

## *NATIONAL RESEARCH CONFERENCE ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING: CHALLENGES & INTERVENTION*

Department of Social Work, Christ University in collaboration with International Justice Mission organized a National level conference on Human trafficking – challenges and interventions on 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of September, 2015. Karnataka State Human Rights Commission (KSHRC), Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai and Indian Social Institute (ISI), Bangalore were partners of the conference.

In the inaugural session, Dr. Mallika Krishnaswamy, Dean, Humanities and Social Sciences, Christ University, delivered her presidential address. She mentioned that, Karnataka being one of biggest hub of trafficking and it is placed third in the country. The trafficked women and children are marred forever and the scars that are there left forever.

The key note address was given by Dr. PM Nair, IPS (Retd), Research Coordinator and Chair Professor, TISS, Mumbai. After seeing many groups being made regarding the issue of Human Trafficking and bonded labour, he encouraged the idea of having anti human trafficking clubs and doing more researches on the issue to come up with answers which

haven't been found as yet. He urged the student community to act against the crime and use their potentials to do researches that can initiate action. He also spoke with much interest about the establishment of anti-human trafficking clubs and research consortiums. This was followed by the guest of honour address by Dr. Manjunath, the Deputy Labour Commissioner, Secretary-Karnataka Building and the Construction Workers Welfare Board. He began by saying that the aim of his to address the gathering is that some of the work which he has done is an enforcing agent in rehabilitating the Bonded Labour and Child Labour and other vulnerable forces in the country. He called Human Trafficking as “Modern Day Slavery” and also spoke of it being the second largest criminal industry worldwide. He concluded by saying that he looks forward to knowing the various ways of solving the problem of Human Trafficking which shall further be discussed in the conference.



Mr. Shivaji, Chairperson, Karnataka State Level Investigation Committee on the Prevalence of Bonded Labour addressed the gathering on his experiences with bonded labour and the response of concerned authorities towards the problem. He spoke of the organization called “Jeevika-Jeeta Vimukti Karnataka” who work closely with bonded labour in Karnataka and they have given a report on the situation of bonded labourers in Karnataka.



Dr. Victor Paul, HoD, Department of Social work, in his guest of honour addressed that, “There is no record on bonded labour in the state. The data available in human trafficking is only about flesh trade, and hence a comprehensive database should be prepared.” He added that, this conference can give a platform to the NGO’s, media, leading resource persons in the country to come together and discuss about the challenges and issues related to Human Trafficking. It would also motivate researchers and students to take up

research on Human Trafficking and could help suggest policies for the Government.

Dr. Sarasu Thomas, Associate Professor, National Law school, Bangalore, in her speech, she invited students to contribute immensely to the topic by means of research by increasing the knowledge pool.

Dr. Sheeja Karalam Associate Professor, Department of social work welcomed the gathering for the inaugural session, Ms. Esther Daniel, Director of System Reform, IJM gave an opening remark for the sessions and Fr. Martin Puthussery, SJ Coordinator, Labour and Migration Unit from ISI Bangalore, delivered the Vote of Thanks.

The second session of the conference started with a presentation on Bonded Labor Trafficking: Challenges and Responses by Mr. Peter Williams, Field Office Director, and International Justice Mission. He mentioned how the poor around the world are vulnerable to violence and Justice for the poor is possible. He also stressed on the importance of research as evidence and information is required to tackle this issue. He said, “Good research shapes a good model of intervention” he mentioned the law framework and the various loopholes in implementing the law,

The second presentation was on a National Study on Human Trafficking by Mr. Jaffer Latief Najar, Lead Research Associate, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. He introduced the study and the existing gaps in the literature. There is a lack of emphasis and research on different forms of human trafficking apart from the Commercial Sexual Exploitation like surrogacy and

others. Through his study he aimed at initiating a National Trafficking route Map. Trend Analysis, New types and forms and develop new methodologies for identifying this crime.

The final session of first day on Research paper presentations related to Labour trafficking was inaugurated by Ms. Meera Saksena, IAS (Retd), Acting Chairperson, KSHRC (Karnataka State Human Rights Commission). She touched upon the key issues related to trafficking and exploitation of human beings. She began by talking about the sense of loss each one of us feel when we try to understand the gravity of the situation as there is no clear picture of the current scenario. She also talked about the plethora of government schemes for the benefit of this section of society but no proper mechanism to study the effectivity of these schemes.

Four paper presentations on labour trafficking were presented by in this session. Ms. Anuja S, Asst. Prof. NLS Bangalore presented a paper on Justice Promised but Undelivered- A Critique on Enslavement through Debt bondage in India, Ms. Cynthia Stephen, IJM presented on Issues and Strategies in the Rehabilitation of Bonded Labour in India. Prof. K Gopal Iyer presented on Comparative strategies to tackle bondage in Bihar, Punjab and Karnataka and Ms. Tashi Choden & Mr. Sean Sokhi presented on Human Trafficking- Bonded Labor: Methodology, Results and Recommendations in addressing Bonded Labor in North India.

Ms. Suparna Kar, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Christ University moderated the session. There were questions and discussions followed by a wrap up session by Mr. Leonnel Dsouza.

The second day sessions started at 9.30 am with a recap of the previous day's conference by Ms. Cynthia Stephen. The next set of paper presentations were moderated by Dr. Sojan Anthony, Department of Social Work. The papers were on sex trafficking presented by Ms. Natasha Choudhary, Freedom firm on Challenges in addressing human trafficking- commercial sexual exploitation, Ms. Brinda Adige, Global Concerns India on Human trafficking for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation, gender power imbalance and decriminalizing prostitution, Ms. Raveena Adams, Indian Social Institute on Spirituality as a coping mechanism among victims of sex trafficking, Ms. Pamela Singla, Delhi University on Ujjwala Scheme: a step towards combating human trafficking – study of Andhra, Karnataka and Maharashtra, Prof. Sujatha Jitu, Mysore University on Girl child trafficking and social work intervention and Ms. Ankita, School Of Law, Christ University on Human Trafficking in India: A social legal perspective.

The first panel discussion was on Social Policy and civil society, was moderated by Dr. Shantanu Dutta, IJM. The discussants were Ms. Esther Daniel, International Justice Mission, Ms. Brinda Adige, Global Concerns India and Mr. Soumendu Mukherjee, IPS, former DIG, CID in charge of Anti Human Trafficking Unit and Dr. PM Nair, IPS(Retd), Research Coordinator and Chair Professor, TISS. The key points raised during the discussion were the recognition of the need for micro level policies, changes at grassroots level, and a sketchy role of laws framed to regulate the practices.

In the second panel, the discussants spoke on the issues in migration – exploitation and redress.



The speakers were Mr. Hemraj, Director, Justice Ventures India, Mr. Lakshmipathi Pendyala, Director at Association for promoting Social Action, Mr. Samuel George, IJM, Mr. Padam Kumar Garg, IPS, ADGP crime and technical services and nodal officer, Anti-human trafficking unit, Karnataka and Dr. PM Nair, IPS(retd), Research Coordinator and Chair Professor, TISS.

In the valedictory session began Dr. Manjunath, Deputy Labour Commissioner, Secretary- Karnataka

Building and the Construction Workers Welfare Board gave his views on the conference and possibilities to make necessary changes in the current scenarios. Ms. Esther Daniel spoke about the conference and summarized the outcomes of the conference. Dr. Victor Paul, HoD of the department of Social Work spoke about the initiatives the department will focus on and promoted the idea of research. Dr. Hemalatha, Associate Professor, Dept of Social Work, Christ University gave welcome address and vote of thanks was delivered by Ms. Mary Prathima, IJM.