to meet one member from an organization who assisted to help him by keeping his children at their home. So their four children of 4, 5, 7 and 8 years old respectively were handed over. Sangita tells that it was as if he was waiting to give his children to safer hands so that he could die peacefully. The very next day after handing over his children to the organization he passed away.

Sangita too had been working as a sex worker and more of an agent. Along with that she also started to smuggle drugs from one place to another but that used to happen once in a while. She tells that there are no other sources to generate money so she calls it her '*Majburee*' (out of compulsion). She had no other choice according to her. She tells once she had sold a girl for Rs.10,000 in the '*kothi*'. She then stopped working as an agent.

She tells she has to spend a lot on her health as she falls ill most of the time. She suffers from fever, abdominal pain and urine infection. She sometimes fears she has been infected with HIV as customers refuse to use condoms. She tells before organizations used to come and supply them with condoms but the customers, do not want to use them. So there is a greater risk of getting infected with STD's and HIV. But she still does not want to go for checkups. Her children are still at the shelter home where she goes and pays visits occasionally. She has married again and is living with her husband.

## **4.2 Conclusion**

The valuable and rich pool of information collected from the case studies played a pivotal role in addressing the research questions. Ethical considerations were taken into account while working on the case studies. It is duly acknowledged that every question pertaining to the data collection process had been highly sensitive, reflecting on the worse experiences of the victims of human trafficking. The researcher is thankful to the participants for their participation and willingness to provide detailed information as required for drawing significant inferences from the research.

A thoughtful analysis of the case studies reveals that the victims of human trafficking from the Darjeeling area belong to different age groups. While some are above the age of thirty years, there are victims as young as twelve years when trafficked. It is learned that human trafficking of these women and young girls involved sending them to distant places such as Kuwait, Oman,

Singapore, Dubai, as well as places within the national border, such as Bihar, Pune, Delhi, Haryana, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Mumbai, Coochbehar, Jalpaiguri and so on. What remains a striking finding that the number of married women who have been trafficked in the recent part is substantial, highlighting the poor social status they have in their domestic lives. Another noteworthy finding from the case studies is that most of the victims belong to the Scheduled Caste category. It is clear from the case studies that most of the victims have a minimum or no educational background and are not capable of making informed decisions when they are lured into the process of being trafficked on the basis of false promises made by the different agents.

It is evident from the case studies that most of the victims are having a positive approach to lead their lives following their rescue. Discrimination faced by these victims is substantial, and it becomes challenging for women and young girls to lead independent lives. Nevertheless, the courage and spirit shown by them are commendable, as they are fighting constantly against any injustices they face. In an attempt to become a respectable part of society, many victims are striving to become financially independent. The different job roles they have taken up include shop owners, employees at NGOs, assistants at health clinics, and housemaids. It is to be noted that some of these victims have considered working as independent sex workers.

## **Part II**

### **Demographic and Socio-Economic Profile of the Rescued Victims**

Following are some demographic and socio-economic details of the respondents who were trafficked by the traffickers from Darjeeling Hills (and surrounding areas) and later on, they were rescued by the Police, the NGO people and other appropriate authorities from different places/states of India and also from different foreign countries.

**Table 1: Age at which the Respondents were trafficked**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Below 20 years	17	56.7
21-25 years	7	23.3
26-35 years	6	20.0
36-45 years	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source:* Fieldwork

The data in the table 1 show the ages (in age groups) of the respondents (trafficked victims) when they were trafficked. 56.7% of the respondents were trafficked when they were below 20 years old, 23.3% of them were between 21 to 25 years of old whereas 20.0% of the respondents were trafficked when they were 26 years to 35 years (age) old.

The overall observation is that the minor girls mostly below 20 years of age are actually much vulnerable and so they are easily trafficked. Minor girls have huge demand in the sex industry. The age group of 21 years to 25 years falls under the second category of demand by the clients followed by the age group of 26 years to 35 years.

**Table 2: Present Marital Status of the Respondents**

<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Married	20	66.7
Unmarried	8	26.7
Widow	-	-
Divorcee	2	6.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source:* Fieldwork

Table 2 shows the present marital status of the respondents who were rescued from their captivities and are living their normal lives at present. The majority (66.7%) of the respondents are married whereas 26.7% are unmarried but they are living with their male companions and the remaining 6.6% of them are divorcees.

**Table 3: Ethnic Group membership of the Respondents**

<b>Ethnic Community</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Bhutia	3	10.0
Nepali	14	46.7
Others	13	43.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source:* Fieldwork

Table 3 shows the ethnic membership of all the respondents. 10.0% of the respondents belong to the Bhutia community, 46.7% were from the Nepali community and 43.3% from other communities like the Bihari and Bengali communities. So it is observable that the majority of the respondents belong to the Nepali community.

**Table 4: Social Categories of the Respondents**

<b>Social Category</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
General	1	3.3
OBC	4	13.3
ST	8	26.7
SC	10	33.3
Others	7	23.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source:* Fieldwork

It is observable from the data in the table 4 that majority (33.3%) of the respondents are schedule castes, 3.3% belong to the general category, 13.3% belong to the O.B.C. category, 26.7% belong to the scheduled tribe category and the remaining 23.3% of the respondents belong to other communities (Muslims).The overall observation is that majority of the respondents who were trafficked belongs the schedule caste category.

**Table 5: Religion of the Respondents**

<b>Religion</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Hinduism	14	46.7
Islam	7	23.3
Christianity	3	10.0
Buddhism	3	10.0
Others	3	10.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>30.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source:* Fieldwork

Table 5 shows the religious faiths of the respondents. Majority (46.7%) of the respondents are Hindus, 23.3% are Muslims, 10.0% are Christians and 10.0% follow Buddhism whereas 10.0% of the respondents do not have belief in religion.

**Table 6: Educational qualification of the Respondents**

<b>Educational Qualification</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Illiterate	18	60.0
Primary I-IV	4	13.3
Lower –Middle V- VIII	6	20.0
Upper-Middle IX- X	1	3.3
Secondary Pass	-	-
Higher Secondary	1	3.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source:* Fieldwork

The data in the table 6 shows the education qualification of the respondents.60.0% of them are illiterates, 13.3% studied up to the primary level (class I to IV), 20.0% studied up to lower middle level (class VIII), 3.3% of the respondents are upper middle level qualified (class X) whereas 3.3% are higher secondary pass. The overall observation is that majority of the respondents were illiterates and so were easily lured and trafficked.

**Table 7: Place from where the Respondents were trafficked**

Place (Sub division)	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Darjeeling Sadar	11	36.7
Kurseong	4	13.3
Kalimpong	9	30.0
Siliguri	6	20.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source:* Fieldwork

Data in the table 7 show the places from where respondents were trafficked. It has been found that respondents belong to the three subdivisions of Darjeeling district namely Darjeeling Sadar (36.7%), Kurseong (13.3%) and Siliguri (20.0%) whereas remaining 30.0% respondents belong to Kalimpong district. So, it observable that majority of the respondents were trafficked from Darjeeling Hills followed by the Kalimpong district.

**Table 8: Places (Destination points) from where Respondents were rescued**

Source of Destination	States/ Other Countries	Districts	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)	
National	Bihar	---	4	13.3	
	Maharashtra (Pune/Mumbai)	---	6	20.0	
	Delhi	---	5	16.7	
	Haryana	---	1	3.3	
	Karnataka(Bengaluru)	---	1	3.3	
	West Bengal	Coochbehar		1	3.3
		Kolkata		3	10.0
		Malda		1	3.3
		Jalpaiguri		1	3.3
		Siliguri		3	10.0
International	Kuwait	---	1	3.3	
	Singapore	---	1	3.3	
	Dubai	---	1	3.3	
	Oman	---	1	3.3	
<b>Total</b>			<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

*Source:* Fieldwork



The above table 8 shows that 86.8% of the respondents were rescued from within India (national) whereas 13.2% of them were rescued from outside India (foreign countries/international). Within India, 13.3% respondents were rescued from Bihar, 20.0% from Maharashtra (Pune/Mumbai), 16.7% from Delhi, 3.3% from Haryana, 3.3% from Karnataka and 29.9% from West Bengal (3.3% from Coochbehar, 10.0% from Kolkata, 3.3% from Malda, 3.3% from Jalpaiguri and 10.0% from Siliguri). The respondents who were rescued from different foreign countries are as follows - 3.3% from Kuwait, 3.3% from Singapore, 3.3% from Dubai and 3.3% from Oman.

### **Summary**

It can be summarized from the above discussion on the social and demographic characteristics of the trafficked women victims that majority of them were trafficked when they were aged below 20 years. The rescued victims (respondents) are from diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds but vast majority of them obviously are from the lower socio-economic strata of their respective societies. Majority of them are married but it has been found also by doing case studies that even those who are unmarried are living with their partners. Illiteracy is widespread among the respondents as majority of them are illiterates. The analysis of the social and demographic data makes it easier for the policy makers to articulate policies that address the circumstances in which women and girls are vulnerable for trafficking.

**CHAPTER -5**

**MAJOR FINDINGS, CONCLUDING  
REMARKS AND  
RECOMMENDATIONS**

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **MAJOR FINDINGS, CONCLUDING REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Human trafficking is a growing complex problem at the global level that entails a comprehensive cross-sector response. Involving the exploitation of people and the basic breach of human rights, human trafficking has drawn the attention of the concerned authorities in recent times who are driven to take adequate measures for addressing the issue. Research holds sufficient potential to exert a profound impact on the fight to bring an end to human trafficking. It is thus essential that the methodology behind data collection is reliable and sound so that the implications for practice drawn from the research findings are apt. The present research has been a sociological study of the trafficking of women in Darjeeling Hills which is located in the Indian state of West Bengal. In 2016, the maximum number of women missing was from West Bengal. In comparison to other states, West Bengal topped the charts for having the highest reported cases of women and children trafficking, as per the article of 'The Telegraph', dated March 10, 2017.

#### **5.1 Major Findings**

Women's trafficking is a major sociological concern in the Darjeeling hills. Adequate attention has been given by the present study to find out the causes behind the occurrence of a large number of cases of women trafficking there. There are several factors leading to women trafficking from Darjeeling Hills. The present research study has found out that alcoholism and unsafe migration are important factors that have resulted in the trafficking of women from Darjeeling Hills. Drinking alcohol is a cultural trait that is freely practiced among the people in the hills. It is socially accepted and encouraged. This cultural trait has created a lot of irresponsibility among the members leading to conflicts and violence in families. Such factors

have driven women to leave their homes in search of better opportunities and a peaceful environment. They encounter agents who lure them for better job opportunities, some travelling abroad are sent without proper work permits and then exploited and threatened with dire consequences. Further, illiteracy was the main drawback of a large majority of the victims as they were illiterates. They were neither aware of their rights nor in a position to fight back against the traffickers. In addition, unemployment was a very serious cause of trafficking as the majority of the victims were unemployed and in search of better jobs, good facilities, and a better lifestyle. They were forced to leave their hometowns and move to the bigger towns and cities as well as overseas for better opportunities. But in turn they were victims of trafficking. Broken families are another very vital cause of human trafficking. Many of the victims either belong to broken families or live with single parents. Families are the backbone for a child's growth and development but when the family tears apart a major impact is exerted on the child's well-being which becomes negative in nature.

A deeper analysis shows that early marriages are quite common affairs in the hills as love marriages are more common practices rather than arranged ones. Young women and girls easily trust these fraudsters who exploit them with lies and subsequently traffic them to the cities and sell them in the brothels. One of the major findings of the present research study is the most unique practice of '*Chor ko shor*' meaning owing up to the crime of stealing. It is a very traditional practice when a girl elopes with her lover. After the third day, the groom's parents send a delegation of elder members mostly males to the bride's house to inform her parents that she has eloped with their ward. The team of elders seeks forgiveness for the boy's imprudence and at the same time speaks of the girls' love for their son. Some poetic lines are cited conveying the love and romance between a boy and a girl. Gifts consisting of rice, meat, liquor, sweets, and

clothes are offered to the bride's family along with money as a part of the ritual. This practice also prevents families to file a missing complaint of their daughters as they feel that their daughters will return along with their grooms who are actually trafficked to unknown destinations. Lodging a missing report or visiting a police station is not encouraged in the hill society as it could bring social disgrace to the family and this also leads to trafficking of women and girls.

Social media has been a platform for people to easily connect with one another. It has also given easy access across a wide range of mediums or Apps like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram through which victims get acquainted with new people. New love affairs seem to blossom between young women and girls and the fraudsters, with the former falling easy prey to traffickers. Along with social media, the use of mobile phones has been the cause of trafficking where mere missed calls have led to a love relationship, and furthermore, the victims being trafficked easily.

