

Combating Human Trafficking For Commercial Sexual Exploitation: Alternative Livelihood Option.

Human trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) is a global phenomenon and one of the worst kinds of human rights violation against any human being. It is ranked as the third largest illegal trade in the world after drugs and arms trafficking. Though, drug trafficking and arms trafficking have received greater attention by different nations, but unfortunately the trafficking for CSE has remained neglected, even though this involves the trading of human being (*helpless women and children*).

Various reasons are attributed for the neglect in combating human trafficking for CSE, some of these include high level of corruption, the victims of crime being powerless (*women, and children, most of them belonging to lower caste and class*), due to various misconception about "prostitution" in the society (*belief that it is the requirement of the society nor it will increase sexual assaults in the society, etc*) being a stigmatized group, not a vote bank (*usually the persons are commercially sexually exploited outside their place of origin city/state/country, as a result they do not have the right to vote and they do not have any importance for the politicians*), confusion of the state and the civil society to treat them as "victim" or "accused".

What ever reasons might be, there are no two opinions that due to the neglect by the state and the civil society the number of person is on the increase for CSE. It is also surprising that though this problem has existed in our society since time immemorial but still there are not many successful model's of combating trafficking for CSE.

The state has usually seen this as a problem from the point of nuisance to the society and dealt it accordingly, by demolishing the red-light areas or by banning dancing in the bars. But unfortunately in all these initiatives by the state the ultimate sufferer has been the victims. Also, these initiatives have not helped in combating trafficking or protecting the victims, for example demolitions in the Baina red-light district, Goa and the ban on dancing in the Bars in Maharashtra, wherein no action was taken against the perpetrators/traffickers and no protection and rehabilitation provided to the victims has resulted in the continuance of the commercial sexual exploitation clandestinely with the victim having no access to the social service and law enforcement agencies.

So the question is that what is the way to address this complex problem?

First it is important to understand the problem of CSE and also the various key players involved in the "existence" and the "continuance" of CSE?

One way the problem of CSE can be defined and understood is that it is a "market", a business proposition for those who are involved in selling (brothel keeper, pimps, brothel owner, etc) and purchasing (customers) and the "commodity", in this market, is the person being commercially sexually exploited. There are also other key players in this business who contribute in the existence and the continuation of the market by protecting the market and/or are the beneficiaries of the business of CSE (police, politician, family members, hotel and restaurant owners, people working in the brothels/red-light area, etc). It is a very organized network and the monetary and sexual interest of the seller, buyer, protectors and the beneficiaries has contributed to the existence and the growth of "prostitution" in our society.

There exists three important groups in the "market" of CSE namely; victim, vulnerable & perpetrator and these three groups play a very important role in the existence and

continuance of commercial sexual exploitation. Therefore it is important to engage with the three groups while initiating any kind of intervention to address this issue.

The experiences and studies have shown that the socio-economic situation of a person plays a key role in the involvement of the person in the “market”, as a victim or perpetrator. Therefore, it is important to have economic alternatives with proper psycho-social services as an intervention to combat human trafficking. While providing economic rehabilitation it is important that there is no discrimination based on age, gender, region and nationality.

The economic alternative would prevent vulnerable population from becoming victim or perpetrator, facilitate exit of victims from CSE, prevent re-trafficking of victims after exit and aid exit of perpetrators from CSE.

The commercial sexual exploitation affects all those who are involved in it (victim & perpetrator) psychologically, socially, physically and financially. It usually makes a person unfit for being employable in any other occupation. Therefore, it is important to have an economic rehabilitation programme with psycho-social services and a business enterprise designed keeping in mind the target population.

The question which is often asked,

Is it possible to rehabilitate adult women in prostitution?

Can the perpetrators be rehabilitated?

*Can the victim, vulnerable and the perpetrator be rehabilitated under
the same rehabilitation programme?*

Swift Wash has demonstrated that, “**it is possible**”!

