



Bodoland Trafficked Survivors Network Forum Member's Life during Covid-19 Pandemic: NEDAN's Intervention



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Trafficking in Person on Global Context:

Human Trafficking is a terrible form of human rights violation which is happening worldwide. The most widely cited definition of human trafficking is in the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons (1): *'The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.(Article 3,paragraph (a))'* .

According to UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) report the most common form of human trafficking (79%) is sexual exploitation. The victims of sexual exploitation are predominantly women and girls. Surprisingly, in 30% of the countries which provided information on the gender of traffickers; women make up the largest proportion of traffickers. In some parts of the world, women trafficking women is the norm. And the second most common form of human trafficking is forced labour (18%). Worldwide, almost 20% of all trafficking victims are children.

Anti-Human Trafficking Movement in India:

Human Trafficking is an age old practice. India is a source and transit for trafficking for forced labour, domestic enslavement, commercial sexual exploitation, forced marriages, and other emerging forms of trafficking like organ trafficking, etc. According to UN Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC), India is the fastest growing region on Human Trafficking where millions of persons are trafficked domestically (Intra state and Interstate) and internationally every year.

State Human Trafficking Nodal Agency:

As per the Crime in India Report, 2015 released by National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB), there were 6,877 cases related to human trafficking in 2015 against 5,466 in 2014, with the highest number of cases reported in the North-east state of Assam. As per the Crime in India Report, 2015 released by National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB), there were 6,877 cases related to human trafficking in 2015 against 5,466 in 2014, with the highest number of cases reported in the North-east state of Assam followed by West Bengal. Anti Human Trafficking Units (AHTU) has been created and operationalized in all the districts of Assam

NEDAN Anti Human Trafficking Movement in BTC, Assam:

Trafficked Survivors Network Forum Formation in 2012:

NEDAN Foundation, a Kokrajhar based NGO has been working for combating Human Trafficking for more than a decade. *Trafficked Survivors Network Forum has formed to enhance the trafficked survivors to raise voice and fight for their entitlement rights.* The members of the forum became a role model for the potential and vulnerable girls in the NEDAN's intervention areas/districts for their tremendous work in preventing trafficking in the region. Moreover, the ultimate aim of NEDAN is to reintegrate survivors within the society where they can live with dignity. Most of the survivors who had been rescued and had come to NEDAN for support are today living and adjusting in the mainstream society. Many girls have found partners for themselves, many are living an independent life and some of them had reunited to their families.

NEDAN being a host Secretariat of North East Network Forum against Trafficking (NENFAT) co-ordinate with all the eight states of the North East on strengthening our anti human trafficking movement and share our North East concerns with larger National and International bodies. In the state level NEDAN has been instrumental in formulating Victims Compensation Guideline, Victim Livelihood Entitlement, housing Rights of Victims under Prime Minister Housing Scheme.

NEDAN'S Intervention:

Livelihood program with restored Trafficked Survivors:

Most of the Trafficked Survivors of Kokrajhar District do not have enough land and opportunity to meet their food requirements. Therefore, NEDAN initiated a livelihood support program to empower the vulnerable girl and women in the target areas, by providing them a permanent source of income through *home based weaving, Social entrepreneur like tailoring shop, vegetable vendor, Tea Stall, organic farming like ginger cultivation, potato, pulse cultivation, silk worm rearing* and many more as per the interest of the individual. Before providing them with the basic needs to start their own self- supportive business and building other small- scale farms a meeting is held in which a small test is taken to see an interest level of the individual.

During Covid-19 Lockdown NEDAN'S Initiative with Restored Survivors:

During this Pandemic and nationwide lockdown NEDAN has initiated of making Face mask production for the female survivors and agricultural based livelihood for the male survivors.

Face Mask production by Survivors:

Most of the vulnerable women, mothers of trafficked survivors, school drop outs and domestic child labourer in the internally displaced population areas of Kokrajhar District do not have enough land and opportunity to meet their food requirements. Therefore, NEDAN Foundation took an



initiative of provide and create livelihood opportunities to empower

the trafficked survivors and the vulnerable girl and women in the target areas, by providing them a permanent source of income. Face mask production is an initiative by NEDAN



to help the restored trafficked survivors to survive during the pandemic.

The masks were distributed among the 10,000 adolescents' boys and girls along with Dignity & Hygiene Kit. Stitching materials were provided for making masks and also paid Rs.20/- for each piece of face mask. Total 6000 masks are produced till now.

Agriculture based livelihood with the boys:

Organic Agriculture like paddy cultivation, Seasonal vegetables is yet another initiative taken by NEDAN for the restored trafficked survivors. Nedan Foundation had started Agriculture Based Livelihood with the group of 10 boys. They cultivated paddy in 25 Bighas



of community land. This initiative is to make rural youth skilled so that they can create livelihood with the locally available resources.

Engagement of Destination Girls Home in Pickle making, Organic farming:

During the lockdown time the girls of Destination Girl's Home produced 500 Kgs of organic mango pickle. The aim is to raise some funds to manage their home and continue their studies. This is an example of how one can become self sustained even during the Pandemic



Dignity Kit and Hygiene Kit distribution:

Lockdown during COVID-19 pandemic have an impact on female in accessing menstrual hygiene products. NEDAN Foundation provided Dignity and Hygiene kit to the restored trafficked survivors which includes Dignity kit (sanitary napkins), hygiene kit (soap, detergent powder and facemask) across 125 villages under three blocks of Kokrajhar district (Kokrajhar, Dotma and Kochugaon block) so that the female may not undergo menstrual problems during the lockdown and have a safe and dignified menstruation.