One of the other key reasons behind human trafficking is negligence on the part of the parents. Parents in the hills are not used to accompanying their grown-up children, neither keeping a track of their whereabouts nor wishing to find out the backgrounds of their friends. Some parents are usually satisfied with their parenting by giving children some money and letting them do as they wish. Money given as payments make them feel that their liabilities have decreased. The Non-Governmental Organizations also felt that parents are easily convinced by the traffickers who silently hand over their children to known or unknown people. The traffickers always make a convincing promise, and they never tell the parents that they are going to sell their daughters in the brothels instead. False promises and hopes assure the parents that their children will be provided with good education, good jobs, and handsome salaries. Modernization has led to the

penetration of new trends into society. The youngsters have totally been unwilling to accept the age-old profession as agriculture, which their fathers and grandfathers practiced. They are eager to move out of their hometowns and go to cities in search of jobs that are much more appealing to them. It is also found in this study that the younger women below the age of 20 years from broken families, single parent families, and poor socio-economic backgrounds are more vulnerable to trafficking as they are driven into fake love marriages that ultimately throw them into the big brothels. Though women of all ages are trafficked, teenagers and adolescents below 20 years are the targeted ones as the demand for minor girls is high in the sex industry.

The primary implication of women trafficking is poverty as most of them are from the poor economic background. Women who are uneducated often face compelling social consequences. Starting from torture to physical abuse, the hardships endured by them are severe. Emotional and psychological trauma that they are exposed to leave behind far-reaching impacts. The impact on individuals and the society at large is clearly unacceptable since the same is destructive. Poor socio-economic conditions led to women trafficking as women were forced to move out in search of employment. Though poverty as a cause of trafficking is important due to the poor economic background, poor level of education is also a concern. Families could not provide education to them and as a result they had to move out from their localities in search of better jobs. Due to their ignorance of the outside world, they were easily fooled in love relationships and also fake marriages and driven into the sex trade.

Gender bias or discrimination exists amongst children of the same families, and in particular the treatment of the elderly towards a male and a female is different. The victims do not want to reveal this situation, but while being interviewed the victims spoke about the boys of the house being encouraged to go to school while the girls being discouraged about the same and married

off early. Women belonging to different caste categories were trafficked, as per the study. It has been understood from the case studies that the highest number of trafficked victims belonged to the schedule caste category followed by the scheduled tribes. Schedule caste groups were more targeted in comparison to the schedule tribes and others as they are the most deprived social category.

One of those major factors is the smartness of the traffickers who implement the latest methods and techniques for trafficking. They experiment by using different channels. The main traffickers (kingpins) always keep their identities hidden. They use many middle agents to carry on with their illegal activities and their own identity is never disclosed. Traffickers are very advanced, and they use the mode of Information Communication Technology (ICT) through which they become faceless characters. They use fake accounts and fake photos so that their identity lies protected. The main trafficker monitors everything over the smartphone. The middlemen usually carry out the orders of the main traffickers. The use of Google Earth has made it easy for the traffickers to locate and find out the information about their victims/targets, it gives them the minute details of each and every aspect sought by the traffickers. This is a significant finding by the present research study as to how acquainted are the traffickers with the modern advanced technologies in trafficking the victims.

### **About the Victims**

The victims of women trafficking were from all age groups though the minors below the age of 20 were in majority who had been trafficked at a very tender age. The traffickers target the minors as they are vulnerable and can be easily tricked and exploited. From the research study the majority of the victims belonged to the Schedule caste category. Majority of the victims

belonged to the Nepali community. Majority of the victims were Hindus. Majority of the victims were illiterates and were unaware of their rights. They were easily lured and exploited by the traffickers.

### **Post trafficking**

After being trafficked, the victims are forced to surrender themselves into the flesh trade, a phase known as the 'Breaking Period' where the women and girls are forced into prostitution and their denial leads to their rape by the '*dalals*', gang rapes, and violence on an extreme level with physical and mental torture injected with drugs and even starved for several days without food. The victims are made to feel unwanted and finally gives in to the work. Once the victims arrive at the brothels, the majors i.e., above 18 years old are registered where they are given different names by the madams and pimps. They become registered sex workers, so it becomes very easy for the madams and pimps, as during raids the police authorities usually let go of a sex worker who is a registered one. Their names are changed once they enter the brothel, but minors are usually hidden underground by the pimps. They are not given the full amount paid for them by their clients. The pimps and the madams take their entire share and only a little amount is given to some, whereas others do not get any earnings.

NGOs have been working tirelessly to rescue women and girls being trafficked as well as those on the verge of being trafficked. Some NGOs have been positioned at railway stations, bus stops and border areas for monitoring purposes. Others have been organizing awareness programs and workshops among different categories of people in society on the prevention of trafficking. They have been rescuing women and girls from different cities within India as well as from abroad.



After the victims are rescued and brought back they have to be counseled and kept in shelter homes.

The law enforcement agencies have been assisting the NGOs in the rescuing mission. They have tied up with the NGOs and have hosted a number of awareness programs on Anti human trafficking in the rural areas and tea gardens. They have been going to educational institutions along with the NGOs in order to spread the word about trafficking. Whenever they are approached by the NGOs they have always rendered their service with dedication. But unfortunately, there are no shelter homes in Darjeeling Hills where the women/girls can be kept after rescuing. This has paved a lot of difficulties for the functioning of the Non-Governmental Organizations. The absence of shelter homes in the hills and also lack of professional counselors compels the NGOs to send the rescued women and girls to the government-run shelter homes in other districts like Jalpaiguri and Coochbehar. Since the shelter homes run by the government are not in a good state, many of the rescued victims run away from these homes and some go back to the brothels as the traffickers wait for this opportunity to take them back to the brothels. Many land up as being Flying Sex Workers or FSW, where they move from one place to another according to the availability and demand of their clients. Sometimes, they also move to the cities as per the demand and the money that is transacted or offered by their clients.

The inability of NGOs to provide adequate interventions pertaining to women trafficking in Darjeeling is related to the absence of coordination among the different organizations. Competition between the different NGOs leads to the decrease in a stringent standard of providing resources to victims of trafficking. The values of preferences of the organizations in relation to the support to be provided to victims differ extensively from each other. It is difficult to find organizations that are quality-driven and engage themselves in being updated with the

latest information regarding how the problem of human trafficking particularly women trafficking can be addressed.

The attitude of society towards the victims of human trafficking has been time and again condemned. After being rescued the attitude of the society towards the victims was not very welcoming as they do not want the rescued women and girls to be brought back to the village or neighborhood. Victims are not easily accepted by society, those rescued from the trafficker's hand before they land up in the brothels are accepted in the society but those victims rescued from the red lights or brothels are not accepted by society. Now, the awareness programs which are being conducted by the Non-Governmental Organizations in the villages have helped people understand and also welcome the women and girls to their homes. It becomes critical to provide essential rehabilitation to the rescued victims of trafficking. The rehabilitation process starts immediately after the person is rescued. So, regarding the rehabilitation, there are no rehabilitation centers for the trafficked victims from the Hills, once rescued from the brothels they are handed over to the shelter homes in other districts.

## **5.2 Some Observed Facts during the Existing Research Study**

### **5.2.1 The Role of Political Parties**

The GNLF (Gorkha National Liberation Front) is a political party in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal. It was formed in 1980 but this political party did not take up the cause of women and girls trafficking as a serious concern or as an agenda to be focussed during their time. After the downfall of the GNLF party, another party Gorkha Janmukti Morcha was formed in 2007. This political party too did not take up women and girls trafficking as a matter of

seriousness and neither did they stand to fight for women's rights nor protect them from trafficking. None of the political parties tried looking into this serious issue. Besides the Non-Governmental Organizations there was no role of social leaders neither were they seen raising the issue on women and girls trafficking.

### **5.2.2 Role of Tourism**

Darjeeling is famous for tea, timber, and tourism. Darjeeling's tourism has indeed climbed a milestone in achieving a status. It was observed during the study that tourism does not have any negative impact on women trafficking. Though homestays and resorts have come up over time but there has been no link with women trafficking.

### **5.2.3 Role of Gram Panchayats**

The researcher visited Kalimpong B.D.O. Office to inquire about the missing cases that were reported in the Gram Panchayats. Kalimpong district has 18 Gram Panchayats which have not reported on any missing cases of women and girls from the villages. The only reporting updates which they get from the Panchayats are the schemes on health, pension and others.

The researcher then spoke to some members from the related Gram Panchayats as well. Mr. Ashish Rai, Gram Panchayat (Karmee) of Bhalukhop, stated that till date there has been no report on missing cases. He also specified that they have various schemes which they look after like the energy scheme, disaster management scheme, old age pension, widow pensions and on health schemes. He said in case if there had been any missing case the villagers would have directly taken the matter to the police and lodged an F.I.R. along with the NGOs but Gram Panchayats are not given any information.

Mr. Bijay Kumar Lama, Executive Assistant from Bong Gram Panchayat also stated that so far no missing cases have been reported to the gram panchayat. They take care of schemes given by the central government and state government, benefits are given to the village people. In case of missing cases, people might have reported to the police but the panchayat has not been informed on any missing case from the village.

Mrs. Sashi Rai, executive assistant, Dr. Graham's Gram Panchayat said that there has been no missing case from their gram panchayat instead they do meetings on every 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday with ICDS regarding children's nutrition but they do not get any information regarding missing women and girls.

The researcher also spoke to Mr. Gajendra Chettri from Dungra Gram Panchayat who too stated that there has been no missing case report reported to the Gram Panchayat. Bal Suraksha Abhiyan an NGO has been playing a very active role in conducting awareness programmes.

Mr. B.B. Rasaily, Executive Assistant from Pudung Gram Panchayat; Mr. Heman Dorjay Tamang, Executive Assistant of Samthar Gram Panchayat; Mr. Amar Singh Rai, Karmee from Upper Echhey Gram Panchayat; Mr. Gopal Sarkee, Job Assistant of Sindebong Gram Panchayat; Mr. Tika Subba, Karmee from Kalimpong Gram Panchayat also said that there has been no missing case reported to their respective gram panchayats.

### **5.3 Experiences and Opinions**

The present research undertaken on human trafficking in Darjeeling Hills proved to be a meaningful study for the researcher, enabling her to have a rich experience. She takes this opportunity to share her viewpoints as a research scholar as the study was indeed a great learning

experience for her. The present research study is on the trafficking of women in Darjeeling Hills which has not been specifically dealt in the past though some writings are there on this issue in West Bengal. The research work has been chosen as it was felt by the researcher to be challenging and at the same very sensitive to explore about it. It was not very easy to extract information from the respondents regarding this topic as there were many things which were latent and to bring it out the same was a big challenge for the researcher who tried level best to explore in-depth the case studies and tried maintaining the ethical principles pertaining to primary research.

As the research work was started, the initial days were marked with enthusiasm and the dedication for the researcher towards collection of reliable information continued throughout the course of the study. The researcher started with a pilot survey and explored the area of the study. The researcher had the privilege to travel back and forth to Darjeeling and Kalimpong districts and its sub divisions within the state of West Bengal. At the beginning of research work, the researcher began to outline the framework of the thesis and accordingly structured three types of questionnaires for different categories of target groups such as the Non-Governmental Organizations, the Police and the victims of trafficking.

In total, 14 NGOs officials were interviewed who provided pertinent information for the research study. It is good to highlight here some important aspects pertaining to the information derived from the NGOs. What drew attention the most was the lack of shelter homes for victims of human trafficking. Lack of shelter homes became a major factor as after the rescue, girls could not be brought back from the destination places. So, a shelter home is very much needed near the hometowns. Sometimes, there were changes in the statement of the victims out of fear or threat and prolonged court hearings. This was very difficult for the NGOs to encourage the victims and

their families to speak up. It has also been found that majority of the NGOs lack professional counselors. Counseling is so important not only for the victims but also for their families and also their respective communities. NGOs have been carrying out awareness campaigns but more serious type of awareness programmes are needed so to stop trafficking from the rural and urban areas of Darjeeling Hills and adjoining areas. To reintegrate the victims back to their families and societies have been a major challenge for the organizations as well. During the study the offices of the organizations were frequented as some information was not given easily or in the first instance. The NGO officials were kept in touch over the phone and sought their permission and availability as to meet them in their offices.

