

## Human Trafficking in Areas of Armed Conflict

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### Abstract:

*Human Trafficking is a threat looming over humanity. It single-handedly defeats the impetus exerted on promotion of human rights and incites its perpetrators to challenge the criminal justice mechanism of the nation. In times of conflict, the traffickers exploit the trouble-torn circumstances to latently promote their venomous activities. Out of the various kinds of trafficking, sex trafficking is one of the most evidently egregious part of the problem. The vulnerability of women and girl child makes them easy targets and the anomic situation does not allow the law enforcement mechanisms to come to their rescue. In this paper, an attempt has been made to understand the plight of women and girl child in armed conflict situations by building a simplified definition of trafficking and pin pointing the factors that contribute to this evil.*

**Key Words:** *Organized Crime, Armed Conflict, Enslavement, Forced Pregnancy, Areas of Transit, Traffickers, Male-dominated Society.*

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## Introduction

Human Trafficking is the coerced movement of people<sup>1</sup> perpetrated by the host to the destination states or countries mainly for the purposes of sexual slavery, labour exploitation, marriage, begging, services as child soldiers, organ trafficking, etc. Article 3a of the anti-trafficking protocol attached to the Convention of Transnational Organized Crime describes trafficking as the *recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of persons by use of threat or force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power, or of a vulnerable position 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.*<sup>2</sup> This description is meant to deliver a consensus and consistency around the globe on the phenomena of human trafficking.

With the advent of globalization, transnational crimes have gained impetus as the current world conditions have credited increased demand & supply. However, it would be wrong to conclude that it is only with globalization that trafficking or trading in persons became a rapidly increasing organized and multinational crime. Historically, population movements have been an enduring component of the human civilization. While migration is believed to be the brighter side<sup>3</sup> of this population movement, trafficking is viewed as the darker side. There is a hair line of difference between the two. Thus, the tale of human trafficking can be found immortalized in historical lithographs & paintings.

Out of the various types of human trafficking, sex trafficking is one of the most visibly egregious part of this vast issue but they are at the tip of an iceberg of the massive international problem of human trafficking that incorporates many miscellaneous forms of abuse and exploitation. A victim of sex

trafficking might not only be the sex slave of the possessor<sup>4</sup> but might be subject to other kinds of services that obliges the whims and fancies of the possessor. Thus, the fundamental human rights of such victims are curtailed and they are alienated from the society.

The trafficking network is so huge, well organized and efficiently planned that it becomes difficult for the law enforcement agencies to take steps towards rescuing the victims of this illegal trade. The root of this crime can emerge from any part of the society, and therefore requires people to be argus-eyed in order to nip the problem from its bud. Formerly, the shroud of obliviousness made the recognition of this crime formidable. However, currently due to the active participation of the media, news linked to trafficking served as a wakeup call to many incognizant souls in deep slumber. Nationalizing and internationalizing the problem was the first step towards recognizing and combating this organized immigration crime

## Research Objectives

- To understand human trafficking as a transnational and organized crime network.
- To study as to how conflict lead to human trafficking and conflict areas serve as places of origin, transfer and terminus for the sufferers of this illicit trade.
- To analyze the situation prevailing in Assam.

## Research Questions

- What is the reaction and opinion of the social audience towards the trafficking victims?
- What circumstantial impetus creates the breeding grounds for trafficking?
- What are the factors that make conflict affected people vulnerable to trafficking?

<sup>1</sup>DAVID A. FEINGOLD, HUMAN TRAFFICKING, *Foreign Policy*, 26-30, (2005).

<sup>2</sup>BRIDGET ANDERSON AND JULIA O'CONNELL DAVIDSON, IS TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS DEMAND DRIVEN? A MULTI-COUNTRY PILOT STUDY, *IOM*, 9, (2003).

<sup>3</sup>SANKARSEN&JAYASHREEAHUJA, TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN AND CHILDREN: MYTHS AND REALITIES, Concept Publishing House, 16 (1st ed., 2009).

