

## Tourism and Trafficking of Women in Goa

**Henrique D'souza**

Asst Prof. Sridora Caculo College, Khorlim, Mapusa Goa, India

### Abstract

Trafficking of men, women and children has direct bearing on sex tourism. People living in abject poverty and indigenous populations who lack rights and access to basic services such as education are vulnerable to sex trafficking. The present article deals with the Trafficking with perspective of Goan experience. The legal regime and sincere efforts of the Goa state have been tried to be detailed out with reference to international conventions as well.

**KEYWORDS :** Human trafficking, sexual exploitation, Tourism Promotion and Impact on Women in Goa, Human trafficking in Goa

### Introduction

Trafficking refers to the movement of men, women and children from one place to another through force, coercion or deception into situations of their economic and sexual exploitation. Human trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) is regarded as a gross violation of human rights and is regarded as a modern form of slavery.<sup>1</sup>The UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (known as the Palermo Protocol adopted in November 2000) defines trafficking as:

. . . 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 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 service, slavery or practice similar to slavery, servitude.<sup>2</sup>

Trafficking is basically done for the purpose of sexual and other forms of 'exploitation', and the victim never gives 'consent' to such sufferings. The end purpose of trafficking is totally different from migration or smuggling. Even if there is manifest consent as the victim is lured, cheated, falsified, deceived and often coerced, it is in fact, a facade of consent and not 'informed consent'.<sup>3</sup> The Indian Constitution

<sup>1</sup>EPCAT: Trafficking in children for sexual purpose: an analytical review. Paper prepared by Epcat for the second world congress against commercial sexual exploitation. 2001

<sup>2</sup>United Nations, *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crimes* (New York: United Nations, 2000), 3.

<sup>3</sup>Institute of Social Sciences, *Trafficking in Women and Children in India* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2005), 141.

prohibits all sorts of trafficking under Article 23. The Suppression of Immoral Traffic Act 1956 (SITA), amended as the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act (ITPA) in 1978 and later in 1986, was in response to the ratification of the International Convention on Suppression of Immoral Traffic and Exploitation of Prostitution of Others in 1950. The amended law lays stress on the prevention rather than suppression of human trafficking, it also is taken into consideration the international conventions and protocols and provided severe penalties for different types of exploitative conditions. The ITPA imposes tough penalties for trafficking in children, particularly by focusing on traffickers, pimps, landlords, and brothel operators. It also protects minor girls as victims. The ITPA also provides protection and rehabilitation for the rescued girls. Under the ITPA keeping a brothel or allowing premises to be used as a brothel is a crime. It provides punishment to (a) adults living on the earnings of prostitutes, (b) procuring a person for the sake of prostitution, and (c) detaining a person in premises where prostitution is carried on. However, prostitution is not an offence under the ITPA.

Internationally human traffickers use false promises as a tool to enslave both adults and minors. People living in abject poverty and indigenous populations who lack rights and access to basic services such as education are vulnerable to sex trafficking. Often people from these communities are offered false hopes of employment opportunities in large cities. Women and young girls are offered jobs as models, nannies, waitresses, masseurs or dancers. Traffickers sometimes disguise themselves as agents that offer cross-country dating services and arrange marriages with the intent of forcing the wife into prostitution, However, these individuals are abused, threatened and sold in the sex industry upon arrival in the country.

Traffickers use debt as a tool to keep victims under their control. The “debt” is the expenses incurred from the victims’ recruitment, transportation and their maintenance. Thus, sex trafficking may occur within debt bondage/bonded labour. Victims of sex trafficking in addition to being forced sex workers are sometimes used to recruit or transport other victims.

According to Kara, there are five ways in which women and children are primarily trafficked into prostitution: deception, sale by family, abduction, seduction or romance, and/or recruitment by former victims<sup>4</sup>. In India, almost 66 per cent of victims from India had been lured with the promise of employment, while one in six victims was enticed by the promise of marriage.

Customary prostitution is also present in India, which has been socially accepted like religious and tribal prostitution. The victims of religious practices such as the 'devadasi system' or the traditional Indian system of temple-based prostitution are normally pre-pubertal girls from scheduled classes who after serving the temples are sold to traffickers. Women from unhappy homes, abusive families and broken marriages domestic violence within marriage, poverty, family migration, befriending with the intention of cheating or deceiving, or regular sexual abuse as a child are the victims are lured away by unscrupulous traffickers. These young women are often forced to enter into the sex trade. Children who leave their homes villages because of

<sup>4</sup>Siddharth Kara, *Sex Trafficking: Inside the Business of Modern Slavery*, Colombia Press, 2010.

family abuse, violence and poverty may be trafficked into the begging or sex trades or work as rag pickers and recyclers of glass and paper. In Goa, some groups like the Lamani, their women work in the sex trade and the children as domestic labour or as beggars; sometimes Lamani children are trafficked in order to be 'sold' to rich families under the guise of adoption<sup>5</sup>.