The second group of respondents was the police officials who were interviewed, though, in some of the police stations/offices the researcher had to wait for a long time in order to meet the officer. There were a lot of interruptions during the interview as many people kept coming inside the office with many queries and knowing the fact that police officials are very busy. The researcher managed to get the information and is thankful to them for providing useful information. But on the other side it was not possible to get the exact figure of trafficking cases as not much had been looked into nor recorded the cases concerning with trafficking.

Finally, the last group of respondents for the present study was the victims of human trafficking. It was very challenging for the researcher as it was a sensitive issue for discussion, and some did not want to recall back those past incidents of torture and exploitation. Some were in tears when they narrated the incidents to the researcher. Some could not even recall properly as they had tried forgetting about their past. The researcher has jotted everything in the field diary about their incidents and how they were trafficked. The researcher also made it a point not to push them too much and has kept their identity as anonymous.

#### **5.4 Concluding Remarks**

The present research study that takes up a significant social problem within the domain of sociological study finds that trafficking of women is an alarming social issue in the Darjeeling Hills of West Bengal. It is a very sensitive subject for doing research where research ethics should have been maintained on the highest level, and that has been kept up with utmost sincerity in the present study which has drawn in a line to protect the identity of the trafficked victims. Pseudo names have been used even while writing the case studies of the victims. Neither photographs nor videography was taken in the research study of the victims. It has been found that women and girls are trafficked to various destinations within the country and abroad. Trafficked victims suffer a lot of psychological, physical, and mental trauma. The victims after being rescued by the NGOs are sent for counseling sessions. Some of them are reunited with their families, some start with new family life. Some start new business ventures, others try to fit in the larger society and some are not accepted by their family members and neither the society so they go back to the same profession. NGOs and the police administration help them in adjusting to the larger society to a considerable extent. NGOs have been holding awareness programs among the people in the rural areas, among tea garden labourers, in educational schools and colleges by organizing seminars, workshops and drawing awareness even among the driver unions, hotel owners and forming different clubs at different levels to fight against trafficking.

Reflecting on the present research study it can be concluded that conducting the study gave an opportunity to have rich and valuable knowledge on human trafficking as a horrendous crime done against humanity and it poses a serious threat to human security and health. It can be understood as a form of modern-day slavery. Women trafficking in Darjeeling Hills has a multi-

faceted dimension despite the immense efforts of the NGOs and the Police Department to check on it. It affects mostly those who are socially and economically vulnerable. It is expected to think critically about how social injustice, poverty, substance abuse, homelessness, and family breakdown function as the primary push factors for the women and girls who become victims eventually. The simple nature of the people also makes them easy prey to traffickers. They are deceived and are easily ensnared into the stronger grip of the illegal sex world from where it becomes very difficult for them to break out. Some of the victims trafficked abroad had desires of going to a foreign land and working there, earning big amount since people going abroad would be looked highly in their localities. Dreaming big had landed them into being traded from one household to another and sold from one agent to another. They were trafficked.

It can also be deduced that the findings of the research study on women trafficking in the Darjeeling Hills hold the potential to inform and guide human trafficking prevention strategies and approaches in the near future. While deciding on the topic prior to the research study it was in mind that a productive research study has the power to bring a social change and thus it can address a pressing concern in the contemporary era. The motivation and encouragement received in the due course of this research study from different sources have been noteworthy. It was believed that research information on the concerned topic has the capacity of enacting change, and it can be believed that this research study would be useful for articulating women trafficking prevention strategies. Throughout the process of conducting the research and reporting the findings, it has been kept in mind that it is crucial to present the collected data on women trafficking accurately since the social impact of the study hopefully is going to be profound in relevant policy formation and implementation on combating trafficking of women. It was therefore pivotal for the existing study to adhere to reliable and sound research methodology to



fulfill its basic objective of how to fight women trafficking as well as to assure a long-lasting impact on the lives of those women who fall victims to human trafficking.

There were certain challenges while conducting the research. The Covid-19 pandemic had brought about unprecedented situations across the globe, impacting social and economic settings across India including West Bengal, heavily. The restrictions on the movement of people and closures of enterprises for the safety of all had brought a fast-moving life to a standstill. The chaos and confusion pertaining to the pandemic delayed the research work to a considerable extent. The unintentional postponement in the study was a significant factor influencing the completion of the research. However, the dedication and sincerity of the researcher aided in overcoming the challenges.

## **5.5 Recommendations**

It is obvious from the above discussion that research studies carry out in the near future on the topic of human trafficking, and precisely on women trafficking promise to bring positive changes in society by curbing the prevalence of such practices. Over the past decades, women trafficking happened globally and regionally has led to a tremendous amount of public attention. Darjeeling Hills of West Bengal in India is not an exception to the fact. The media has covered the topic from time to time, and the involvement of the NGOs has also increased considerably. The need of creating new policies and enforcement mechanisms for tackling the problem is also felt. Nevertheless, a considerable part of the discourse, enforcement, and policymaking might be lacking an evidence base. This is due to the inadequacy of relevant and quality research studies on the issue. New directions in research on women trafficking are therefore critically needed. Women trafficking's seriousness, trends, and magnitude, all are to be addressed by serious

research work in these days. An argument is to be made for carefully conducted research on trafficking at the micro-level. It is suggested that such research would be beneficial for identifying the magnitude of trafficking within a proper context, as well as for formulating contextually fit enforcement and policy response.

Reflecting on the findings of the present study it can be recommended that self-help groups (SHGs) are made available for the rescued victims of trafficking so that they can remain independent and self-reliant to earn their livelihood. Government-aided shelter homes too should be established in Darjeeling Hills as it has been found that the rescued women and girls are kept at shelter homes in the adjoining districts of Coochbehar and Jalpaiguri where it has become very difficult for the victims to interact as well as to adapt in these shelter homes there due to different socio-cultural setups as well as mismanagement in those shelter homes. Consequently, many of them run away from these shelter homes due to these difficulties and then again return to the brothels.

The law enforcement agencies have to be more aware of the issue of women trafficking. Very little of the needful record or no record was kept in regard to the trafficking of women and girls. The police department was not able to provide the exact information when they were asked about the number of trafficking cases during the year and during the past five years. Some of them mentioned that it was very difficult for them to determine whether the missing cases were of trafficking or not. They further added that most of the cases also do not reach the police station, as it goes unreported. So the enforcement agencies particularly the police should be more sensitized on the issue of the brutality of women trafficking.

All the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) working to combat women trafficking should work together and not compete with one another. If a chain of actions is created then it becomes easy to prevent women trafficking. Likewise, recently the NGOs have formed an ATN (Anti Trafficking Network) to collectively work in preventing trafficking. Professional and trained counselors are needed for the counseling of the victims. The members of the organizations have been counseling the victims but trained counselors would be much preferable. As most of them need psychological guidance and counseling to overcome the trauma. One of the major findings of this research study shows that there is a lack of professional counselors for counseling the trafficked victims. As most of the NGOs lack professional counselors the Government should provide good counselors or conduct some training programs for counselor-ships which could be attended by the members of the NGOs who could give professional counseling to the needy. Good professional counselors could motivate the parents to lodge FIR against the traffickers. Frequent workshops and seminars should be organized by the NGOs where they could discuss, share and exchange their views on ways and measures to combat trafficking. More innovative programs should be encouraged for women's empowerment so that they become independent and aware of their own rights and their duties for society. Formation of Self-help Groups could be encouraged in the rural areas as well as some skill development training/vocational training could be conducted for school dropouts so that they get engaged in some work and earn their rations. This would prevent them from travelling to other places in search of a job and getting employed in their hometown itself.

It is further recommended that collaborative efforts are enabled by the concerned agencies for the accomplishment of set goals to improve the situation of women trafficking in Darjeeling Hills and other surrounding areas. Building trustworthy and strong relationships with organizations

and allies and developing collaborative strategies within the community people on the village level, block level, district level as well as broader regional level is indispensable for the improvement of services for meeting the needs of vulnerable people and trafficked survivors. The government must come forward to sponsor technical assistance and training to the varied champion organizations who seek to work in a collaborative manner for effectively responding to women trafficking in the respective communities. The interactive opportunities would be bringing professionals together to advance best practices in the course of preventing trafficking and ensuring self-determination and wellness for survivors. It can be hoped that with collaborative efforts from the different spheres of society the burden of women trafficking can be reduced substantially within a short span of time.

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# Annexure I

## Interview Schedule

### Interview with the Non Governmental Organizations:

I. Name of the Organization:

Year of Establishment:

Registration number:

Nature of work:

Area of work/location:

Name of the Interviewee/Designation:

Financial Position:

SL. No.	Name of the NGO	Year of Establishment	Registration Number	Location	Name of the Interviewee and His/Her Designation
1					
2					
3					

1.What can be the causes of Human Trafficking?

2.How do you act(methods/techniques implemented)especially if you know that girls are being trafficked?

3.How do you get information about the victims?

4.What type of difficulties do you face while rescuing the victims? Can you explain the major difficulties faced?

5.After rescuing where are the girls kept?

6.Are the girls accepted into the society or not?

7. What type of counseling is given to the victim and by whom?
8. If not, how do you provide relief to the rescued victims?
9. Which ethnicity or which category of women are mostly trafficked? reasons.
10. From which sub-division have you rescued most of the victims?
11. Is there any panchayat who helps your Organization-like the religious committees, taxi drivers union, from different samaj's etc
12. How often do you organise outreach/ awareness programs and where?
13. How willing are the police to join hands at the time of rescue? Is there any joint action undertaken along with the police?
14. Is there any financial aid given from the Government while rescuing the trafficked victims?
15. Is there any Political pressure in the working of the organization?
16. What are your future plans for finding out better ways to prevent trafficking cases?

<b>Year</b>	<b>No. of Cases Handled</b>	<b>No of Victims Rescued</b>	<b>Category (ST/SC/O BC)</b>	<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Reasons For being trafficked (Social /Economic/Political)</b>	<b>Response from Society</b>	<b>No. of Victims put in Protection Homes</b>
2011-2012							
2012-2013							
2013-2014							
2014-2015							
2015-2016							
2016-2017							

## Interview Schedule

### Interview with the Police Administrations:

II. Name of the Police official:

Designation:

Age:

Sex:

Area of Duty/ PS:

1. What according to you are the major causes of Human Trafficking?
2. What type of case gets registered?
3. In case if a missing report is filed, how do you handle it? Immediately or wait for some time?
4. Can you specify the areas which have Human Trafficking as an acute social problem?
5. Which ethnic community is mostly targetted by the traffickers and why?
6. What actions have you taken against the Traffickers?(Laws?)
7. Can you give the appropriate number of victims that are trafficked every year?
8. What according to you are the means through which the trafficker gains access to the victims?
9. If any case has been registered against trafficking how promptly does the police take action?
10. At times, are the Police influenced by the political leaders? Yes/No/Reasons:
11. Has it happened in any case that the officer in charge has been transferred?
12. How willing are the police to take up the cases coming from the NGOs?
13. Is there any type of pressure coming from the higher authority, to give up on a case or else transference to a remote zone?
14. How do you get information about the whereabouts of the trafficked victims?

15. What type of difficulty do you face while rescuing the victims? Can you specify the nature of difficulty faced?

16. Is there any specific amount of fund allotted for combating Human Trafficking?

17. Do you organise outreach programmes, if yes can you specify how often do you organize these outreach programs to spread awareness?

18. What type of link do you develop with the city police as well as other NGOs?

Year	Name of the Police	Number of cases registered	Number of victims rescued	Category/Ethnicity ST/SC/OBC/Others	Age group	Traffickers convicted	Reintegrated or not
2011-2012							
2012-2013							
2013-2014							
2014-2015							
2015-2016							

### **Interview with the Railway Police (RPF and GRPF)**

III. Name of the P.S:

Designation:

Sex:

Area of Duty/Location:

1. According to you what can be the causes of Human Trafficking?
2. How do you act (methods/techniques implemented)especially if you know that girls are being trafficked in the trains, or are accompanied by traffickers on the platforms?
3. From where do you derive information about trafficking?
4. At times, do you seek help from city police as well as other NGOs?
5. So far, how many cases have been rescued by the railway police from (2011-2016)

1. From which state/country/ethnic community is the highest rate of victims trafficked?
2. After rescuing what is your next step?
3. If rescued, are the girls sent back to their states and how?
4. If suppose, the girls are from another country and cannot communicate in the regional language what do you do?
5. In case you doubt a trafficking case, but on questioning the trafficker answers saying they are married on mutual consent what do you do?