<sup>4</sup>VEERENDRA MISHRA, HUMAN TRAFFICKING: THE STAKEHOLDER'S PERSPECTIVE, Sage Publications, 1(1ed., 2013)

- What are the steps that can be taken at individual level to combat trafficking?

### Research Methodology

The research has been conducted after analyzing the work of different authors so as to achieve the set objectives of the paper. Doctrinal method has been adhered to. The researcher has resorted to the use of books, websites, and reports of the NGOs and international organizations. Thus, secondary sources of data collection have been used. The research design is explanatory and analytical.

### Limitation of the Study

The paper aims to provide an overview of the concept of human trafficking and then proceeds to deal with the theoretical aspects of trafficking in areas of armed conflict. Though several references of foreign countries have been made, the primary focus is on India.

### Human Trafficking: An Organized and Transnational Network

Human Trafficking is recognized to be the fastest growing transnational crime aggravated by globalization. Globalization has credited increased demand and supply. Resource subsists because globalization has led to an increase in economic and demographic inequalities between the developing and developed countries along with feminization of poverty and the relegation of many pastoral groups.<sup>5</sup> It has even led to the sequencing of the cyclopean advancement of tourism that has facilitated paedophiles to travel and involve themselves in sex tourism. The expansion of trafficking can also be credited to the transportation infrastructure and the decline in the cost of travelling. Demand has led to an increment as producers rely completely on trafficked and abused labour to survive the competition in universal economy in which the

consumer seeks cheaper goods and services containing easily available and reachable sexual services.<sup>6</sup> Thus, demand and supply have spawned a thriving business for the traffickers.

Some scholars trace the genesis of human trafficking to the slave trade in the sixteenth century that witnessed the Africans being bought, owned and sold by traders across the Atlantic to work in American plantations and many other services. According to Marxist Theory of Revolution, the very fact that the Africans became the centre of commercial black labour hunting, broadened the coming up of capitalist system of manufacture and brought along with it the assets for an Industrial Revolution.<sup>7</sup> But even after the eradication of the intercontinental slave trade; industrialization, urbanization and the incongruence between the economic developments of various nations has facilitated the intensification of the unseen face of modern day slavery or bondage in the form of sexual abuse, domestic servitude and forced child labour. Though globalization had promised benefits to the exploding population through employments; the stream of profit trickled down because of low wages, inhuman working conditions and instability of work.

Human Trafficking is weighed from the perspective of organized crime. Organized crime is crime based on cooperative effort and unity of purpose, like an organized business, for its successful execution. It is characterized by hierarchical structure, team work, centralized authority, planning, specialization, reserved fund, division of labour, monopoly, violence, conduct norms and protective measures<sup>8</sup>; all of which is necessary for trafficking of persons and successfully dodging the law enforcement agencies. This crime network makes it difficult for the executives to trace and decipher the complexities of the illicit trade. Moreover the benefit that human trafficking gives the perpetrators of organized crime is that unlike drugs, humans can be sold repeatedly.

<sup>5</sup>LOUISE SHELLEY, *HUMAN TRAFFICKING: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE*, Cambridge University Press 3(1d ed., 2010).

<sup>6</sup>Id. at 3.

<sup>7</sup>VEERENDRA MISHRA, *HUMAN TRAFFICKING: THE STAKEHOLDER'S PERSPECTIVE*, Sage Publications, 1(1ed., 2013).

<sup>8</sup>RAM AHUJA, *CRIMINOLOGY*, Rawat Publications, 157-158(2d ed., 2012)

Thus, the only way to combat trafficking is utter vigilance that has to be observed by each and every member of the society as the illicit trade remains hidden within the massive and exploding population dynamics.

