

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

### **Abstract**

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

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

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

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

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

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