

# Implication of India's Look East Policy with human trafficking mainly women that reflect Social chaos and armed conflict

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**Abstract-** The North-Eastern tip of India consisting of contiguous seven sister states- Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and the state of Sikkim – constitutes a unique narrow passageway connecting the Indian subcontinent to East and South-East Asia and acts as a crucial corridor for human migration between these areas. Globalisation via Look East Policy has been identified with a number of trends, most of which have developed since World War II. These include greater international movement of commodities, money, information, and people, development of technology, organisations, legal systems, and infrastructures to allow this movement. Globalisation is aimed at placing the world under a unitary economic framework of free market capitalism. The globalised system is based on certain principles which require certain constants. It is a “complex world transformation whereby the mobility of capital, organisations, ideas, discourses, and peoples has taken an increasingly global or transnational form”. In this process, people become increasingly interdependent on and interconnected with one another in what they produce and what they purchase, although not equally across borders. Numerous aspects of globalisation impact the workforce, including poverty, in developed, developing, and transitional economies and the use of immigration policy to alleviate shortages in particular occupations. Any discussion of globalisation must acknowledge the international debt crisis and payment conditions directed at debtor nations by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Strategies defined to alleviate the debt of poor nations include the enforcement measures of fiscal austerity, abridging social and health care spending, and international trade agreements that rarely, if ever, benefit the developing nations. To help meet their debts to international institutions, many Third-World nations encourage women into four gendered production networks: export production, sex work, domestic service, and micro-finance (income generation).

**Index Terms-** India's Look East Policy, Globalisation, Four gendered production networks, Strategic imperatives.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Human Trafficking is a crime against humanity. It involves an act of recruiting, transporting, transferring, harbouring or receiving a person through a use of force, coercion or other means, for the purpose of exploiting them. Every year, thousands of men, women and children fall into the hands of traffickers, in their own countries and abroad. Every country in the world is

affected by trafficking, whether as a country of origin, transit or destination for victims. UNODC, as guardian of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and the Protocols thereto, assists States in their efforts to implement the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons (Trafficking in Persons Protocol).

In addition to the criminalization of trafficking, the Trafficking in Persons Protocol requires criminalization also of:

- Attempts to commit a trafficking offence
- Participation as an accomplice in such an offence
- Organizing or directing others to commit trafficking.

In this globalising world, growing numbers of immigrants are seeking a better life in another country; increasingly, they are women. (Arya and Roy, 2006; George, 2005 cited in Browne, Braun 2008) Globalisation promotes the movement of people, but migration is also a basic process of globalisation. Globalisation is working both as push and pull factor to migrants (Misra, 2007); as a result those women, who migrate due to economic compulsion, do not receive equal wages as compared to men. All this increases the stress in the family, especially the womenfolk, to provide clean food and water. The magnitude of the problem grows by unexpected folds due to wars and conflicts rising in the shadow of the new global world order. Whereas older people, women and children tend to stay in the refugee camps close to conflict areas, younger men and women search for opportunities for global migration. Political and gender repression by dictatorships, military regimes and some fundamentalist patriarchal rulers have also led to increasing numbers of refugees. Among all this the process of illegal migration and trafficking has become another matter of concern. There are estimates that 2.5 million women, men, children are trafficked within and across the border at the very least, and one-third of these are trafficked for economic purposes other than sexual exploitation. Pointing out at the very outset of the paper that people largely used to migrate in search of better haven and economic opportunities, there are estimates to suggest that nearly one out of six people in this world, more than one billion people, are crossing national borders as migrant workers. Of these one billion, 72 per cent are women. Traditionally, migration has been mostly a male phenomenon because men had the freedom to travel and a duty to maintain the financial upkeep of the family. Migration was a men's world, migrants' jobs were male jobs and migrants' rights men's rights. More recently globalisation has created conditions for feminisation of migration, and the number