Year	Name of the Police	No of cases registered	No of victims rescued	Category ST/SC/OBC (ethnicity)	Age	Reasons For being trafficked	Action taken against traffickers	Response from society	Role Of Authority
2011-2012									
2012-2013									
2013-2014									
2014-2015									
2015-2016									

### **Interview Schedule** ( Family Survey Schedule of the Trafficked Victims )

#### **IV. Demographic characteristics**

1. Name:
2. Address:
3. Age: Less than 20years/21-25 years/26-30 years/31-35 years/36-40years/41-45years/above 46years
4. Sex: Female
5. Marital status: married /unmarried /widow /widower /divorcee
6. Ethnic Group: Nepali / Bhutia / Lepcha /Others



7. Caste: General /OBC /SC /ST /Others

8. Religion: Hinduism /Islam /Christianity /Buddhism /Others

9. Educational Qualification: Illiterate / Literate /Primary 1-IV /Lower middle V-VIII / Upper Middle IX-X /Secondary Pass /Higher Secondary /Graduation/Post Graduation /Others

10. Occupation Income /month / Yearly:

11. Housing Conditions:

i) Structure of House: Building /Made of wood /Made of soil

ii) Form of Housing: Rented /Owned house / allotted house

12. Total Family Members in the house including the H.O.F:

Respondents Family Members	Age	Educational Qualification	Occupation	Income
H.O.F				

**Economic condition:**

13. Assets: Land / Property (Movable/ Immovable):

i) Savings: Yes / No, If Yes then type of saving: Bank/ Post Office/ L.I.C etc

If no, then why? Reasons:

ii) Are you sufficient on your income? Yes / No: If yes how? If no how?

14. Household Commodities: T.V. /Fridge /Washing machine /Desktop /Any other

15. Mode of Cooking: Firewood /Cooking gas /Electricity /Kerosene /Any other

16. What type of expenses do you make the most: Medical /Food / Lifestyle /Education/ Ceremonies/Festivals etc.

17. Is there any financial aid from the Government for your family?

Government /NGO'S / any other

18. Monthly expenditure:

Less than Rs1000 /Rs 1001-Rs 3000 /Rs 3001-Rs 5000 /Rs 5001-Rs 7000 /Rs 7001- Rs 9000/Rs 9001-Rs11000 /RS11001-Rs13000 /Rs 13001--Rs15000 /Rs 15001-Rs17000 /Rs 17001-Rs 20000 /Rs 20001 and more

**Social Conditions:**

19. Type of Family: Joint / Nuclear /Extended /Broken /Others
20. Is staying out at night at friend's place allowed: Yes /No /Never
21. Is Marriage allowed on (Inter caste/Inter Ethnic /Inter Linguistic/ Inter Religious/ Widow Remarriage):
22. During Marriage is Dowry or any kind of bride price demanded,  
if yes, to what extent: cash / kind /Any other
23. Is there any kind of Gender Discrimination in the Family?  
(Yes/No)If Yes then reasons:
24. What is the probable age of marriage in the family: Male- years/Female- years
25. Is Education considered important in the family? Yes /No
26. Do you prefer to go to school? Yes /No / Reasons
27. To whom does the family prefer to educate: Son /Daughter/ Both, Reasons:
28. Do you think female education is important? Yes /No/ Reasons:
29. Do you support Family Planning? Yes /No/ Reasons:
30. Which community do you live with? Hindu /Muslim /Christian /Buddhist /Others
31. Do you share a harmonious relationship with other communities: Good /Bad /Moderate
32. Do you read newspapers? Statesmen /Telegraph /Himalaya Darpan /Others

**Cultural conditions:**

33. What type of culture practice do you follow?
34. Do you celebrate cultural festivals of other communities? Yes /No / Reasons
35. What type of impact has culture made on you? (values)
36. Has cultural impact influenced your economic condition? Yes /No /Reasons

**Health condition:**

37. How is your health condition? Good / Bad / Average
38. Are you easily prone to diseases? Yes /No / Reasons
39. Is there any type of health issues in the family? Yes /No /Reasons
40. Place for treatment: Government Hospital /Private Hospital /Ojha /Others
41. Hospital facilities: Availability of Doctors /Nurses /Operation Facilities:
- 42 . Is there any Public Health Centre nearby?  
If yes, -Nature of visit- (Frequent /Occasional /Never):
43. Form of treatment:  
  
Homeopathic /Allopathic /Ayurvedic /Ethno medicine /Others
44. Are you aware of Family Planning? Yes / No
45. Sources of Drinking water: Pond / River /Stream (dhara) /PHE water supply /Others
46. Do you have toilet facility? Yes / No / Reasons
47. If Yes, type of laterine: Kacha /Pacca / Semi Pucca / Sanitary Laterine / Others

**Questions (Nature of Trafficking)**

1. At what age were you trafficked?
2. How were you trafficked?
3. Where did they take you?
4. How long were you kept there?
5. What relation did you have with the trafficker?
6. Once taken, were you able to contact home, friends at any time?
7. Who rescued you and how?
8. After rescuing were you brought home directly?
9. Are you working? presently?
10. What plans do you have for tomorrow?

## Women Trafficking In Darjeeling Hills: Factors and Solutions

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### Abstract

Human trade or trafficking of humans is an illegal activity where the fundamental motive is to create wealth at the cost of trading humans. Darjeeling Hills, situated in the northern part of West Bengal state and northern side of Eastern India is a region embracing diversity of nature, culture, wildlife and adventure. The district of Darjeeling has international boundaries with Bhutan in the east, Bangladesh in the south and Nepal in the west. The district covers an area of 3149 sq.km and inhabits a population of more than 18 lakhs. The district has a blend of ethno-linguistic groups comprising of the Nepalese, Bhutias and the Lepchas constituting a major chunk of the population followed by Biharis, Bengalese, Marwaris, Bhutanese and Chinese. Darjeeling is well-known for the three T's i.e. Tea, Timber and Tourism, but in spite of the recognition and demand for its tea in the international market it has not been able to accelerate the tempo of economic growth and development. This has resulted in paving the way for youngsters to seek employment opportunities elsewhere in other towns, cities and abroad. The strategic location of Darjeeling Hills and the surrounding nations provides ample opportunities to the traffickers as it has been an easy passage for migration of women and girls for decades. The present study is an attempt to identify the factors leading to women trafficking and finding way out to address this social pernicious.

**Keywords:** Darjeeling, Trafficking, Women, NGOs, Bengal, Prostitution.

### Introduction

Human trade or trafficking of humans is an illegal activity where the fundamental motive is to create wealth at the cost of trading humans mostly for the purpose of sexual slavery, forced labour, begging, drug peddling, forced marriages, pornography or commercial sexual exploitation along with the extraction and trade of organs/tissues, forced surrogacy, political instability, natural calamities and disasters, some are also used as combatants by some terrorist and insurgent groups along with violation of human rights. It is an age old trade dating back to human history.

According to the oxford dictionary, the word 'traffic' means 'barter', 'illegal trade' and 'traffickers' means the 'illegal traders'. Human Trafficking is recruiting, harboring, transporting, providing or obtaining a person by the use of force, fraud or coercion for the subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage or slavery. It is an illegal commercial trade of human beings, where they are exploited and treated like commodities for profit. Both men and women may be victims of trafficking, but the primary victims worldwide are mostly women and girls who are trafficked for sexual exploitation. Trafficking can occur anywhere, an urban area or a rural area, within a country or outside, where there is illegal migration. Trafficking affects all regions and majority of the countries in the world.

The United Nations estimates that trafficking in person generated approximately \$7 billion in 2002 and the amount has risen to about \$32 billion in 2010 (Bright 2011).

The UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (also referred to as the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking), which entered into force in 2002 (the Protocol supplements the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime), defines trafficking thus:

Trafficking in persons shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of the abuse of power or of the 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 purposes of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs. (Nair 2011)

Article 23 of the Constitution of India, guarantees right against exploitation, prohibits trafficking in human beings and forced labour, and makes their practice punishable under the law. The ITPA Act, Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, 1956 renamed after amending the Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act, 1956) This Special legislation deals with trafficking. The Act defines the terms "child", "prostitution", "public place", "special police officer", and "trafficking officer". The objective of the Act is to inhibit/abolish traffic in women and girls for the purpose of prostitution as an organized means of living. Offences specified under this Act are punishment for keeping a brothel or allowing the premises to be used as a brothel.



- a) Punishment for living on the earnings of prostitution
- b) Procuring, inducing or taking persons for the sake of prostitution
- c) Detaining a person in premises where prostitution is carried on
- d) Prostitution in or the vicinity of public places
- e) Seducing or soliciting for the purpose of prostitution
- f) Seduction of a person in custody.

The law confers wide powers on the concerned authorities in matters of rescue and rehabilitation of victims and survivors and provides for stringent action against the exploiters including closure of brothels, surveillance, extenuation, as well as aggravated punishment when the offences are committed on children. (Sen and Ahuja 2009)

Human Trafficking is a modern-day slavery, a grave human rights abuse, it promotes breakdown of families and communities, fuels organized crime, deprives countries of human capital, undermines public health, creates opportunities for extortion and subversion among government.

Trafficking in human beings takes place for the purpose of exploitation which in general could be categorized as a) Sex-based and b) Non-Sex based. Sex-based includes trafficking for prostitution, commercial sexual abuse, pedophilia, pornography, cyber sex, and different types of disguised sexual exploitation that takes place in some of the massage parlor, beauty parlors, bars and other manifestations like call girls racket, friends clubs etc. Non sex based trafficking could be for different types of servitude, like domestic labour, industrial labour, adoption, organ transplant, camel racing, marriage related rackets etc. The growing traffic in women is principally for the purpose of prostitution is an international problem which can be found in both developing and industrialized nations. (Roy 2010).

A trafficker is a person who either lures a minor or a major with false promises, high hopes, and expectations or by force, coercion or abduction with the intention of exploitation and making maximum profit by selling off the individual. A victim is a person who has been subjected to betrayal, exploited sexually and mentally, economically deprived, threatened, instilled fear, violation against the dignity and sold from one hand to the other (amongst the agents/pimps or the Dalals) into the brothels.

### West Bengal: A Profile

West Bengal is a state in eastern India, between the Himalayas and the Bay of Bengal with over 91 million

inhabitants (As of 2011 census), it is India's fourth-most populous state. Apart from the ethno-linguistic it shares its borders with Bangladesh in the east, Nepal and Bhutan in the north. It also borders the Indian states of Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar, Sikkim and Assam. Bengal has been marked as the state with the highest number of victims of Human Trafficking.

The Union Government has presented a report on Human Trafficking in India at the Rajya Sabha and West Bengal tops the list. A steep rise of more than 70% is observed in the data of the number of women and children trafficked from Bengal in the last couple of years. The data showed that 3,856 women and children have been trafficked from West Bengal in 2015 and the number has increased to 6,672 in 2016. The National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) which prepared and compiled the data of the report says that at a time several cases of child trafficking have been registered in West Bengal from Baduria in the South to Jalpaiguri in the North. However, the actual members of trafficking cases might be higher than the NCRB figures as several incidents go unreported. In 2014, the State, according to the NCRB (National Crime Record Bureau) it was reported that the highest number of missing children 14,671, was from West Bengal. Source: Press Information Bureau, Government of India (The Telegraph, March 10, 2017, Calcutta)

### Trafficking in Women: Theoretical Discussion

The theory which is being incorporated for the existing study is the 'The Theory of Gender and Sexuality' which has been used since the early 1970s to denote culturally constructed femininity and masculinity as opposed to biological sex differences. The 'female sex' is usually subordinated in comparison to the 'male sex'. Theories of gender oppression describes women's situation as the consequences of a direct power relationship between men and women in which men have fundamental and concrete interest in controlling and dominating women as they are the weaker sex and this leads to exploitation like trafficking in women. Patriarchy can be seen as a system of society or government in which the father or the eldest male is the head of the family and descent is reckoned through the male line. Women and children are subjected to the male dominance.

Theory of Globalisation is very pertinent in determining the trafficking issue in society. As there is widespread awareness which is stretched beyond our conventional boundaries 'Global consciousness'- a consciousness that not only drives our life but also at an empirical level, is a source of socio-cultural change. Globalisation refers to those processes which tend to create and consolidate a unified world economy. The globalisation discourse in



India has set from the 1990s. During this decade the mantra of liberalisation, privatisation and Globalisation (LPG) was set into motion by the Indian state. Globalisation is also characterised by greater mobility of goods and people on a rapid pace. Remote parts of the world are now integrated into the global economy. Globalisation gives way to migration of women and children from one country to another which can also make them the servants of globalisation where they become easy targets for trafficking.