U.S.Sen. Ted Cruz says human trafficking is nothing less than the face of evil. It completely tears down the victims, forcing them in modern-day slavery which needs to be stopped immediately. Sex trafficking has devastating consequences for the trafficked victims, they may suffer from long-lasting physical and psychological trauma, disease (HIV/AIDS), drug addiction, malnutrition and social ostracism.

### **Tourism Promotion and Impact on Women in Goa**

After the liberation of Goa from the Portuguese rule in 1961. Goa underwent a tremendous transformation. New Industries, banks, schools and colleges were started. Villages were electrified, hospitals roads and bridges were constructed and homes were connected with piped water. The European tourists began to descend into Goa in small numbers in late 1960 and were mostly backpackers who referred to as 'hippies'. These tourists who had rebelled against the materialistic lifestyles in their home countries wanted to enjoy the simplicity, austerity and lived close to nature. They were concentrated in the isolated beaches of Anjuna, Vagator and Arambol. The different values and lifestyles of these 'hippies' that came into conflict with local sensibilities. There was a church protest launched by the church on the issues of nudity, drugs, permissive values which included free sex and rock music. During this time the locals, being poor and unemployed, found tourism as a source of livelihood and therefore the church did not get much support for this protest. In the early 1980's The anti-tourism Movement under the banner of Jagrut Goenkaranchi Fauz (Vigilant Goans Army) along Bailancho Saad raised several issues such as prostitution, drug abuse, AIDS, violence against women, cultural degradation with the commercialisation of culture, the image of Goan women in advertisements and tourism brochures and also the destruction of beaches through sand extraction for construction. They protested against the cultural degradation of the local population which they regarded as the beginning the opening of the doors for prostitution, nudism, drug addiction and AIDS. These factors promote the sexual exploitation of women in Goa<sup>6</sup>.

The issues of the movement related to the commercialisation of traditional festivals like the carnival. Floats that were produced by communities became floats sponsored by companies such as liquor and cigarette manufacturers and hotels. Local women were harassed by tourists, who assume that women in Goa are available for the asking, mainly because of the images conveyed through the derogatory images of women that were being portrayed on the floats and the advertisements about them In the 1980s and early 1990s. These advertisements and reports attracted the attention of the anti-tourism movement that was already discussing concerns of Goan socio-political identity and later launched into the protest against tourism. The anti-tourist movement saw prostitution, violence against women, AIDS and drug abuse as

<sup>5</sup>Journal of Historical Archaeology and Anthropological Sciences Issue, 5,2017

<sup>6</sup>Shodhganga:*Status of Women in Goa*. Ch. Five p. 100.

inevitable outcomes of tourism promotion as was experienced by countries like Thailand and the Philippines<sup>7</sup>. They felt that Tourists should show respect to local sensibilities and culture. Irresponsible commercial tourism was seen as the bane of art and culture of the local people. The 1990s saw many more join the movement with village-level anti-tourism 'Nagrik Samitis' being formed to oppose tourism. The main reason for this was that tourism was declared an 'industry' which meant that not only were financial concessions available but also that land could be acquired for the construction of hotels and tourism-related infrastructure. Large tourism companies including foreign companies began to eye large tracts of land for construction of five-star hotels and began purchasing land from local communities Goa at this time saw large-scale land conversions. The loss of agricultural land to large-scale tourism projects or the fear of the loss brought people together with the support from the anti-tourism movement to form village-level protests. Further, the advent of charter tourism or package tourism plan meant that a large number of European tourists would descend into Goa and the impacts of tourism would be even greater with the volume of tourists. This period also saw the beginning of the increase of tourists coming from all over the country, the beginning of violence in Kashmir provided a perfect launch pad for Goa to jump into the limelight. The sight of a large number of foreigners triggered the imagination of tourism and soon the image of Goa began to be transformed. The availability of cheap alcohol, pristine beaches and nightlife began to attract youth. The increase of disposable income of Indians post liberalisations brought in hordes of tourists from all parts of the country seeking fun and frolic. The increase in the flow of tourists attracted investors from Mumbai, Bangalore and Delhi who began large scale purchase of land especially in the tourist belt of Candolim, Calangute, Baga and Anjuna. Land prices began to skyrocket making it unaffordable for locals. A large number of hotels began to come up in these areas. The policy of putting up shacks on the beach was the only hope for locals being involved in tourism besides tourist taxis and motorcycles on hire. Of late the locals are getting alienate as more and more non-locals are being employed in the hotel industry as room boys, waiters, drivers, maintenance staff, cooks, helpers etc.