of women who migrate alone, as men do, to make money for themselves and/or to support their families, is increasing. In women's migration, their role in society, their autonomy and capacity to take decisions play a major role. In women's migration, gender discrimination acts as a powerful factor. In feminist migration studies, the main focus is on the causes and conditions of women's migration. Unlike the traditional feminist migration studies, the recent works on feminist migration have challenged the concepts and scale of the study. These studies have challenged the conventional understanding of nation, society and challenging the national and international scales of migration, ask additional questions about the nation and migration, most centrally the question: 'Whose nation?' These also try to explain that the very construction of the nation and national scale are not the right categories as they are constructed as a result of gender politics and discrimination. In other words, gender analysis of migration examines how the social, economic and cultural contexts of an individual force him/her to flee. In this study, feminists have also focused on the gender politics of identity construction, and the complex relationships between identity and the production of migration and place. It is important to understand the causes and consequences of international migration from a gender perspective because hierarchical social relations relating to gender play an important role in shaping the migration experiences of migrants, whether male or female. Understanding whether migration occurs because of gender inequality or whether migration itself helps to perpetuate gender disparities, is valuable to guide the formulation of policy and measures to address the specific needs of women who migrate. (UN Report on 2004 Women and Migration).

When it comes to environmental migration, women are more affected than men. IOM (2009) has noted: "Statistically, natural disasters kill more women than men, and kill women at a younger age than men. Behavioural restrictions and poor access to information and resources can directly affect a woman's chances of survival during a natural disaster or its aftermath. Their role as the main caregivers in many societies also means that women tend to look more after their children's safety before their own." This statement clearly shows that women are more vulnerable to environmental migration.

ALTHOUGH trafficking is not a new concept as in history there were traditions of treating humans as slaves, in today's globalised and democratised world the form of human trafficking has changed. It refers to the illegal trade of humans for sexual exploitation and forced labour. Young children, teenagers, men and women—all are victims of human trafficking and they are subjected to force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of sexual exploitation or forced labour. (US Department of Health and Human Services) In other words, a person, who is coerced, deceived or forced to move within her/his country or to another country for the purpose of exploitation, is a victim of trafficking. (GAATW Working Papers Series, 2010) The United States State Department (2010) data shows that an "estimated 600,000 to 820,000 men, women, and children [are] trafficked across international borders each year, approximately 80 per cent are women and girls, and up to 50 per cent are minors. The data also illustrates that the majority of transnational victims are trafficked into commercial sexual exploitation."

The Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (2000), defines trafficking as follows:

Trafficking in persons shall mean 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. (United Nations General Assembly, 2000)

People smuggling and trafficking in humans are generally viewed as two distinct offences. In general smuggling involves: Delivering persons into the country they wish to enter illegally and then leaving such persons to their own devices. It usually involves a voluntary act entailing a payment of a fee to provide a passage to a particular destination. (Bernadette and Susan 2008)

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Apart from economic reasons, people also migrate due to change in environment and such persons are generally referred to as Environmental Migrants. Such people get uprooted due to earthquakes or floods leading to forced displacement; this phenomenon is commonly present where there is a slow onset of environmental change or the degradation process such as desertification or abrupt changes in weather affecting those who are directly dependent on the local environment for their living causing them livelihood stress. (Dun and Gemenne)
2. Feminist theorists further tend to study the identity related aspects like cultural, geographic studies of migration in order to address the migrants' cultural identities as represented in their locally specific views of mobility, but they do so according to a different understanding of identity and subjectivity. (Silvey 2004)
3. In this globalising world, growing numbers of immigrants are seeking a better life in another country; increasingly, they are women. (Arya and Roy, 2006; George, 2005 cited in Browne, Braun 2008)
4. Globalisation is working both as push and pull factor to migrants (Misra, 2007); as a result those women, who migrate due to economic compulsion, do not receive equal wages as compared to men.
5. The UN Protocol sets out a definition of 'trafficking in persons'; strengthens avenues for border control and responses by the judiciary and establishes prevention policies. (Bernadette and Susan 2008)
6. The evolution of international trafficking in women and girls appears to be closely linked to two areas: i) changing demands for women's labour in the global political economy, and ii) the changing patterns of international migration. The shift in the role of women in migration from being dependents of male migrants to

becoming the major economic agent in many developing countries has become increasingly visible. (Kojima 2007)

### III. NEED OF THE STUDY

The present economic structure creates conditions where the demand for cheap migrant labour is accompanied by declining wages, benefits and safety standards. Migrant workers, especially women migrant workers, are paid at a lower rate than local workers.