When viewed from the dimension of transnational crime, the growth in human trafficking can be construed by the demand for cheap labour, the enormous productivity in this trade and the supply of people ready to be traded. Human trafficking stems from the victims vulnerability that is exploited by the trafficker. Due to internationalization of corruption, rise of regional conflicts and globalization<sup>9</sup>, the gap between the rich and poor has widened. As a result of which the people below the poverty line expose themselves to the trafficker's exploitative motives. In addition to this, the improved communication facilities have paved the way for buying and selling of women with the ease of a mouse click. The root of trans nationalizing human trafficking lies in the idea that dispersing victims to different international locales makes the trade difficult to trace.<sup>10</sup>

### Factors Promoting Trafficking

There are many factors that incite the business of trafficking people and aids in spreading its tentacles. To facilitate a better and easy understanding, they are divided into push and pull factors<sup>11</sup>. Push factors are primarily origin based factors whereas pull factors are those present at the place of destination. They both are complementary to each other, luring the victim to fall into the trafficker's trap.<sup>12</sup>

#### a. Push factors involve:

- **Class and Caste structure-**

G.S Ghurye in his polemical work had stratified the Indian society into different segments and established the functioning of different divisions by

calling each division a caste. According to him, caste system is a very intrinsic part of the Indian society. This stratification of society into different caste groups led to the emergence of two antagonistic extreme classes. The people of the lower castes were always subject to exploitation by the upper castes. As the upper castes enjoyed a certain degree of influence and respectability in the society, the lower castes not being the owner of such powers and privileges, were subject to victimization on account of their vulnerability. As a result of this, the people undergo monetary deficiency and status hindrance. This oppression estranges them from the main stream society and in order to be de-victimized and be free from this vicious cycle, they get drained into illicit opportunity arrangements. In the progression of pursuing scenarios in the unmapped land, they create fertile grounds for traffickers to exploit them. In addition to this, people from lower classes are hired as domestic laborers and agriculture help. They are subject to the pleasure of the dominant class in order to make their living. Moreover the existence of structural inequalities on caste and class basis is preserved by less bureaucratization and more feudalism. There is less rule of law, natural justice is not appreciated, and political violence is resorted to in order to enforce structural shattering, crushing the demands of the feebler section brutally<sup>13</sup> and exposing them to the evil intentions of the traffickers.

### Gender Based Discrimination:

Feminization of poverty has exposed women to the brutalities of a patriarchal society. Poverty among women has forced women to succumb to jobs like that of a domestic servitude, prostitution etc.

<sup>9</sup>SHIRO OKUBO & LOUISE SHELLEY; HUMAN SECURITY, TRANSNATIONAL CRIME AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING: ASIAN AND WESTERN PERSPECTIVES; Routledge, 138(2d ed. 2011).

<sup>10</sup>Id. at 138

<sup>11</sup>VEERENDRA MISHRA, HUMAN TRAFFICKING: THE STAKEHOLDER'S PERSPECTIVE, Sage Publications, 6(1ed., 2013); See also: LOUISE SHELLEY, HUMAN TRAFFICKING: A

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE, Cambridge University Press 3(1d ed., 2010).

<sup>12</sup>VEERENDRA MISHRA, HUMAN TRAFFICKING: THE STAKEHOLDER'S PERSPECTIVE, Sage Publications, 6(1ed., 2013)

<sup>13</sup>VEERENDRA MISHRA, HUMAN TRAFFICKING: THE STAKEHOLDER'S PERSPECTIVE, Sage Publications, 8(1ed., 2013)

Feminization of migration<sup>14</sup> is another emerging concept that drags home the reason as to why women and children become victims of human trafficking. Women face discrimination at their workplace where they are paid less than their male counterparts for the same or more hours of work. So in order to feed their children and take up the responsibilities of their households, single mothers often resort to prostitution and readily become a part of the trafficking network. The moral turpitude they go through is not comprehensible.<sup>15</sup>

- **Culture and Traditions:**

Child marriage and bride trafficking comes to play under this factor. Equating a girl child to that of a burden pushes the parents to engage in trafficking and promote prostitution. *In certain parts of India, there are many castes that practice community-based prostitution like Bedia, Bechara etc. In South India, girls are subject to sexual exploitation, violence, abuse, neglect in the name of Devadasis, Joginis, Basivis.*<sup>16</sup>

- **Economy:**

The increasing economic disparity between the developing and the developed countries has credited the mandate for cheap labor and easily accessible sex services leading to human trafficking. The poor, who are the targets of the exploitative mechanism, find themselves victimized by this illicit trade.