One Month ration for Restored Survivors:

The outbreak of the Corona virus and its effect has hit the lives of people. It is rapidly affecting the day to day life, disrupting the business and other income generating activities. Trafficked Victims and Transgender community are the most vulnerable and neglected ones in the society. They are still victims of social stigmatization.



NEDAN Foundation being the

pioneer in combating human trafficking in the North East Region has the history of 2600 people rescued and restored back with the family. Since livelihood in the rural areas was badly affected by the pandemic, the survival of the trafficked survivors was challenging. It was tough for the organization to reach out to the trafficked survivors since the areas were restricted for movement of the public. Since NEDAN is working for emergency relief, the team was able to reach out to provide one month's dry ration which consists of Rice, Dal, Mustard oil, Soyabean, Potato and Onion to 65 survivors so that they can live without hunger and meet the nutritional needs.

Online Emotional Support:

Online Telephonic interaction with the restored trafficked survivors was also carried out by the professionals of NEDAN Foundation to lighten the burden of stress, anxiety caused by this pandemic.

NEDAN as a leading anti-human trafficking organization rescues and repatriates more than 124 children and women annually. Most of them are restored back with families and for the children(0-18 years)who does not have proper social support system in the families and who needs special care and attention are provided comprehensive development space at Destination Girls Home run by NEDAN. Destination girls home also have after care facilities for the those girls who have completed the age of 18, in order to enable them to adopt to the society moving away from an institutional based life.

Trafficking rescued Intervention during lock down (Mentioning only a few cases):

Case-1:

Covid-19 pandemic has hit so hard to the lives of the poor people to survive. The situation has come into extreme level where a couple (migrant returnees from Gujarat) are forced to sell their new born baby girl for Rs.45, 000. A rich woman from Kokrajhar town approached and motivated the father to sell his 4 month old baby for adoption in Karbianglong District. The deal has done and two ladies forcefully taken away the baby from mother's arms. Community members came to know about the case and they informed Kokchugaon Police station. After two days the child was rescued by Kochugaon police along with Childline Kokrajhar and NEDAN Team from Mrs Pranita (Trafficker's) house. At present the child is with her parents.

Case-2:

Anjana is an 18 years old girl who got married in her early age that went unreported. She is also a mother of 3 year old girl. She got married in Barpeta district. Last year she left her husband's place and now living in her parents' house with her daughter in Santinagar Kokrajhar. She has also an agreement with her husband's family for the divorce but they are not legally divorce



yet. Anjana along with her close friend Ms. Anu planned and arranged everything to go to Haryana and get second marriage with the man with whom she talks in phone. The neighbors suspected the case as a trafficking and informed one of the members of CWC, Kokrajhar. CWC member informed NEDAN team for the necessary action. NEDAN team lodge FIR to SP, Kokrajhar and SP has forwarded the case to Kokrajhar Police station and within some minutes Police did a detail investigation on the case and prevented the suspected trafficking case. Police and NEDAN team has ordered to Anu's and Anjana's family if the families of both the man and woman are ready for the marriage, Anjana has to legally divorced with her first husband and register the second marriage in the Court. As this are the law and also the safety of Anjana.

Case-3: A 17 years old girl from Santipara, Patgaon of Kokrajhar District was trafficked by a man named Jibon Ali.

On 31st August'2020 the girl was sold by a man named Jibon Ali known also known as Jaharuddin Sheikh (Trafficker) to Helahi Sekh (Trafficker) of West Siliguri Jibon Ali is a Muslim guy who pretended to be a Hindu by changing his name to Raju Das in order to seduce her to his false love. Since the girl was missing from home, her parents filled a FIR in the Serfanguri police station. The Serfanguri police investigated the case and rescued the girl from Khalpara red Light area of Siliguri on 4th August'2020 with the help of local activist.



The traffickers Jaharuddin Sheikh, Helahi Sekh and Salma Begum was arrested and a case was registered under 49/2020 U/S 366.

Challenges:

- Repatriation of trafficked victim from other state of India like Ahmadabad
- Repatriation of the cross-border trafficking completely closed.
- Shelter provision without Covid-19 testing
- Isolation Rooms provision for rescued victims
- Delay of the Legal support due to Court closer
- Difficulties in restoration of victims with family because of the restriction in movement due to Covid-19 pandemic.

Way-Forward:

On Combating Human Trafficking:

- Empowering the trafficked survivors' network forum members.
- Training of adolescents on life skill education and other leadership skills.
- Collectivize the adolescents' club members and enable them to speak out for their rights.

Promoting education for girls:

- Collectivizing adolescent girls affected by conflict into clubs.
- Reenrollment of the girls into school.
- Distribution of books and study materials among the students.

Creating Alternative Livelihood for Migrant returnees and school dropouts:

- Creating locally available livelihood such as paddy cultivation, organic farming etc.

Community Involvement for protection of Child Sexual abuse:

- Each child Protection Committee works towards the Child Protection and safeguards the rights of children and takes appropriate measures to prevent and address the issues of child rights violations.

Work with existing govt. institutions and department in the districts of BTC on the above mentioned wayward.