### IV. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of trafficking in persons for the purpose of sexual and other forms of exploitation is not new, but a comprehensive international, regional and national attention to the issue is recent. It is estimated that four million people are trafficked or smuggled across international borders each year. The trafficking of women and girls for prostitution and forced labour has also become one of the fastest growing areas of international criminal activity.

### V. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The paper emphasis to point out the relative consideration of India's Look East Policy with the human trafficking and trying to verify whether the majority of victims of human trafficking have been highly concentrated as women or not.

### VI. HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

Although men, women, children, adolescents and adults are all victims of human trafficking, the majority of victims have been highly concentrated as women. Data shows that women are more vulnerable than men because they experience multi-dimensional exploitation. In all parts of the world, because of gender bias women's role in society has always remained subordinate and they are treated as second class citizens of society. Even in the globalised world, which has created social and economic opportunities for all sections of society, poor unskilled workers have been among the first to suffer retrenchment and unemployment. These reasons make women more susceptible to trafficking.

### VII. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data collection comprises of primary data collection, secondary data collection and informal discussions. The data for the study are collected through personal interview, discussion with different persons concerned and 'The Imphal Free Press & Sangai Express (Manipur English Daily newspaper)' etc. are chosen for the purpose of the present study.

The type of sample used for the selection of respondents is the Multi – stage sampling.

### VIII. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The periods of proposed research work are cover from the year 1826 to 2011. However, if it is necessary, the research work may be extended prior to 1826 and subsequent years after 2011.

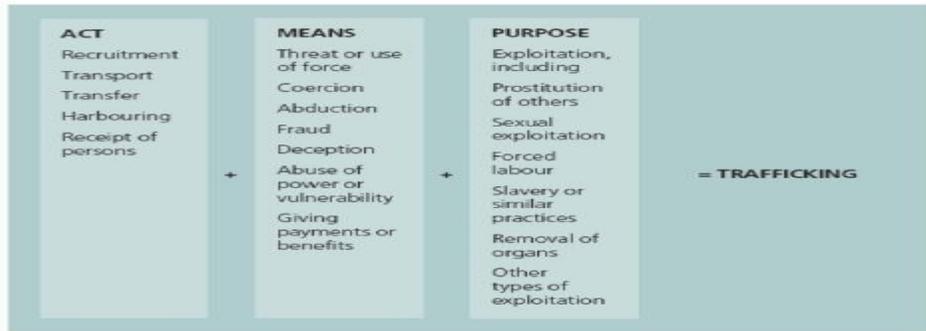
### IX. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

(GAATW, Global Alliance against Trafficking for Women, UNHCR and UNICEP) In most cases, the traffickers take advantage of the vulnerabilities of the victim. In other words, we can say that they are the outcome of economic and social poverty, driven by gender inequality, lack of good governance, and social segregation and so on. (Baruah 2005) "The widespread assumption that most trafficking incidents start with kidnapping and coercion is far from true and has been validated by many recent researches on this issue. Most trafficking starts as a migration experience; which could be legal or illegal; is for economic (employment) or social (marriage) reasons. It may have elements of deception in it from the beginning but the process of force and coercion comes into play after the initial first steps toward movement has happened." (Ibid.: 3)

Many people assume that migration and trafficking are the same but there are differences in these two different movements. Movement is central to both migration and trafficking and this commonality between the two builds a complex relationship. Sometimes the element of coerced movement is found to be absent especially in the case of the bonded labour system where men, women and children may be exploited in their own place of origin without having to cross geographical borders. These people were already living in an awful situation; their life becomes more vulnerable after they got trafficked. Trafficked people do not have the opportunity of informed consent with respect to the experiences they undergo. (United Nations 2000: ESCAP 2003) There are also certain technicalities which make the whole concept of trafficking limited. For example, take the case of exploited migrants; they are also victims of offences on themselves but these do not always lead to trafficking. However, the majority of trafficked people are exploited migrants. So there is a need to broaden the whole debate on trafficking. The crucial factors in distinguishing between the two will be in the nature of consent: the intention of the agency between the information made available at the start of the journey as compared to the circumstances they find themselves to be in at the end of the journey.