- **Environmental factors:**

Natural catastrophes like floods, famines, droughts and earthquakes upsurge the susceptibility of women and children to the traffickers, who take undue advantage of their having lost social and financial

support. The women who are frantic to find a way out of this pitiful situation, become chief aims of the trafficking host. The relief camps become burning grounds of sexual exploitation, drug and human trafficking because of their vulnerability.<sup>17</sup>

b. **The Pull Factors:** Trafficking is perceived as the dark underbelly of globalization<sup>18</sup>. The cultural drift from traditional norms to enculturation of values of the modernized society has increased demands for unethical services by haves from have-nots. The have-nots aspire de-victimization and eventual empowerment when they move to the glossy world. The traffickers project the destination site according to these aspirations. Inadvertently, these gullible people become victims of the trafficking network and get entrapped into its organized warren.<sup>19</sup>

### Conflicts and Human Trafficking

Armed struggle is inseparably connected to human trafficking. *War and instability cause a breakdown in law and order, a deterioration of institutional and social protection mechanisms, increased poverty, deprivation and dislocation of the civilian population, creating an environment in which trafficking thrives.*<sup>20</sup> Traffickers take undue advantage of this opportunity and prey on those who are forcibly displaced or compelled to migrate in search of safety and stability, both within and across borders.

The vulnerability of women exponentially increases at the time of conflicts. While other people struggle through the devastation that accompanies wars and battles, women and girls encounter violence, discrimination, oppression and become victims of

<sup>14</sup>SANKARSEN&JAYASHREEAHUJA, **TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN AND CHILDREN: MYTHS AND REALITIES**, Concept Publishing House, 16 (1st ed., 2009).

<sup>15</sup>*Toolkit to combat Trafficking in Persons*, <https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/Toolkit>, Retrieved on 22-10-2015 at 8.15am.

<sup>16</sup>VEERENDRA MISHRA, **HUMAN TRAFFICKING: THE STAKEHOLDER'S PERSPECTIVE**, Sage Publications, 10(1ed., 2013).

<sup>17</sup>DAVID A. FEINGOLD, **HUMAN TRAFFICKING**, Foreign Policy, 26-30, (2005).

<sup>18</sup>VEERENDRA MISHRA, **HUMAN TRAFFICKING: THE STAKEHOLDER'S PERSPECTIVE**, Sage Publications, 19(1ed., 2013).

<sup>19</sup>Id. at 17.

<sup>20</sup>SUSAN FORBES MARTIN & JOHN TIRMAN, **WOMEN, MIGRATION AND CONFLICT: BREAKING A DEADLY CYCLE**, Springer Science and Business Media, 47(1d ed. 2009)

sexual slavery. This brutality faced by them can be linked to their deteriorating status in the society, pre-war inequalities and inadequate opportunities, which are exacerbated during and after war. *Armed conflict also leads to specific forms of war-related trafficking such as military abduction and enslavement for sexual servitude or forced labor.*<sup>21</sup> Women who become immigrants and internally colonial persons are exposed to a high-risk situation, as post war they have lost all economic and educational opportunities, social and financial support, protection etc. As men go off to war, they are left behind with inadequate shelter, insufficient food, are deprived of basic healthcare and their condition is reduced to a farce. They are restricted together in the crude domiciles, in unhygienic settings, which make them distressed to find a way out of this situation. The traffickers take gain of this desperation and either abduct or entice them into their trap by promising a better life at the destination site. Subsequently, these women are trafficked for sexual enslavement or enforced military prostitution. Moreover, in order to sustain war economies and prolonged war, women are forced to do domestic works, cultivate crops and demine contaminated areas.

Historically, the end of Cold war sequenced with the rise of provincial clashes resulting to an increased number of economic and political refugees<sup>22</sup>, who were trafficked by many rebel groups to fund their military actions and provide for soldiers. Thus, armed conflict is very intrinsically intertwined with human trafficking since time immemorial.