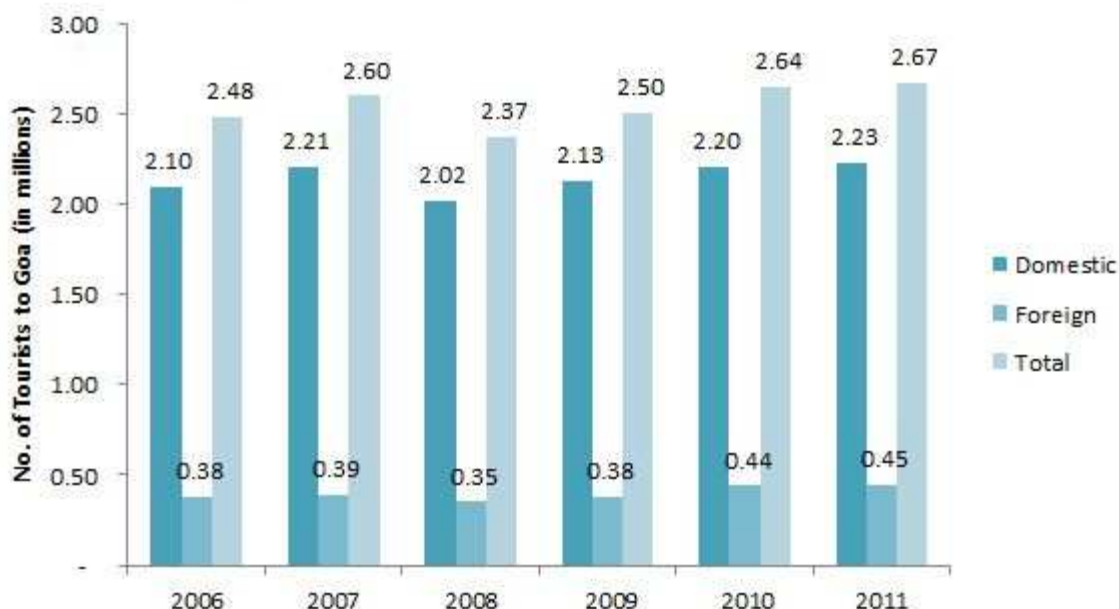
Tourism has today been overtaken by investors from Delhi and other places who are least interested in local affairs and culture. The gambling policy allowed the establishment of an offshore casino and some on land casinos. This led to large scale protest by the locals but the politically well-connected owners and their money power have seen them stay till today. The government also promoted various festivals like wine festival, food festival, cultural shows and the mega music shows like Sunburn and supersonic which again brought a large number of tourists in the state. The months of December and January saw a step increase in visitors. However, it also attracted unscrupulous investors who began to clandestinely promote prostitution in the garb of massage parlours and sale of drugs. The low tax on alcohol saw a large number of tourist especially young males descending on the beaches with bottles of alcohol and ogling at female foreigners bathing on the beaches. This lead many European tourists to shun Goa and move away to Kerala and Sri Lanka. The worst suffers were women as many of them were forced to come to Goa after the ban of dance bars in Mumbai and started to solicit customers. The ready clientele attracted more people into the business and thus began the large scale exploitation of women. Although the local

---

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p 101.

women and girls are not directly involved in flesh trade, the image of Goan women as cheap and easy going has spread all over. There is a general impression among the tourists all over the country that in Goa everything is available. Wine, Women and Drugs appear to be the sole attraction for the tourists coming to Goa today.

### Total Goa Tourist Arrivals 2006-11



### Human trafficking in Goa

Arun Pandey, Director of ARZ (Anyay Rahit Zindagi), an NGO committed to combating trafficking of persons for the purpose of sexual abuse and commercial sexual exploitation in Goa states, “Human trafficking is said to be the third illegal revenue generating business after arms and drugs trafficking. A large number of tourists visiting Goa especially domestic (single) look for sex and that has created a demand which has resulted in an established market for commercial sexual activity.”<sup>8</sup>

Goa Police in the last five years has rescued about 500 girls in the state. Girls are trafficked from across the country and are brought to Goa in the name of offering them good jobs. The pimps advertise in local newspapers in other states offering well-paid jobs with salaries ranging from 25,000 to 30,000. The girls unknowingly end up contacting the agents and get trapped in the net to undertake prostitution. The girls who are trapped are beaten up and threatened by their pimps and employers if they refuse to work.