## X. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

### Elements Of Human Trafficking-



To ascertain whether a particular circumstance constitutes trafficking in persons, consider the definition of trafficking in the Trafficking in Persons Protocol and the constituent elements of the offense, as defined by relevant domestic legislation.

UNODC offers practical help to States, not only helping to draft laws and create comprehensive national anti-trafficking strategies but also assisting with resources to implement them. States receive specialized assistance including the development of local capacity and expertise, as well as practical tools to encourage cross-border cooperation in investigations and prosecutions.

### The Root Causes of Migration

Understanding those forces that compel people to migrate is necessary to understand the process of migration. There are countless factors which force people to leave their home, but poverty, injustice, armed conflicts and natural disasters are the major reasons that make most of the people to move from their native place. Estimates say that in the last 30 years, the number of international migrations has doubled to 191 million worldwide, (Renaud, Bogardi, Dun and Warner 2007) These are economic migrants, refugees and internally displaced people fleeing persecution and victim of human trafficking. Besides this, there are roughly 30-40 million undocumented migrants worldwide, comprising around 15-20 per cent of the world's migrant population. (Ibid.) The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) has estimated that almost half of the world's migrants are women. In today's developed world, 59.9 per cent migration compared to the 45.7 per cent of the developing world are women. Women are increasingly migrating as workers themselves. The economy is playing a major role in women's migration and women are migrating both as qualified professionals as well as domestic workers, careers and cleaners etc.

It is the lack of viable economic opportunities at home that often pushes workers to migrate in search of better options. If we see this process through the angle of globalisation, we come to know that globalisation has led to widen the gap between the rich and poor people. Global economic policies, initiated through liberalisation of the market and the structural adjustment policies (SAPs) of the international economic institutions like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, are major causes of the

gap in income and employment opportunities, displacing workers from their local livelihoods.

Women mainly migrate to join a migrant husband (family reunification) or to marry someone living in a different country. "While working in Hong Kong I experienced many things—the way people treat a dependent or independent woman. I have gained much experience and my confidence has grown. Now, I have a say in decision-making at home. My husband does not shout at me. I have bought a piece of land and four rickshaws and I am creating a means of livelihood for four other families," said Sushila Rai, a Nepalese migrant domestic worker. (Jolly and Reeves. 2005) In addition, those women, who might have migrated for other reasons, often do not want to return home because of the fear of losing their autonomy. Migration can provide a very important source of earning for migrant women and their families, and also give them greater autonomy, self-confidence and social status. At the same time, migrated women can also face stigma and discrimination at every stage of the migration process. Before departure, women can be confronted with gender-based procedures and corrupt agents. Gender inequality, poverty and violence can force women to migrate or enable women to be trafficked. (Jolly and Reeves, 2005)

In the present economic system high demand for the service of women has been created but at the same time their capacity for negotiations has decreased. In the present market-oriented economy women are in greater demand as they are paid very low and exploited easily. As Renu Sharma (2007) put it, "The gender discrimination they suffer and exclusion from the economic and political arenas makes them socially vulnerable subjects. This kind of socially created conditions of women as marginalised social groups is the key element in their oppression and exploitation."

Trafficked women frequently come from regions where there are few employment opportunities for women and where women are dependent on others and lack access to resources to change their situation. At the same time, their social status also plays a leading role in women's trafficking. (Miko 2002)

Trafficked women and girls often presume that they will work in legitimate occupations but at the end they find themselves trapped into forced prostitution, marriage, domestic work, sweatshops and other forms of exploitation that are similar to slavery. The debate about trafficking is more concerned on the

causes of trafficking than on the strategies to fight against the problem. (Chew and Jordan 2002)

Finally, UNODC initiatives on strengthening partnerships and coordination occur through its participation in inter-agency groups such as ICAT, UN.GIFT and GMG and its management of the UN Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons.