### Trafficking During the Time of Conflicts

<sup>21</sup>Id. at 47

<sup>22</sup>LOUISE SHELLEY, *HUMAN TRAFFICKING: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE*, Cambridge University Press 3(1d ed., 2010).

<sup>23</sup>Sonja Wolte, *Armed Conflict and Trafficking in Women: A Desk Study*, Deutsche Gesellschaft für TechnischeZusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH, Jan 2004, at 16

<sup>24</sup>David A. Feingold, *Human Trafficking, Foreign Policy*, Oct 2005 at 26; See also Sonja Wolte, *Armed Conflict and Trafficking in Women: A Desk Study*, Deutsche Gesellschaft für TechnischeZusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH, Jan 2004, at 16; SUSAN FORBES MARTIN & JOHN TIRMAN, *WOMEN, MIGRATION AND CONFLICT: BREAKING A DEADLY CYCLE*, Springer Science and Business Media, 47(1d ed. 2009); SANKAR SEN & JAYA SHREE AHUJA, *TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN AND*

The forms of trafficking vary at the time of conflicts depending on the geographic area where the conflict occurs, the economic and political conditions and the military and civil forces indulged. Out of the different forms of trafficking, the most ostensible are:

- **Military abduction and enslavement in war territories<sup>23</sup>:**

During the armed conflicts, women and children are abducted, held for a long time or swapped for new women, for different purposes, however sexual violence<sup>24</sup> is the most rampant among them all. The world has witnessed many burning examples of such occurrences. For instance, *the case of systematically organized military sexual slavery during wartime in which 200,000 women, mainly Korean and Philippine, were abducted by the Japanese army during World War II. Officially organized by the military leadership, these women were held in 'comfort stations' frequented by Japanese soldiers.*<sup>25</sup> Abduction for sexual abuse and enslavement by military forces has been repeatedly reported in existing conflicts zone such as for *Angola*<sup>26</sup>, the war in *former Yugoslavia*<sup>27</sup>, in *Sierra Leone, Liberia,*<sup>28</sup> and *Democratic Republic of Congo*<sup>29</sup> etc.

- **Forced Pregnancy:**

In several battles, rape and forceful pregnancy of abducted and enslaved women were used as a means of ethnic cleansing. This was the case in Bosnia,

**CHILDREN: MYTHS AND REALITIES**, Concept Publishing House, 16 (1st ed., 2009).

<sup>25</sup>Sonja Wolte, *Armed Conflict and Trafficking in Women: A Desk Study*, Deutsche Gesellschaft für TechnischeZusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH, Jan 2004, at 16

<sup>26</sup>*Peace, Women and Security*, United Nations (2002) at p.22.

<sup>27</sup>Alexandra Stiglmeier, *Vergewaltigung in Bosnien-Herzegowina, Massenvergewaltigung- Krieg gegen die Frauen*, Freiburg i. Br., 1993 at 109-216.

<sup>28</sup>Sonja Wolte, *Armed Conflict and Trafficking in Women: A Desk Study*, Deutsche Gesellschaft für TechnischeZusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH, Jan 2004, at 16

<sup>29</sup>United Nations (2002), pp. 17

Herzegovina, Rwanda, Bangladesh, Liberia and Uganda.<sup>30</sup>

- **Forced**

**Labour:** In order to sustain war economies, the trafficked people are forced to work as domestic servants, crop cultivators, fire wood collectors, demining contaminated sites<sup>31</sup>, carrying heavy ammunitions and messages between war gangs and fighters.<sup>32</sup> In Columbia, abducted women and men were enforced by the guerillas and the paramilitary forces to work on drug crops.<sup>33</sup>

- **Cross-border trafficking of women and girls:** Though data on cross-border trafficking during armed conflicts is less, war-torn countries are breeding grounds for such activities. Lawlessness, exemption from punishment, dysfunctional state institutions and border controls and the extraordinary level of violence during war create beneficial environment for trafficking. Moreover loss of social and financial support structure make women vulnerable and primary targets of these traffickers.