There are two ways in which Globalization has influenced the internationalization of trafficking in persons. Firstly, it can be said that the victims of trafficking in persons are more often and more easily moved from one place to another place and from one country to another. The organisation of the trafficking has become easier through the use of modern communication techniques and the various forms of transportation that can be used to transport victims from one place to another. With the use of these techniques, the traffickers are for instance more able to serve the specific demands of the sex market. Secondly, it is widely observed that poverty and unemployment affect women more often than men. Consequently, the effects of globalization affect women disproportionately, making them vulnerable to trafficking practices. It is widely recognized that poverty and underdevelopment is one of the main reasons for the existence of trafficking in persons. Therefore, trafficking mainly takes place from poor, underdeveloped countries to rich. (Rijken 2003)

### Objectives of the Study:

The objectives of the present study are as under:

- To identify the factors leading to Women trafficking in Darjeeling Hills
- To understand the preventive measures to combat women trafficking
- To offer meaningful solutions to the prevailing issues concerning women trafficking

### Research Methodology

#### Study Area:

The area of study has been Darjeeling Hills; Darjeeling district is situated in the northern part of West Bengal state, due to the porous nature of the area, which has allowed the movement of people and commodities, there has been lot many cases of trafficking. Darjeeling has been used only for recreational purpose but the rampant occurrence of the societal issues like trafficking in women and children have not been highlighted much. Over the years many children, young men and women were found to be missing from Darjeeling and its surrounding sub-divisions, yet the public did not have any clear information or news as to the identity of their abductors and the causes for their abduction. These incidents be-

came a sensation for the moment and then it was forgotten. However, the families which suffered the loss of their members due to human trafficking were left with an unforgettable memory and a scar which would never fade away.

### Data collection:

The study has focused on quantitative and qualitative methods. Both primary and secondary data were used. The primary data was collected by interviewing the NGOs and Police in and around Darjeeling Hills and Siliguri. Secondary data was collected from secondary sources: books, journals, articles and Internet.

### Factors leading to women trafficking in Darjeeling Hills:

Trafficking in women and children is thus one of the worst forms of violence of human rights. This is because it gradually results in the total destruction of the victim's personal identity and his/her right to live as a free human being in the so-called civilized society. Being subjected to continuous violence and humiliation, it also violates several other human rights (Sen and Ahuja 2009).

There are various factors leading to trafficking of women and girls.

- Demonstration effect/Easy Money:** Girls go to the cities to work and earn huge money, their entire outlook is changed where they come in wearing gold chains, good outfits, expensive mobile phones and when they return to their villages they lure other simple village girls who are forced by their parent to join them without even inquiring as to what type of work is provided to them in the cities.
- Alcohol (A socially accepted drug in the hills):** In the hills there is the practice of exchanging alcohol in any function be it marriage or any type of celebrations, (eg Dasain, Tihar Puja time, parents also allow children to sit together and drink). Alcohol leads to early death of the husband due to too excess intake of alcohol, leaving behind the wife and children, who in turn goes to work in beauty parlours and meets the same fate of trafficking. According to Sister Sangeeta Rai, from Kalimpong Hospital, she stated that alcoholism is a very bad practice in the hills, where out of five homes we find three or even four houses which have alcoholics. Miss Margret Horo from Darjeeling Mary Ward Social Centre said that tribals in the tea gardens are so addicted to alcohol that they cannot stay without consuming. Local Liquor is a regular drink for them which is made of rice, millet which leaves them intoxicated throughout the day. Some are ready to give away their daughters for domestic work purposes in exchange with alcohol.



- c) **Fake Marriages/ Extra Marital Affair:** The traffickers give false promises of marriage to young girls but in actual they are taken to cities and sold off at a large sum of money. The notion of "Chor ko Shor" in the hills is a very common practice as more of elopement and love marriages take place in comparison to arranged marriages. In the case of a missing girl, the family instead of reporting the matter to the Police, keep waiting for three days thinking the girl has eloped and would be brought back after the third day but within that time period, i.e.. Three days they are either taken to cities or flown abroad.

In 2014, 14-18 girls were missing, major girls who were missing were recovered as cases of elopement and few minor cases were there which was handed over to Bal Suraksha who after counselling helped them reintegrate with their families this was reported by SI Dawa Sherpa, from Kalimpong Police Station.

- d) **Early marriages:** Though child marriage is not a cultural practice in the hill communities but early marriage among the adolescents is taking place due to their age, feelings, and the environment so they get into the hands of the traffickers. Mr Govind Pradhan from Hill Social Welfare Society, Kalimpong cited an incident which had taken place from Bhalukhop in Kalimpong where the trafficker had sold off the girl (a minor), under the pre text of marrying her.
- e) **Technology (Use of Mobiles):** The traffickers study about the details of the victims, they have all the information as to what can attract the victim as well as what can be the soft target of temptation for them. Mr Nirnay John Chettri from MARG, Darjeeling gave an example of how a trafficker from Bangalore was totally aware of the whereabouts of a girl studying in class 8, details were known to him as well as the house and even the colour of roof of her house through the Google earth. He further stated that through face book, (a social networking site) youngsters share their personal life, phone numbers with strangers and also update their whereabouts to the world like for eg a status updated as 'i am lonely...i am on my way to Siliguri', and sometimes posting good comments in their pictures will leave them impressed, these are the information's easily tracked down by the traffickers.

Miss calls are yet another means of starting a relation which can again be turned into trafficking. Many cases have taken place starting with a miss call there has been a direct interaction between the

trafficker and the victims leading to friendship and then getting trafficked.

- f) **Advertisements/Agencies:** There was an advertisement on escort services in the local newspaper but no one opposed. Mr Nimay Chettri himself had called to find out but they refused to speak so when a female volunteer spoke over the phone they invited to come to Siliguri as well as if she brought in more girls she would also be given commission but not to tell anyone so Mr Chettri asked the police. Mr Jagmohan who raided within one week and found out that it was being operated from Uttarayan in Siliguri, where a class ten student named Rocky was operating through Siliguri call girls.com. There has been many other instances where women and girls have been trafficked by these employment providing agencies. In 2010 (case study), Reena from Kalimpong, was promised a job in Kuwait by an agency at Bagdhara, and also promised a handsome salary, some amount was charged from her, she was then sent to Kathmandu, Nepal where from a Nepali agent she could collect her passport which was a fake/ jalee passport where she got a pseudo name and a marital status. She was a married woman with a kid, she flew to Kuwait, where she was sold from the Nepali agent to a Filipino agent, who snatched away her passport and her phone, on reaching Kuwait and then auctioned her to an Arab Sheikh, and she had to work at his place, the amount promised to her was never given. After escaping from that house she was taken into Police custody for more than a month as she did not possess a passport. So, finally after much struggle and hardship she returned home.
- g) **Physical Appearance:** In sex industry there is more demand for fair complexioned, slim figure of women and girls. Mr Rishi Kant Director of 'Shakti Vahini' an organisation working to combat Human Trafficking was the resource person for the National Seminar on Trafficking in Person: Prevention, Control and Rehabilitation organized by the Department of Law, University of North Bengal on 26th and 27th of November 2016. He stated that there has been more demand for the girls from the hills, as they get high price for them because of their fair complexion, and they are very submissive which becomes an advantage for the traffickers, pimps and the madams. It also becomes very easy to trade them not only nationally but internationally as well in South East Asia.
- h) **Beauty Parlors:** Beauty parlours or massage parlours hire young girls with good salaries to entertain the clients physically. eg a Thai spa was raided in Salugara, Siliguri (2014) and minor girls of 14-



15 years were into prostitution serving almost 40 customers a day, were rescued from there. As far as North Bengal is concerned there are many dance bars which have come up in Siliguri after the metropolitan cities.

- i) **Simple/Emotional People:** People from the hills are more emotional they do not think, they blindly trust people (strangers) who take full advantage of their situation. Hill people become soft targets for the traffickers. According to Sub Inspector Rohita Lama, Darjeeling PS, she stated, that the society is much liberal in the sense once they trust they do not even question as to where are they heading to? Who all are going? Where are they going? When will they be returning? Parents hardly pose such questions to the traffickers, whereas in other communities there is a lot of questioning and in case things are unclear, parents too accompany them. Lady traffickers also are very good at convincing the parents because a woman trusts a woman more than a male and even allow their children to accompany them. Women as much as they are victims, are also facilitators of this human trade. Women exploit other women and young girls in servitude.
- j) **A sweet pledge:** According to Sister Subeshna Thapa, from Bal Suraksha Abhiyan, Kalimpong. Trafficker makes a pledge (convincing truth which is very sweet) between them and the parents of the children by offering them some gifts or deeds, as according to their requirement, due to their poor living conditions, the traffickers never open up the truth, that they are going to sell their daughters in the brothels, they give false promises to the parents that their children would be provided with good education or a good job with a handsome salary would be provided so they convince the parents to give their children in their hands.
- k) **Childhood abuses:** Childhood abuses can leave a negative impact on the child. It leaves a scar which becomes very difficult to erase. Sister Sangeeta Rai referred to a case which she had dealt in Kalimpong Hospital, Molestation of a minor in the tender years (10 years old) within the family, where the step father, uncle (mama, kaka) had taken advantage of the girl. Family molestations: The family background was not very strong, due to the physical abuses within the household, the child was left in a traumatic condition, and she felt she was unwanted. This has also been a factor which later pushes these children into illegal activities or some are sold by their own family members to the traffickers.

- l) **Poverty:** Poverty is the root cause of trafficking taking place around. Families from poor background are easily convinced by offering some monetary assistance as well as other requirements by the traffickers who are shrewd and well versed in changing the mindset of the poor parents. Poverty can be monitored only by creating employment so that the migration too decreases. In other words, Parents are easily targeted on commercial lies and bribed with money.
- m) **Closed Tea Gardens:** Tribals too are easy to convince since they are simple and the closing of tea gardens give easy passage to the traffickers to pave their way into their habitats and lure their children away with false hopes and a few financial assistance.
- n) **Taking Food offered by Strangers/known:** In many cases girls were offered sweets and cold drinks, tea which made them unconscious, one incident was when the girl accompanying her friend to the railway station was offered cold drinks after meeting a person thereafter she was trafficked.
- o) **Unemployment:** Many youngsters are school dropouts, some are socio- economically backward, and Employment opportunities are very few as a result people from the hills have to migrate to other towns and cities. Mr Nirnay John Chettri from MARG, stated that flesh trade is on the rise mainly due to unemployment, resulting from political unrest and the porous borders in Darjeeling. Unsafe migration takes place due to the ignorance of the people. There is a strong link between poverty and unemployment which pushes women and girls out from their places in search of better job opportunities.

These are the major factors leading to trafficking in women and girls especially in Darjeeling Hills and Siliguri area.

### Preventions

- a) **Awareness Campaigns :** Trafficking can be prevented by putting up 'Awareness Campaigns' in schools and colleges, rural and urban areas, about the false promises made by traffickers in luring the children from their villages and families. Programmes could be either through street plays, documentaries. Seminars, skits, rallies and by distributing pamphlets and brochures. Awareness programmes should be conducted amongst the parents, among the drivers, hoteliers, rickshaw pullers and so on. It is notable that two youngsters named Tejasweeta Pradhan (18 years) and Shivani Gond (17 years) members of the 'Students Against Traf-



ficking Clubs'( SATC) of Darjeeling were awarded by the West Bengal Commission for protection of Child Rights' (WBCPCR) on 21st November, 2016 in Kolkatta. They had helped in exposing an international sex racket at Munirka in New Delhi, Gurgaon and Haryana. They saved several girls from Darjeeling, Doars, Sikkim and Nepal from the traffickers. So awareness programmes are a must. (The Asian Age, 17th January 2017)

- b) **Skill Development Training Programmes:** NGO's are trying their level best to do the follow ups for the rescued victims so that they do not return to the same profession and also providing them some opportunities like trainings in beauty parlor, sewing and Skill Development Programmes which can help them to sustain on their livelihood.
- c) **Corruption/Bribery:** Strict vigilation should be conducted at the grass root levels, so that taking bribery is stopped, Police in the grass root level takes bribes and seems corrupt which brings disgrace to the profession.
- d) **Women Empowerment Programmes:** If more women empowerment programmes are held it will help in building stronger, much more confident and independent women. These programmes should be held in the rural areas as well.
- e) **Technological Awareness** through the mediums like IEC (Information, Education and Communication) includes materials, Information and ICT (Information, Communication and Technology) like radios, mobile phones; internet could be another important means to prevent trafficking. Implementation of the IEC system by distributing pamphlets, leaflets to the youngsters so they could spread awareness. There was a case of a 16 year old school going girl who helped MARG and Darjeeling Police in saving another girl from being trafficked and arresting four traffickers from Darjeeling and Siliguri. It was with the help of IEC materials that the organisation was called in for rescuing ( as stated by Mr Chettri from MARG).