The girls are not the only ones lured into Goa in engaging in sexual activities. High profile sex rackets also operate in the state. Actors, models, TV stars, upcoming models are supplied for sexual activity across starred hotels in the state. According to a pimp who was recently arrested, models or actors charge anywhere between Rs 5,00,000 to 20,00,000 per customer. There are also escort services. Massage parlours and hotels are often used as a disguise to offer sex services and escort services.

<sup>8</sup>[www.Itsgoa.com/goa-the-land-of-human-trafficking/amp/](http://www.Itsgoa.com/goa-the-land-of-human-trafficking/amp/)



There are recent reports of girls being brought down from Russia, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, etc. Once these girls land in Delhi they have their passports taken away from them and they are sent to Goa and forced into commercial sexual activities. They are threatened by the pimps that they will be handed over to the police once their visas expire. On the fear of landing up in jail these women end up keeping mum and continue to work as prostitutes. The pimps also get women from other countries to India on medical visas. They are brought first to Delhi. Their passports are seized and then they are trafficked to Goa for commercial sexual exploitation. The pimps have also resorted to social media and online sites to boost their businesses. There is a growing number of websites in Goa offering 'Escort Services' to people. At a click of a button when you search for escort services in Goa in Google, you will find a number of sites redirecting you to pages offering escort services.<sup>9</sup>

Many police personnel have been punished for having alleged links with the pimps. In the past 3 policemen have even been caught and suspended for having sex with a sex worker and recording the act! The policemen were first suspended and later reinstated into the police force. If members of the police themselves are part of this trade, then who are going to be the people who will save the girls?

During the last three years, the maximum number of girls rescued from the clutches of human trafficking in Goa were from West Bengal according to a statistics of ARZ, among foreign nationals, the highest number of victims were from Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Uzbekistan, Russia, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Israel. Besides girls from the north-east, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Delhi-NCR, Goa, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka. Vulnerable girls and women (orphans, single mothers, victims. from vulnerable sections of society are lured to Goa in the guise of employment in massage parlours, casinos, hospitality segments, etc.trafficking took a serious turn when after the red light area in Baina, Vasco was demolished in 2004, as a result, the problem spread all over the state becoming more organised and complex.

Goa is increasingly witnessing crimes against women and children in the name of human trafficking. With crimes rising against women in every part of the country, Goa too, unfortunately, has its share.

According to statistics, a total of 1,864 crimes have been reported against women and 1,194 crimes against children from the past five years in Goa. Girls are also brought down from countries like Russia, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Bangladesh etc. and are stripped off their passports and made to work as sex workers. This flesh trade has expanded into a massive business with many actors, models and high-profile people involved. They have resorted to online services as well with available escort websites.

According to studies conducted by ARZ, "Goa has become a major destination for human trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation." According to the daily, Times of India, they have suggested that a separate trial court must be established to enable faster justice to the victims of sexual harassment. The traffickers have no fear of conviction as they have political and police connections. Around 100 girls on an average are rescued from Goa every year, but that is hardly around 10 per cent of the

---

<sup>9</sup>ibid

number of girls trafficked in the sex industry. The tourism sector is among the most unethical and unregulated, being seasonal the employees are paid a pittance. They receive no labour benefits and in order to make a decent living, they tacitly allow prostitution as it helps the women and also helps the industry to flourish. A most dangerous outcome of this is the growing number of women with HIV/AIDS.

### **Conclusion**

Human rights are embodied in the Indian Constitution are justifiable. All these rights now have the support of a large number of international conventions and human rights covenants dealing with human rights. National Human Right Commission has a greater role to play in dealing cases and should make states especially those involved in tourism promotion to protect the interests of trafficked women and impose strict penalties on police and the perpetrators of the crime. People also need to aware about the commission and it is now for the people to take help of these available institutions in order to inculcate human rights values in the home, in the community, in the society and in the public.

### **References:**

1. United Nations, *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crimes*, New York: United Nations, 2000.
2. Institute of Social Sciences, *Trafficking in Women and Children in India*, New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2005.
3. Siddharth Kara, *Sex Trafficking: Inside the Business of Modern Slavery*, Colombia Press, 2010.
4. Journal of Historical Archaeology and Anthropological Sciences Issue, 5, 2017
5. Shodhganga: *Status of Women in Goa*. Ch. Five.
6. [www.Itsgoa.com/goa-the-land-of-human-trafficking/amp/](http://www.Itsgoa.com/goa-the-land-of-human-trafficking/)