- **War zones as areas of transit<sup>34</sup>:** The lack of law enforcement agencies and border controls makes it way too facile for the traffickers to facilitate their self-driven interests. The term ‘military prostitution<sup>35</sup>’ explicitly explains as to how military forces are involved and have shaken hands with the perpetrators of this illicit trade. Thus, the conflict areas serve as areas of transit and even act as sources of recruitment from where the victims are abducted.

- **Poverty has a women’s face:** When men go to fight in wars, women are left behind with inadequate housing facilities, lack of food supplies

and unhygienic conditions. Having lost their financial support, they get exposed to the exploitative situations in male-dominated structures.

### Trafficking in Post Conflict Situations

War zones have always been burning sources and transits of trafficking irrespective of whether it is the time of conflict or post war period. Post war regions can be areas of source, transit and destination for the trading victims. Due to anomic situation after the war, the law enforcement institutions and political forces are in shackles. Criminal activities and violence are at the peak. These are used as pretexts for perpetuation of trafficking. *Former militia and ex-combatants also get indulged in trafficking activities to replace revenue losses after the termination of the war. Even income losses in weapon trafficking are filled by trafficking of people.*<sup>36</sup>

Victimization of women emanates from the belief that women have core responsibilities in rebuilding the war-torn societies. In the male dominated societal structures, women are often exempted from post-conflict decision making, peace-negotiations, policy decisions and execution procedures. So the very fact that women are not considered to be at par with men, propagates their victimization.

Post conflict zones also serve as areas of destination as the foreign troops who come as allies or international peace support operators, fetch with them the *demand for sexual slavery and, domestic labor.*<sup>37</sup> Moreover, *better access to sexual services by prostitutes is construed to be an essential*

<sup>30</sup>Sonja Wolte, Armed Conflict and Trafficking in Women: A Desk Study, Deutsche Gesellschaft für TechnischeZusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH, Jan 2004, at 15.

<sup>31</sup>SUSAN FORBES MARTIN & JOHN TIRMAN, WOMEN, MIGRATION AND CONFLICT: BREAKING A DEADLY CYCLE, Springer Science and Business Media, 47(1d ed. 2009).

<sup>32</sup>Sonja Wolte, Armed Conflict and Trafficking in Women: A Desk Study, Deutsche Gesellschaft für TechnischeZusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH, Jan 2004, at 15.

<sup>33</sup>Fanny M. Polania, Analysis on the relation between trafficking in humans and drugs in Columbia, Oct 3, 2003.

<sup>34</sup>Sonja Wolte, Armed Conflict and Trafficking in Women: A Desk Study, Deutsche Gesellschaft für TechnischeZusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH, Jan 2004, at 19.

<sup>35</sup>SUSAN FORBES MARTIN & JOHN TIRMAN, WOMEN, MIGRATION AND CONFLICT: BREAKING A DEADLY CYCLE, Springer Science and Business Media, 47(1d ed. 2009).

<sup>36</sup>Sonja Wolte, Armed Conflict and Trafficking in Women: A Desk Study, Deutsche Gesellschaft für TechnischeZusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH, Jan 2004, at 27. See also: SUSAN FORBES MARTIN & JOHN TIRMAN, WOMEN, MIGRATION AND CONFLICT: BREAKING A DEADLY CYCLE, Springer Science and Business Media, 47(1d ed. 2009).

<sup>37</sup>LOUISE SHELLEY, HUMAN TRAFFICKING: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE, Cambridge University Press 3(1d ed., 2010).

*ingredient for better military performance and it also prevents the military personals from harassing the women of the host countries.*<sup>38</sup>

### **Flesh Trade Menace in Assam**

According to the data for 2015 detailed out by the National Crime Records Bureau, Assam has emerged as the trafficking hub of the country. With almost about 1494 reported cases of trafficking, the state accounts for 22% of the national figure<sup>39</sup>. The state also holds the highest number of reported cases of child trafficking which projects the doleful state of affairs within its boundaries. A NGO named NEDAN Foundation records 4 to 5 cases of missing kids and adults every day in different parts of the state. Apart from these statistics, it has been presumed that a majority of cases go unreported as families of the victims fear getting caught in the legal hassles. In spite of the endeavours of the Chief Minister of the State, much is yet left to be done.