### Solutions

Based on the above analysis, the researcher has made an attempt to offer meaningful way out to address this social pernicious:

- a) Change in the Educational System- Education is the most powerful catalyst for social change. Educational system, can transform society for the better, as according to Mrs. Kylie Duncan, from CROSSROADS, Kalimpong, an organization working for prevention of trafficking, she stated that students should be given the liberty to make their own assessments,(evaluations) and not just accept what is written in the texts, it would help them become more creative and judgmental.
- b) Provision of a shelter home-Lack of shelter homes for rescued victims in the Hills and in Siliguri. There is 'CINI 'an organization, which keeps only minor girls and boys even after rescuing the major girls are let off, who are again re-trafficked. There is one 'KORAK' home in Jalpaiguri, so girls from Siliguri and Darjeeling Hills have to be kept either in Jalpaiguri or in Coochbehar. It would be better if a home was set up by the Government either in Siliguri or in the Hills.
- c) Professional counsellors to be provided; NGO's lack good professional counselors especially to motivate parents to lodge FIR's against the trafficker. Proper guidance and counselling is the need of the hour.
- d) Police to be sensitized and more essential requirements to be provided to handle Women trafficking. As according to the Police, there is no fund allotted for handling human trafficking cases. Government should take it up as a serious matter and provide some funds.
- e) Police should also be given the advanced equipments like technology to track down and investigate the traffickers and also provision of enough vehicles so they could rush on time to nab the traffickers before they escape.
- f) According to the police there is not much cooperation seen from the public when it comes to giving out information, could be out of fear and also avoiding the long ongoing court cases which becomes difficult for the Police to act. So, an approachable and public friendly environment could be created between the Public and the Police.
- g) There should be a stricter vigilance at the transit points and the cross border migration of people by the Police authorities. Understanding the interlink between migration and trafficking will help to identify the key factor of trafficking and also proper care should be taken to protect the freedom of people migrating.
- h) NGOs have to form a nexus and work collectively, since NGOs are working individually according to their major focuses. Ms Hasina Kharbhih, Managing director of IMPULSE, an NGO working against trafficking stated that NGOs have to form a nexus



in order to work against trafficking. Since North Bengal is the corridor to the North East, IMPULSE is focusing to make all NGOs pro active for combating trafficking and facilitating a chain of robust of umbrellas so that they could function more properly and effectively. She also said that some NGO's are keeping the rescued victims in shelter homes for months but according to the law she says that a shelter home can keep an individual just for three months after that she has to be reintegrated with her family. Sometimes NGO's refuse to give updates/follow-ups about their rescued victims which in actual has to be provided so that the victim does not go back in the same track. The neighbouring nations too should be given their own space where and how they can handle along with their implementation of rules and laws but she said that there are some NGO's who are encroaching on the other nations privacy and making things difficult for them to handle. There should be a very good understanding between the neighbouring countries so together illegal activities could be checked and controlled.

- i) A Fast Track Court is required so that immediate action could be taken and victims could be given justice. Other times, there is much delaying in giving the statement by the court. It happens that a trafficker is released on bail and by the time justice is meted out, a long duration of time has already collapsed.
- j) Certain National schemes like the Ujjawala which was launched in West Bengal in 2007 which was being implemented by the NGOs and Swahadar scheme had 18 shelter homes in West Bengal, providing shelter to women in distress. According to Mr Chettri from MARG, he stated that these schemes have to be relooked upon so a new scheme could be prepared by the panel constituted by the Supreme Court.

### Conclusions

Trafficking in Women in Darjeeling Hills has been a serious concern, where NGOs, Police, parents and the Public have to work hand in hand together. Parents need to monitor the whereabouts of their wards as well as the duty lies in every parent to create a strong bond and create awareness so that they do not fall in the hands of the traffickers. The higher authorities need to attend the cases with utmost priority. The Government should relook and reframe certain schemes which have been outdated. NGOs need to counsel the victims and help them reintegrate with their families. Human trafficking is a serious crime and grave violation of human rights. Time has

come for all to join hands to fight against this gruesome practice so to build a better place to live in.

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## **Role of Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Combating Women Trafficking in Darjeeling Hills**

Dr. Ujjwal Bhui and Persis Mukhia<sup>1</sup>

### **Abstract**

*Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) perform a variety of humanitarian services. Different NGOs cater solutions to different kinds of social issues and their focuses are on a wide range scale ranging from human rights to improving health, providing education to the underprivileged, spreading awareness on environment, upliftment of women and children, combating human trafficking and so on. Several NGOs in Darjeeling Hills are working to combat women and girl trafficking. The existing article aims to analyze empirically the roles play by these NGOs to prevent and control the trafficking of women.*

*Keywords: gender, sexuality, bondage, Shakti Vahini, prostitution.*

### **Human Trafficking: A Brief Introduction**

Human Trafficking is a grievous crime in human society. It is the inhuman act where the main aim is to make profit at the cost of trading humans mostly for the purpose of sexual slavery, forced labour, begging, drug peddling, forced marriages, pornography or commercial sexual exploitation along with extraction and trade of organs, forced surrogacy and some are also used as combatants by some terrorist and insurgent groups, a grave violation of human rights. Trafficking can occur anywhere,

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in an urban or rural area, within a country or outside country where there is illegal migration. Both men and women may be victims of trafficking but the primary victims worldwide are mostly women and girls who are trafficked for sexual exploitation. Article 3, Paragraph (a) of the United Nation's Trafficking Protocol is related to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons. The Protocol declares "Trafficking in Persons" as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, 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 of exploitation. *The Global Alliance against Trafficking* defines 'women Trafficking' as: All acts involved in the recruitment and/or transportation of a woman within and across national border for work or services by means of violence or threat of violence, abuse of authority or dominant position, debt bondage, deception or other forms of coercion. Every minute of a day, the most vulnerable women and children are raped for profit and pushed into the flesh trade. According to the *SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution, 2002*, 'trafficking' means moving, selling or buying women and children for Prostitution within and outside a country for monetary or other considerations with or without the consent of the person subjected to trafficking (Nair, P.M. 2011: 11).

Trafficking in human beings takes place for the purpose of exploitation which is general and could be categorized as (a) Sex based and (b) non sex based. The former category includes trafficking for prostitution, commercial sexual abuse, pedophilia, pornography, cyber sex, and different types of disguised sexual exploitation that takes place in some of the massage parlours, beauty parlors, bars and other

manifestations like call girls racket, friends clubs etc. Non sex based trafficking could be for different types of servitude, like domestic labour, industrial labour, adoption, organ transplant, camel racing, marriage related rackets etc (Roy, Rekha 2010: 2). But the growing trafficking in women is principally for the purpose of prostitution, an international problem found in developing as well as in industrialized nations.

### **Trafficking in Women: Theoretical Discussion**

Theories provide a concrete basis to a particular subject of discussion. For the existing study which deals with women trafficking, the "Theory of Gender and Sexuality" is being incorporated in view of the fact that it has been used since the early 1970s to indicate culturally constructed femininity and masculinity as opposed to biological sex differences. The 'female sex' is generally considered subordinated in comparison to the 'male sex'. Theories of gender oppression portrays women's position as the outcome of a direct power relationship between men and women in which men have primary and material interest in controlling and dominating women as they are the weaker sex and this leads to their exploitation. Trafficking in women is such a social and power relation issue among men and women wherein men dominate on females' body and mind.

Trafficking in women is local issue but it is obviously a global issue. It unlocks the national and international boundaries. The 'Theory of Globalization' is specifically relevant to throw light on the gloomy issue of women trafficking in our society. Since there is an extensive awareness which is expanded beyond our conventional boundaries, the 'Global Consciousness' - a consciousness that not only drives our life but also, at an empirical or practical level, is a source of socio-cultural change in societies throughout the world. As well as globalization refers to those practices



which tend to build and strengthen a unified world economy. The process of globalization as a discourse as well as an economic program has been laid down in India since the 1990s. Throughout the decade and subsequently the agenda of liberalization, privatization and globalization (LPG) was set into action by India. Globalization as a process encourages even insists migration of people from one region to other regions within a country or one country to other countries. Globalization gives way to migration of women and children from one country to other countries which can also make them the drudges/slaves of globalization where they befall as easy targets as victims for the traffickers.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The existing research work primarily is based on these theories which provide necessary direction to the work to obtain an empirical base. Considering the factors or the causes which have led to the uprising of trafficking of women in Darjeeling hills, it has been observed that several NGOs are working to combat this social evil out from the society. Those NGOs have taken up a well spirited team effort to organize outreach programmes, creating and spreading awareness in rural areas as well as in schools and colleges. Street plays are organized so that each and every age category of individuals become conscious as to preventing them from falling prey in the hands of traffickers. There are several NGOs in Darjeeling hills which play important roles to combat trafficking of women. The present paper mainly focuses on this aspect of NGOs like MARG, (Mankind in Action for Rural Growth), Hill Social Welfare Society, Cross Roads, Bal Suraksha Abhiyan, CINI, Tiny Hands, Kanchanjunga Udhar Kendra Welfare Society, and Mary Hill Ward Society which provide their every effort for preventing and controlling women trafficking in and around Darjeeling Hills. Following are the objectives of this study:

- (i) To study the nature of women trafficking in Darjeeling Hills
- (ii) To know the roles played by the NGOs to combat women trafficking
- (iii) To understand the ways and methods applied for preventing women trafficking

### **Research Methodology**

The whole study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data have been collected by direct interviewing the NGO members. Purposing sampling technique has been applied to select the NGO members as informants from whom relevant information have been collected. Pilot survey was done before framing a semi-structured interview schedule used for collection of primary data. Primary data collected from different NGO members have been presented as case studies. Secondary data have been collected through books, newspapers and internet.

### **Women Trafficking in Darjeeling Hills: Some Aspects**

Shri Rishi Kant, the Director of *Shakti Vahini*, an NGO working against trafficking stated in a National Seminar on "Trafficking in Person: Prevention, Control and Rehabilitation on 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of November 2016, organized by the Law Department of N.B.U., stated that many girls from Darjeeling Hills were trafficked to Kashmir, North India and many other places. He also mentioned that North Bengal particularly Darjeeling Hills has been a very easy target for trafficking in women as it shares porous boundaries with other nations. It also has a prolonged history of movement of people, goods and commodities.



Darjeeling district is the northern part of West Bengal which shares its boundaries with Nepal to the west, Sikkim to the north, and Bhutan to the east. Irrespective of having potentialities for a better development, it still has low pace of development and economic growth paving the way for youngsters to seek employment opportunities elsewhere in other towns, cities and other countries. Poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, closed tea gardens and many other factors have given advantage to the traffickers to lay their firm grip on the innocence and simple minded people from Darjeeling hills. We can also say that this porous nature of the area allows and gives ample opportunity to the traffickers, who are also known by the term 'Dallas' or 'Dalalis' who could be either neighbours, relatives, lovers, people who have been trafficked before, or sometimes even the parents. The recruiters pick the victims from bus stops, railway stations, airports, streets, beauty parlours or even from their homes. The 'Dallas' or 'Dalalis' move to the potential sites for victims especially poverty stricken areas where there has been no proper rehabilitation. The traffickers are very calculative as to from where and when they can pick up their victims. They have a very large scale networking, spreading all across, and are using modern methods to track their victims. Regions which have been hit by earthquakes, floods, cyclones, drought or any natural calamity can be their softer targets. Poverty and hunger makes women and children belonging to the poorer sections of the society highly vulnerable to human trafficking. As per our observation in the region besides the factors like poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, natural disaster etc one unique feature exists there that even if the girls go missing hardly there is any missing complaint filed in the police station by the family members due to the fear of social disgrace. They also do not file complaint as they are with the hope that the girl would return after three days. This unique cultural practice in the hills is term as "*Chor ko Shor*" when family members assume that the girl has eloped and would come home



after tying the knot with the boy but within that period of time *i.e.* three days they are either taken to different cities or flown abroad. Over the years many women and children went missing but there was no initiative to trace their abductors or to realize the cause of their abduction. These incidents became a sensation only for the moment and soon forgotten.