Swift Wash, a mechanized laundry unit, is the brain child of Arz, an NGO working in Goa, INDIA towards combating human trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation (CSE). Arz set up a mechanized laundry unit, Swift Wash in the year 2006. It is a non-residential economic rehabilitation unit providing rehabilitation to victims of CSE, perpetrators of CSE and those vulnerable to be a victim or perpetrator. The aim of the unit is to combat human trafficking for CSE by providing economic alternatives to the three important groups of CSE which contributes in the functioning and existence of the “market” of CSE namely, victim, vulnerable & perpetrator. Swift But, there is a need for a public – private partnership, whereby the resources and expertise of different organization/s comes together to address the economic rehabilitation of the members of CSE market.

The Swift Wash experiment began in 2006. Arz after working for 9 years on the issue of combating human trafficking for CSE realized that lack of economic alternatives was hampering the work of Arz in the area of prevention of vulnerable population, prevention of re-trafficking of rescued victims and the exit of victims and perpetrators of CSE.

Arz after being convinced that there is no choice but to provide an alternative livelihood option held consultation with the members of the CSE market (victims and perpetrators) about the need of the alternative livelihood option and the kind of business enterprise they wish to have. Arz after their approval that a livelihood alternative needs to be initiated conducted a detail study of the target population regarding their salary expectations,

behavior, skills, interests, social services required, etc. On the other hand Arz conducted a detailed business study in Goa about the possibility of different business enterprise, budget required for setting up the unit, business opportunities and risks. After the detail study Arz zeroed down to laundry.

After the finalization of the business enterprise (laundry business) Arz first educated itself about the laundry business (machinery, operation, clients, chemicals, accounting, etc). Arz meanwhile also listed down its strengths and weakness in successfully setting up the unit and running the business. Arz realized that it had a good understanding of the member of CSE (behavior, services required, etc) and a rapport with the target population, which will be handy in mobilizing them and to assist them in adjusting to a new environment and occupation. But Arz felt that it required guidance in setting up the laundry unit (kind of machinery, capacity, quantity, layout, etc), formulating a business plan, training to the beneficiaries about laundry (machinery, operation of machine, clients, usage of chemicals, accounting, etc.) and training for managing/conducting business (team work, customer relationship, etc).

Arz for setting up the unit contacted a machine supplier who not only helped in suggesting the machinery (capacity, quantity, layout, etc) but also provided machines at a very subsidized rate. For the laundry training Arz contacted chemical suppliers and hotels who had in house laundry such as Marriott, Goa who willingly conducted training free of cost. Taj was approached by Arz for the training in the management of the business. Taj conducted series of training programme and provided skills to the beneficiaries and Arz staff in management of the business.

The laundry required business for the unit. Arz contacted hotels, hospitals and pharmaceuticals who came forward and provided laundry orders to the unit.

The Swift Wash corporate/private partners are:-

Hospitality:- Taj Group of Hotels, Taj Airways Services Caritas Holiday Home, International Center, Youth Hostel,.

Health Care & Pharmaceuticals:- Sanofi Aventis Pharma, Blue Cross Laboratories, Indoco Pharma, Wallace, Indipharma, Transocean, Equator, Duraline and Corlim Marine Exports Pvt Ltd, Salgaonkar Medical Research Center.

Arz felt that the unit should reach out to one and all in Goa who is either vulnerable, victim or perpetrator of CSE. Arz felt that it would not be possible for Arz alone to reach out to everyone and therefore felt the need to involve government and non-government agencies. Arz contacted the magistrates who under Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, 1956 and Juvenile Justice Board and Child Welfare Committee member under Juvenile Justice Act are expected to prevent, protect and rehabilitate, to refer girls, boys and women in their custody to Swift Wash for economic rehabilitation. The concern authorities responded positively and referred persons to Swift Wash for economic rehabilitation. The response of non-government organization was also very encouraging.

The result of all this is that, today Swift Wash is a professionally run 24 hour and 365 days laundry service which employs 40 females and 15 males working in 3 shifts. The beneficiaries

include victim as well as perpetrators. The monthly business done by the unit is Rs. 4,50,000/-. It currently provides a minimum salary of Rs. 4000 to a fresher (for 8 hrs of work). The beneficiaries of Swift Wash also receive benefits such as crèche, bus service, ESI, and EPF. The women beneficiaries have a self-help group and they plan to register themselves as a women's cooperative and take over the management of Swift Wash from Arz.