## XI. RECOMMENDATION AND SUGGESTION

Actions to prevent trafficking include the dissemination of information on the modes used by traffickers to attract and deceive women, the dangers involved and the legal channels open for migration, as well as the provision of better employment opportunities in the country of origin. A number of international instruments outline the human rights of migrants. In order to prevent trafficking, there is a need for dissemination of information on the modes used by the traffickers through which they attract and deceive women and legal channels. Human trafficking is threatening the power, legitimacy and effectiveness of states on a global scale. There are many questions which have risen due to the process of migration. How should we deal with migrants? Should illegal migrants be granted certain rights? If yes, then what kind of rights and how many rights? And if no, then should we leave them in the same vulnerable condition? There is no single answer to these questions. What is needed is a balanced approach. We have shown above that gender always remains at the centre of both migration and trafficking and in both these two processes, which are linked to each other, women are in a more miserable condition. No doubt, human trafficking is becoming one of the most serious threats to human rights as this phenomenon is both the cause and the consequence of human rights violations. The trafficked persons exploited as workers have been deprived of their freedom of movement, denied access to health care and deprived of their right to life. Lack of rights and social inclusion for migrants and trafficked persons makes the situation horrific.

The problem of trafficking needs to be checked, as it is creating new kinds of threats to the security of women and children. Stringent laws and international cooperation are imperative to fight against this problem. At the same time collaboration and coordination between state and non-state actors are also important as these can help evolve new sources of income and survival for all those women who are facing this problem.

UNODC's strategic approach to combating trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants is founded in the full and effective implementation of the Protocols, and can be best understood as having three interdependent and complementary components:

- (1) research and awareness raising;
- (2) promotion of the Protocols and capacity-building; and,
- (3) the strengthening of partnerships and coordination.

The adoption in 2000 by the United Nations General Assembly of the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking In Persons, Especially Women and Children* marked a significant milestone in international efforts to stop the trade in people. As the guardian of the Protocol, UNODC addresses

human trafficking issues through its Global Programme against Trafficking in Persons.

## XII. CONCLUSION

Certain obstacles like lack of infrastructural development, absence of enthusiastic response from local people, frequent insurgencies, poor governance in the states, the easy availability of arms and weapons from across the international border to be utilized in armed movements and criminal activities impede increased relations between North-East India and South East Asia. Moreover, the geographic location of the North-Eastern region makes it more vulnerable to be the core of hostility with massive negative outcomes.

There are enough avenues through which North East India can be related to South-East Asia. Racial, linguistic and cultural similarity prevails among the people of North-East India and those of South-East Asia. If the concerned governments really strive to translate their policies into reality their collaborative endeavours would invariably revive age-old cultural and historical bonds. To highlight the linguistic attachment it should be stated that it is an area of extensive linguistic diversity with predominantly three language families represented- Austro-Asiatic, Indo-European and Tibeto- Burmese.

Austro-Asiatic languages are now spoken by a single group in North-East India (the Khasi) but they are also found in East India and South-East Asia reflecting that they might have been more frequent in North-East in the past. Indo- European language is spoken from Europe to Central and South Asia with their easternmost occurrence in Nepal, Bangladesh and North-East India. Tibeto- Burmese languages are a branch of Sino-Tibetan family which is mainly spoken in North-East India, China and South-East Asia. Thus North-East India sets up an important linguistic contact zone.

Through centuries there has been exchange of peoples, goods and services between our North-East and countries of South and South-East Asia. The Ahom of Assam migrated several centuries ago from the Shan state of Burma where the language spoken is almost identical to that spoken in Laos and Thailand. The Chins from Myanmar migrated over the past centuries to Manipur and Meitei of Manipur have ties for over 2000 years with the Burmese of Myanmar. Similar migration has also occurred to North-East from Yunnan province of China. Boosting people to people contact transcending political barriers is an imperative for facilitating cultural interaction among various regions. In contemporary era, physical connectivity is of utmost importance as it channelizes the means to accelerate the movement of goods, people and services and thereby acts as a gateway to reviving economic enterprise.

## XIII. SCOPE FOR FURTHER STUDY

What distinguishes the present engagement with East Asia from previous ones is the fact that it is operating on multiple fronts; India's historical, cultural and ideological links are being complemented by growing economic interdependence and multilateral cooperation from the movement of capital and

human resources and a growing number of free trade agreements and cooperative security dialogues.

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