### Role of the NGOs

The Darjeeling Hills facilitate many Non Governmental Organizations or NGOs to work actively to combat women and children trafficking. They have been spreading awareness among people consequently people are also becoming active to prevent trafficking of women and children. Officials from some of the NGOs were interviewed in the course of the study. These NGOs are the Mankind in Action for Rural Growth (MARG), Hill Social Welfare Society (HSWS), CROSSROADS, Bal Suraksha Abhiyan, Tiny Hands, Mary Hill Ward Society, IMPULSE etc. The following table shows the activities of some of the selected NGOs which they acknowledged during their face-to-face interview with the researcher:

**Table No 3: Activities of the NGOs**

Questions	MARG	HSWS	TINY HANDS	CROSSROADS
1. What are the causes of Human Trafficking?	Unemployment, alcoholism, fake marriage, Socio-cultural practice of "chor ko shor"	Unsafe Migration, easy money, unemployment, fake marriage, School dropouts.	Lack of job opportunities, intra country migration, deception by lover or spouse	Poverty, politics, family problems, sex abuses, no proper implementations of legislation
2. How do you	Police is	Asking the	Regular	Organization

act, if girls /women are being trafficked?	mobilized immediately & information gathered about the victim.	parents & relatives to file a missing complain & then organization takes up the case.	monitoring are done along with inquiry	directs people to child line in case of minor & assists people to report the case.
3. How do you get information of the victims?	From parents, police, & Sansthas (Committees)	Parents, relatives, friends	Staffs & SSB ( Seema, Sashtra Bal)	It is through awareness programmes people come & share
4. What are the difficulties faced during rescuing?	Victims consider NGOs & police as outsiders	Non-cooperation from the police, as without the assistance of the police they cannot functions	Victims at time do not accept that they are being trafficked as they are brain washed & hence they retaliate with the staffs.	Organization does not rescue but assists people to report cases, do not face much difficulty
5. After rescuing where are the girls/women kept?	Shelter homes / protection homes in Jalpaiguri and Coochbehar	Kept in shelter homes or reintegrated with their families	Minors are kept at CINI, majors are reintegrated with their families	Organization refers to other organization/s which work in the nearby areas
6. Are the victims accepted by the society or	Not easily accepted by the society	Not easily accepted	Pre-trafficked rescuing leads to easy acceptance by	Not easily accepted but more awareness programmes in



not?			the society.	this regard are required
7. What type of counseling is given to the victim and by whom?	Professional counselors	Since professional counselors are not there, so seniors of the organization do the counseling	All the staffs counsel the victims & handover them to the shelter homes	Organization does not have trained counselors so senior members counsel the victims
8. If not, how do you provide relief to the rescued victims?	Organization does not provide relief, it only rescues	Organization does not provide relief, but provide training courses & encourages them	Organization does not provide relief, but ensures home safety	Organization does not provide relief, but assists in reporting the cases
9. Women/girls are mostly trafficked from which ethnic group?	From all categories - General / ST / SC / Others	Mostly scheduled tribes as compared to others	Nepalese from Nepal in big groups and in most of the time Adivasi (ST) girls in small groups or as individual	All categories are vulnerable to trafficking but ST and Nepalis are more vulnerable
10. From which subdivision / district / country you have rescued the most?	All Sub divisions	Kalimpong	Nepal, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling	Kalimpong, Darjeeling, Doars

11. Any help from NGOs / Religious communities or any Union / Samajs?	Yes, DAT (Drivers Against Trafficking) clubs are formed who provide help	Yes, the organization has received help from the Panchayats, Sansthas & also from GDNS (Gorkha Dukh Niwarak Samelan)	Yes, other organizations, churches, taxi drivers, travel agencies provide help	Yes, the organization has received help from the locals and Panchayats
12. How often do you organize outreach programmes and where?	Awareness programmes are held in every month in schools, colleges, hotels, samajs etc	Once in two months especially in rural areas	Once in a month with Christian communities in Malbazar, Panitanki along with distribution of pamphlets	Regularly, sometimes 6 to 8 times in a month on drug addiction, domestic violence, trafficking issues etc
13. How willing are the police to join hands at the time of rescue?	Police forces are very cooperative	Police forces is much required at the time of rescue, though the cases are not taken seriously	Police are casual, they stop the traffickers only when order comes from higher authority	Very cooperative and help to prevent trafficking
14. Is there any financial aid given by the Government	Yes, but it is a very long process	No financial aid is provided but funds are collected through	There is no fund at present as the organization has to prove	No fund but organization is supported by providing donations



while rescuing?		donations and membership fees	itself independent at least for a year	
15. Is there any political pressure in the functioning of the organization?	No	Yes	No	No
16. What are your future plans?	More focus on prevention of trafficking	Control and prevention of trafficking	Organization is willing to work more for the society	By listening and welcoming new ways and strategies

### Case Studies of Some Well-Known NGOs in Darjeeling Hills

1. **MARG:** It was established in Darjeeling on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2006. It focuses on issues relating to women and children. It provides basic education to the underprivileged women, children, marginalized sections and rescued trafficked victims. The General Secretary of MARG, Nirnay John Chettri stated that flesh trade is on the rise in Darjeeling hills mainly due to unemployment resulting from political unrest, and porous borders in Darjeeling Hills. He also informed that 420 girls were found missing in 2010 which rose to 923 in 2012 as per the survey conducted by the NGO in the district. MARG has been organizing outreach programmes regularly, conducting awareness programmes in schools and colleges. They have formed clubs in schools /colleges and presently there are 7 numbers of clubs in Darjeeling and 4 numbers of clubs in Kalimpong. They also held awareness camps among the Local Samaj, Drivers Samaj, and also with the

Police forces. The NGO has rescued 43 victims since 2011-2012 from various age groups. 5 traffickers were convicted for 2 to 4 years of imprisonment. 150 victims have been recovered and they were kept in the Coochbehar Rehabilitation Centre as they lack a home to keep the rescued victims. Most of the victims were minors.

2. **Kanchanjunga Uddhar Kendra Welfare Society (KUK)** is a very old NGO of Siliguri which was established on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2004. It focuses on prevention of trafficking, child protection, issues related with any type of violence against women. Its focused areas are Siliguri, Darjeeling hills and Dooars. It has built a good rapport with Police administration, schools, and other organizations which inform them about missing cases. They have been rescuing women and girls from trafficking as they receive help from "DECOIR CUSTOMER" meaning to say some known staff acts as a customer and make their search for missing individual. Just after information of the missing person, they immediately report the police. They have been playing a big role in providing training to the members like teachers, advocates etc coming from the nearby villages. They have formed the *Village Protection Committees* which alert people in the villages regarding trafficking. They have staffs for counseling the trafficked victims. Shri Prabhat Pathak, a member of the organization stated that trafficking has two types: CSW (Commercial Sex Worker) - when girls, women are trafficked for commercial sexual purpose and the other one is LRW (Labour Related Work) - when children especially boys are trafficked for labour purposes for camel jockeying and other uses. Awareness campaigns like workshops are held. Many Christian missionaries and institutions have come forward to help the organization. They also get information from travel



agencies which also help them in their endeavors in combating trafficking. He stated that the main reason behind trafficking in North Bengal is due to the limitation of jobs in the region. Being a tea garden belt where thousands of labourers were employed few years ago are now unemployed particularly due to the use of machines in tea factories. Consequently, requirement of labour power is less, so supply of jobs goes down and people are forced to migrate out of the region. In 2016, three batches of girls were taken to Uttar Pradesh, Bihar for organizing orchestra songs where Bollywood item songs were played and the abducted girls were forced to dance. And later, these girls were sold one by one to the people who attended the orchestra event. Eight girls were rescued in Raxaul (Bihar) out of which 5 girls were trafficked from Nepal, 2 girls from Dooars and 1 girl was abducted from Assam. During the period 2004-2008, approximately more than hundred cases of trafficking mostly girls from Nepal who were running away to escape the Maoist threat and fear were handled and solved. Five numbers of traffickers were convicted in 2013.

- 3. Hill Social Welfare Society, Kalimpong:** The NGO was established on 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2000. It mainly focuses on the upliftment of women, children and other marginalized groups. They organize health checkups, monitor nutrition intake and provide training to the youths. It also focuses on agriculture (multi-crop farming, square feet farming, and animal husbandry). They also have started the Self Help Group or Neel Kamal Group scheme to empower rural women. They watch over areas like Kalimpong, Algarah, Gorubathan, Rangli-Rangliot blocks and the tea gardens found in these regions. The main role of HSWS is to provide a platform for training to young girls and women as beauticians, handloom and weaving workers. They

are trained in cutting and tailoring. They make khadas, shawls, incense sticks etc. Horticulture is also practiced like mushroom cultivation so that they can sustain their livelihood. HSWS also conducts awareness programmes in rural areas, tea gardens to educate them so to prevent forced migration. They have rescued 42 victims since 2011-2016 who belonged to the age group of 21-35 years. Some of the rescued were sent to missionary homes, one victim who was trafficked from Nepal sent to Maiti in Nepal. Others also were reintegrated. Shri Govind Pradhan stated that those who were rescued from brothels were not accepted by their respective society whereas those victims who were rescued before pushing to the brothels were accepted by their society.

4. **Tiny Hands, Siliguri:** This NGO is one of the recently established NGOs set up on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2016, but has taken a major role in transit monitoring, preventing of trafficking by conducting awareness programmes at bus stops, junctions, railway stations etc. They have also conducted many awareness camps with the stakeholders, rickshaw pullers, auto drivers and travel agencies. They also have established Monitoring Cell in Panitanki situated in the Indo-Nepal border. The Organization has handled 52 cases in Siliguri, New Jalpaiguri Railway Station, Siliguri Junction, and bus stations etc where two traffickers were caught out of which one trafficker was convicted and sentenced to 20 years of imprisonment as per appropriate the law of Nepal. In India, the punishment is only for 5 to 7 years and occasionally it is of 10 years. Three cases were found from Malbazaar, Jalpaiguri in which no traffickers were arrested as the victims failed to give their statements. Most of the girls are tribals from the tea garden areas of Terai and Dooars (sub-Himalayan regions).



5. **Mary Ward Social Centre, Siliguri:** This NGO was established in 2016 in Champasari situated in the outskirts of Siliguri. It is run by the Loreto Sisters. The main role played by the NGO is to monitoring the nearby tea gardens like Mohargaon, Gulmarg, Sukna, New Chumta, Putin Bari, Nischaritapur tea garden so that trafficking cases should not happened. Margret Horo is an active member who has been organizing special awareness camps in these tea gardens. She herself rescued three minor girls from Bagdogra. She said that the rescued minor girls are handed over to CINI, and the rescued adult girls/women are reintegrated with their families. She has been keeping a strict vigilance on the tea gardens as the tribals are very much vulnerable for trafficking.
6. **Bal Suraksha Abhiyan (BSA), Kalimpong:** It has been looking after children and rescuing them from being trafficked. At the present they have 96 children who were rescued from different districts of West Bengal. Sister Subeshna says that children used to clope and generally they are falling in the wrong hands. She handled a case when two minors were being taken to Haryana but with the help of Child Line in Delhi they could bring them back home in Kalimpong.
7. **CROSSROADS, Kalimpong:** it is an another organization which has been helping to prevent trafficking by registering cases of missing girls and children as most of the time cases go unregistered as parents are hesitant and out of fear they do not file cases. Sometimes, the traffickers are residents in the same village who keep pressurizing the parents that their children would be back and not to file a complaint. CROSSROADS helps the parents to register complaints and hands it over to other organizations working on it. It

also holds awareness camps on domestic violence, drug addiction and on trafficking. The organization has rescued three girls from Darjeeling, and two girls from Sikkim.

### Observations and Opinions

Observations have been made here taking into consideration the roles played by the NGOs. Above mentioned NGOs in Darjeeling Hills (District) are actively working and rescuing victims of trafficking of women but the problems which are being observed by them are many which are as follows:

- **Lack of Shelter Homes for Rescued Victims:** There is an organization named 'CINI' which keeps only minor girls and boys even after rescuing the major girls are let off who are again re-trafficked. There is one shelter home named 'KORAK' in Jalpaiguri, so girls from Siliguri and Darjeeling Hills have to be kept either in Jalpaiguri or in Coochbehar. It would be better if a home is set up by the Government either in Siliguri or in Darjeeling.
- **Fewer Co-operations from the Police:** On occasions, the NGOs do not get sufficient as well as timely co-operation from the Police administration and the delay in their arrival creates a lot of instability which provides chance to the traffickers to escape never to be traced again.
- **Change in the Statement by the Victims:** Sometimes, victims do not accept that they are being trafficked and they tend to change their statement due to the fear of threat and prolonged court hearings. NGOs have to be very vigilant and need to counsel them appropriately.