In the last three years more than 150 persons have benefited from the programme (*male members and those who are vulnerable are placed by the Swift Wash with its clients after working on their behavior*). Swift Wash has not only provided livelihood options to victims and perpetrators who wanted to exit from CSE but has also prevented the local red-light district to re-operate.

Swift Wash has demonstrated in the three years of its existence that, "Public Private" partnership can do wonders, make a business enterprise successful and bring confidence among the members of commercial sexual exploitation that they can earn a livelihood other than from CSE.

Swift Wash has managed to achieve a unique non-residential economic rehabilitation model due to a well coordinated multi-pronged strategy and a multi sectoral response which involves multi stakeholders (government, judiciary, NGO's, funding organization, corporate houses and the civil society). The partnership is a fundamental requisite for ensuring the holistic rehabilitation of the members of CSE.

Based on the Swift Wash experience following "**Multi Stake Holder Approach**" is suggested for any economic rehabilitation initiative with the members of CSE market:-

I. Government:

- The government should support economic rehabilitation initiatives with infrastructural facilities, extending civic amenities at subsidized rates and providing financial concession to the unit.
- The government should create opportunities for the inmates of the government protective home and institutions registered under Juvenile Justice Act (for persons above 16 years) to benefit from the economic rehabilitation unit set up outside the unit by referring the inmates to the unit for rehabilitation and making arrangement for their transportation and security.
- The government should issue proofs of identity to victims, ration card, voting card to enable them to benefit from the government schemes.
- The government should up-scale and replicate successful economic initiatives to enable it to reach out to more persons.
- The magistrate should under sec 17 of ITPA refer victims for rehabilitation to the economic rehabilitation unit.
- The JJB & CWC should refer cases to the rehabilitation unit for economic rehabilitation.
- The government should publicize the initiative so that the needy persons benefit from the programme.
- Provide protection to the beneficiaries of the economic rehabilitation programme from the perpetrators.
- Provide business to the economic rehabilitation unit.

- Loan on low interest and easy installment.
- Provide land, electricity and water at subsidized rates.
- Link it to the government schemes such as ICDS, ART, DOT, Rajiv Gandhi Rojgar Yojana, Indra Awas Yojana, etc

II. NGO:

- Set up an economic rehabilitation unit after a proper assessment of business prospects and the interest and the capacity of the target population.
- Identify and mobilize the members of CSE to join economic rehabilitation programme.
- Provide psycho-social counseling, medical care, legal counseling, after care services to the beneficiaries.
- Provide necessary empowerment to the beneficiary to enable him/her to continue in the economic rehabilitation programme.
- Mobilize necessary training, information, awareness programme, sessions to improve capacity and performance of the beneficiaries.
- Generate awareness among the civil society, government and non government agencies and judiciary regarding possibility of rehabilitation of members of CSE.
- Advocate and lobby for a non-discriminatory economic rehabilitation (it is often found that the government and the non-government agencies while providing services discriminate on the basis of age, region and nationality).
- Work towards breaking the misconceptions regarding the members of CSE.
- Advocate for a holistic approach which includes all the members of the CSE for the economic rehabilitation.
- Facilitate partnership with government and the corporate bodies for the economic rehabilitation.
- Conduct training and sensitization programme with the government staff and the non-government staff to become partner and for active participation in the economic rehabilitation.
- Create link between the target population and the government schemes
- Support the victims in setting up the enterprise and in the day to day business management and coordination.
- Enable and empower the beneficiary to take over the management of the economic rehabilitation unit.

III. Corporate Houses:

- Long term business relationship with the institution.
- Provide business opportunities as part of their corporate social responsibility.
- Impart technical skills, professional inputs, business and management expertise to the beneficiaries and the Ngo staff managing the business enterprise.
- Assist in creating systems such as monitoring, accounts, performance, attendance records, salary, stock book, etc.
- Assist in planning and expanding the business by providing technical support.
- Assist in achieving the maximum capacity of the unit.
- Provide awareness regarding the statutory requirements and assistance in fulfilling the requirements.

Swift Wash has demonstrated that the problem of CSE has existed in our society not because there is no solution to the complex problem, but due to lack of proper understanding, attention, approach and partnership.



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