

ANTECEDENTS AND REINTEGRATION OF SEX TRAFFICKED CHILDREN: A QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATION

Abstract

Trafficking of children for sexual exploitation has assumed alarming proportions in the country. The law prohibits the procurement of children for prostitution and has extensive provisions for their rescue and rehabilitation but in vain. In this backdrop, the objectives of the study are (1) to examine the context and processes of trafficking of children into prostitution; (2) to describe the habituation of victims to the brothel culture; (3) to evaluate the provisions of rescue and rehabilitation of the victims of trafficking; (4) to examine the victims' perceptions regarding their rescue, reintegration, and aspirations for the future; and (5) to prepare an interception model in view of the findings. Drawing upon the exploratory-cum-descriptive research design, the data for the study were collected from the Children Home for Girls 3 (CHG3), Delhi using case study method and in-depth interview. The findings of the study reveal that the vulnerability to trafficking lies in socio-economic configurations of society such as impoverishment, illiteracy, lack of skill, early widowhood, dysfunctional family, risk taking propensity, and abduction. After being trafficked, the victims are compelled to habituate to detrimental surroundings as victims (being habituated to their forced surroundings) find it difficult to untangle again from them. The data suggest that the current practice of rescue and rehabilitation fail to take into cognizance the impact of brothel experience in the process of rescue and rehabilitation of the victims. The mandatory repatriation of victims is not desirable as they were apprehensive about family reunification in the existing socio-cultural and economic context. The results further highlight the critical role of affirmative familial support in the effective reunification of the victims lending credence to proposed "family-centric approach." A holistic, multi-layered approach is required with tailor-made programmes to cater to the needs of the victims in order to address the root causes of trafficking and to prevent re-trafficking.

Keywords: sex trafficking, children, vulnerability, social vulnerability approach, rescue, rehabilitation, reintegration, and family-centric approach.