Further, in areas of armed conflict, child trafficking is rampant. According to UNODC Report 2013, Assam is ranked as one of the eight Indian states with regard to child trafficking. The Bodoland Territorial Area district has a regular feature of conflict which enhances the vulnerability of girl child trafficking<sup>40</sup>. By making fake promises and assurances of a good future, girls are lured into sex trade by supplying them to the forces for sexual exploitation. In Kokrajhar district of Assam, the stats of human trafficking are very high as the situation there is compounded by unbalanced democracy, military and separatists clashes within and amongst the province, difference in economic growth rates that omitted large sections of varied ethnic population, susceptible to natural and man-made disasters<sup>41</sup>.

In spite of the chaotic situation prevailing in the state, the constant attempts of the Nedan Foundation in opposing cross border human trafficking between North-East India and South Asia, deserves acclaim. The NGO has been trying to build regional collaboration with the SAARC nations on Standard Operating Procedure on Rescue, Repatriation and Reintegration.<sup>42</sup> It has been conducting training programmes, seminars and workshops for building conceptual clarity on the definition of human trafficking. This NGO has also shaken hands with the State Government for success in its anti-trafficking protocol.

### **Conclusion**

Human trafficking is the illicit trade in people for purely commercial purposes. Though, there are evidences of the existence of this crime in the pages of history, it became one of the fastest growing transnational and organized crimes due to the cushion provided by globalization. This crime can be divided into three segmental areas of occurrences, which are: place of origin, transit and destination. There are several factors that aggravate this menace, however an analysis of all these factors demonstrate the fact that women and children are much more susceptible to trading than men. For the purpose of this paper, it is in fact every important to understand as to how conflicts lead to trafficking. Conflicts themselves signify anomie i.e. total breakdown of law and order. In the absence of law-making, law enforcement and law-regulating agencies, criminal activities reach its peak. Thus conflict affected areas are conducive to promote trafficking. Women having lost their financial and social support expose themselves to the selfish interests of the carriers of criminal norms. Even the relief camps provide no respite to them. This victimization of women

<sup>38</sup>Sonja Wolte, *Armed Conflict and Trafficking in Women: A Desk Study*, Deutsche Gesellschaft für TechnischeZusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH, Jan 2004, at 27

<sup>39</sup>Rangili Brahma, *Armed Conflict and Girl child*, IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science, Vol. 22 Issue 1, www.iosrjournals.org. See also 'Assam emerges as India's hub of human trafficking' available at googleweblight.com.

<sup>40</sup>UNODC Report on Human Trafficking exposes modern form of slavery, <http://www.unodc.org>, retrieved on 21-10-2015 at

10.45pm. See also Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, 2012 and 2014.

<sup>41</sup> *Combating Human Trafficking in Assam*, Nedan Foundation, www.nedan.in

<sup>42</sup> *Human Trafficking in North-Eastern Region, India*, NEDAN Foundation's initiative to End violence against Women and Children, Bodoland Territorial Council, Assam, NEDAN'S Newsletter, vol. 1

emanates from the prejudiced and biased outlook of looking down upon them.

Human trafficking is a fast growing network, victimizing anyone or everyone vulnerable. As it is perceived to be one of the greatest menaces in the present society, it is indeed important for us to endeavour to combat it from its very root. Trafficking can occur anywhere at any time. To prevent victimization, one has to be argus-eyed.

Discarding the thought that women are merely vessels of sexual pleasure will definitely help the situation. Apart from this, spreading awareness and imparting training to adolescents and anti-trafficking police officers is another step towards eradicating this cancer. With the noble work of the NGOs along with the state governments will only be rewarded if similar attempts are made by the people at the grass-root level. .