

CHAPTER -4

CASE STUDIES ON THE VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING

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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.1lakh 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 Tatkals 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

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

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

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

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

| Ethnic Community | Number of Respondents | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Bhutia | 3 | 10.0 |
| Nepali | 14 | 46.7 |
| Others | 13 | 43.3 |
| Total | 30 | 100.0 |

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

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

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

| Religion | Number of Respondents | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Hinduism | 14 | 46.7 |
| Islam | 7 | 23.3 |
| Christianity | 3 | 10.0 |
| Buddhism | 3 | 10.0 |
| Others | 3 | 10.0 |
| Total | 30.0 | 100.0 |

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

| Educational Qualification | Number of Respondents | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 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 |
| Total | 30 | 100.0 |

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 |
| Total | 30 | 100.0 |

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 | |
| Total | | | 30 | 100.0 | |

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.