- **Lack of Good Professional Counselors:** Majority of the NGOs lack good professional counselors especially to motivate parents to lodge FIRs against the trafficker/s. According to a member of 'Hariyo Kharka' meaning 'Green Pasture' a Christian Organization in Kalimpong which provides counseling to the youths and empowers women by organizing awareness programmes. Ms. Saru Koirala stated that even after the rescuing, the girls are kept in shelter homes provided by the Government in inhuman conditions. These shelter homes are crowded resulting in several inmates fleeing back to the brothels.
- **Organization of Additional Awareness Campaigns:** More awareness campaigns through awareness programmes, skits, distribution of pamphlets and sensitization on the grass roots of different sections of people like in different clubs, hotels, drivers, teachers, students, and shopkeepers could help prevent trafficking from rural and urban areas.
- NGOs are trying their level best to do the follow ups for the rescued victims so that they do not return to the same profession and also providing them some opportunities like trainings in beauty parlour, sewing and other types of skill development related trainings which can help them to sustain on their livelihood.

Though, in Darjeeling hills, NGOs are working individually. According to Ms. Hasina Kharbhih, Managing Director of IMPULSE, an NGO working against trafficking stated that NGOs have to form a nexus in order to work against trafficking. Since North Bengal specifically Darjeeling district is the corridor to the North East. Therefore, the focus of IMPULSE is to make all NGOs pro active for combating trafficking and facilitating chain of robust undergone umbrella so that they could function more properly and effectively.

## Concluding Remarks

Women Trafficking in Darjeeling hills can be controlled and prevented only when people from different walks of life irrespective of their differences, join hands together to fight for uplifting women in society and helping them to acquire a position of respect, also teaching the young ones the revival of values which has now been disappearing from our society. Then only can our society be a better place for humankind – free from all kind of domination and bondage. NGOs are playing a significant role in this respect in Darjeeling hills.

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# Darjeeling woman rescued from Oman

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
DARJEELING, 25 APRIL

A social organisation has successfully rescued a Darjeeling woman in her late thirties from Oman and brought her back home.

The woman had recently had gone to the Gulf country after she was promised a housemaid's job. "However, she was physically tortured in the house she used to work, and after we learnt of the case, we did our bit to rescue her and bring her back here," Mankind in Action for Rural Growth (MARG) general secretary, Nirnay John Chettri, said.

He added that there are many people from the Hills that go to the Middle East for work, but without proper verification of the agency that is taking them, which is a must. The woman had gone

to Oman on 19 November last year, through an agency based there. The victim maintained that she stayed in Dubai for 12 days, after which, the agency made her work in a house in Oman, but as she failed to speak either the local language or English, she was physically tortured and returned to the agency after six days, where she was tortured further.

"She was then sent to work in another house where she worked for about three months, and where she underwent a similar ordeal. She returned to the agency again, while her pleas to return home fell on deaf ears," sources said.

"Meanwhile, she was in constant touch with one woman from her village, who learnt of her miseries and took up the matter with one social worker who got in

touch with the Darjeeling NGO, the Indian Embassy in Oman, the district administration here, and Darjeeling MP SS Ahluwalia," they added.

The woman was finally rescued on 11 April and she reached Delhi last Friday, it is learnt.

## EXEMPTION OF BOND-WORKING OUTSOURCING OF HOUSEKEEPING & CLEANING & REPAIRS AT RATNAPUR DIVISION

**E-TENDER NO. KIR/ Engg./17 of 2018 and 20-04-2018.**  
E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the works: **Tender No. 1. Brief Description of Work:** Construction of unarmoured L.C. Gate No. NC-44 by providing diversion road to L.C. Gate No. NC-45 between Akabani Road- Mangaraj. **Tender Value: ₹70,92,716.31. Earnest Money: ₹1,41,860.00. Tender No. 2. Brief Description of Work:** At Sitgajai Jh. Outsourcing of Housekeeping & cleaning of GRH & SRH including landscaping and providing security round the clock. (12 Months). **Tender Value: ₹5,85,105.35. Earnest Money: ₹11,710.00. Tender No. 3. Brief Description of Work:** At Sitgajai Jh.

# Nepal's missing girl turns out to be trafficker, gives cops the slip

ANANDA CHAKRAJAY

ANANDA CHAKRAJAY: A 19-year-old girl, who had been missing from Nepal and was thought to be a victim of trafficking, has turned out to be a trafficker who has given cops the slip.

She had been missing from Nepal for about a year and was thought to be a victim of trafficking. She had been missing from Nepal for about a year and was thought to be a victim of trafficking.

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SELECTING ANA FROM WHO HAD BEEN MISSING FROM NEPAL FOR ABOUT A YEAR AND WAS THOUGHT TO BE A VICTIM OF TRAFFICKING, POLICE OFFICERS WERE SURPRISED TO FIND THAT SHE WAS A TRAFFICKER IN HER OWN RIGHT.

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Anana Verma, daughter of the man who was arrested by cops in Kathmandu on Saturday, at court.

# Flesh trade: Delhi not just transit point but emerging source area

Around 10% of girls rescued from flesh trade in Goa are from Delhi

ANAND CHAKRAJAY

ANAND CHAKRAJAY: A data compiled by NGO Anand Chakrajaya (ACZ) reveals that vulnerable girls from Delhi are being trafficked to Goa in the name of better employment opportunities and are commercial sex workers.

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## TRICKED INTO PROSTITUTION

A lot of 200-odd girls rescued in Goa in the last two and half years, 30 are from Delhi. Girls mostly lured with the promise of better opportunities in Goa. All the girls trafficked from Delhi to Goa travel by flight. Tickets are booked by the traffickers and the details are relayed to Goa.

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## Foreigners also trafficked via Delhi

Delhi is also known to be a transit point for foreign nationals as well as victims from other Indian states who are trafficked to Goa for prostitution. The foreign nationals mainly include nationals of Bangladesh, Russia, Uzbekistan, Singapore, Turkmenistan etc. whereas from Indian states it includes Punjab, Rajasthan, UP, West Bengal and Uttarakhand, followed by Andhra.

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# Study rings Bengal trafficking alarm

ANAND CHAKRAJAY

A study by a group of researchers in Bengal has revealed that the state is a major source area for girls being trafficked to other parts of India. The study also revealed that the state is a major source area for girls being trafficked to other parts of India.

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## Darjeeling kids receive bravery awards for busting international sex racket

BY ANAND KUMAR

**DELHI, Feb 2**—Two youngsters from the Darjeeling hills were awarded bravery awards by the New Delhi-based Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCRP) on November 23 in Kolkata on the occasion of International Child Rights Week. They were awarded for playing a crucial role in exposing an international sex racket in Kolkata in New South West Coochpur, Garpo. They helped save several girls from Bangladesh, the Bhojra, Sikkim and Nepal. All to-

gether, five young members of the Systemic Against Trafficking Child (SATC) were awarded for helping the authorities bust the sex racket. Sixteen of them were above 10 years of age. They could not qualify for the award. Last year NGO MANG, along with the State Child Welfare, other local NGOs and NGOs played a significant role in bringing the girls back to their homes. Speaking at the award ceremony, NCRP's National Child said, "We have achieved a milestone of the award for the National Bravery Award as well." With help

## Darjeeling girls shun fear and reveal identity Brave faces unveiled

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from the girls, the Bharat police and MANG intervened on international sex racket leading to the arrest of Gagan Kumar, the 14-year-old boy from Garpo, and a woman from Nepal, who was being regularly reported missing from Bangladesh. Anandika and Pratiksha were awarded for their role in exposing the sex racket. They helped save several girls from Bangladesh, the Bhojra, Sikkim and Nepal. All to-

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## WB keen on signing MoU with Delhi govt on human trafficking

ARMY BUREAU

Kolkata, Feb 2

In a bid to combat human trafficking, West Bengal government wants to join hands through memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Delhi Government. Sources claimed that the West Bengal government wants to initiate a dialogue with Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Karnataka and Goa by signing MoU for Rescue, Recovery, Repatriation and Integration (RRRI) of trafficked children and women.

NGOs, Bengal govt officials discussed the importance of MoU with different states. In recent times both Delhi government and West Bengal government had shown the interest in helping trafficked victims where once they helped a victim who was brutally assaulted and Delhi government took the responsibility of her treatment at CTR hospital.

On Monday a team of NGO Shakti Yuhini, took her with them in a flight to West Bengal where the girls were handed over to WB government officials and now the state government will take care of her. Sources claimed that West Bengal has emerged as a source area for inter-country trafficking in India.



Mrs. Yuden Bhutia

Regarding the same, a meeting of the State Task Force (STF) on Trafficking and RRRI of women was held in Kolkata which was attended by government officials of West Bengal and Delhi-based

# मानव तस्करी बाल शोषणबारे रिम्बीकमा जनचेतना कार्यक्रम



**रिम्बीक, २२ दिसम्बर (विश्व) :** मानव तस्करी तथा बाल शोषणबारे सचेत गराउँदै दुर्गम पार्इहस्यमय पुनः जनचेतना कार्यक्रम गरिनेको मार्ग विकासकारी संस्थाले बुधवार रिम्बीक बजारमा जनचेतना कार्यक्रम गरेको। रिम्बीक नगरिक अधिका सुधा समिति (महिला सशक्त) टोपनसहित मार्ग अनि लोपोन्मुख पुलिस प्रशासनको संयुक्त कार्यक्रममा मार्ग एनजीओको महासचिव निर्मल जोन छेत्री, हाथवी राई अनि कर्म

विश्व लेखा उपस्थित थिए। कार्यक्रममा मार्गका सदस्यहरूले वर्तमानमा बढ्दै गइरहेको मानव तस्करी अनि बाल शोषणले समाजलाई कुनै असर पारेकोको साथै यस मुलमूल बुझाको रोकथाम गर्नलाई मार्ग विकासकारी संस्थाले गाउँ गाउँ पुगेर जनचेतना कार्यक्रम महत्त्वपूर्ण रहेको बताए। उनीहरूले यस अभियानको रोकथामको निम्ति जनसाधारणहरू पनि सचेत रहनुपर्ने बताउँदै संकाजनक निम्ति

देख्ने पुलिस प्रशासन एवं संस्थालाई छत्र पाँटिने उद्देश्य गरे। कार्यक्रममा लोपोन्मुख बजारका सम्वन्धकारिता बोधी सङ्गले मानव तस्करीमा के कस्तो कानून हुन्छ त्यसमा आगेपीलाई बस्ने सञ्चय दिन सम्बन्ध भन्ने कुरा प्रकाश पार्दै घरमा कुनै संकाजनक व्यक्तिहरू संलग्न रहेको भावा पाए सम्पूर्ण विचार सहित पुलिस प्रशासनलाई खबर गरे पुलिस प्रशासनले पञ्चाशीप टोस कदम उठाउने बताए।



Miss Margret from DMWSC

# मानव तस्करीबारे सचेतना कार्यक्रम



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## Trafficking check

Youth Against Trafficking Club (YATC) was formed on September 12 at Darjeeling Government College by Mankind in Action for Rural Growth (MARG), ARZ Goa and ECPAT Luxembourg. The event was coordinated by Shrawan Bhutia, assistant professor of the college. Students were handed badges by officer in charge (OIC) of the women's cell, Meena Rai Bhutia is also the YATC coordinator of the college. Hirany Jaha Chhetri, general secretary, MARG,

held an orientation for the students and stressed that the youths had the capacity to change the world. On September 8, YATC was also formed at North Bengal St. Xavier's College in Rajpuraj Block of Jalpaiguri. The event was coordinated by Purnima Mukhia of the women's cell. Radha Khawas from MARG held an orientation event for the students at St. Xavier's. The students pledged to work towards stopping this social evil.



The MARG event in Darjeeling

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Mr Prabhat Pathak (KUK)



Sister Sangeeta Rai  
(Kalimpong District Hospital)



S.I Shiksha Singh (P.S Pradhan Nagar)



Inspector Biplab Majumder (NJP RPF)



Mr Ashim Rai (Tiny Hands)



ASI Dibyendu Chakraborty (NJP GRPF)



S.I Sujit Lama (PS Mirik)



Miss Sharu Koirala (Hariyo Kharka) on-the-right



Mrs Bhim Bahadur (Cross Roads)



Fr Stanley Sj Darjeeling