

**AN ABSTRACT OF
“A STUDY OF ANTI HUMAN TRAFFICKING
UNIT FUNCTIONARIES’ EXPERIENCES AND
OPINIONS: SOCIAL WORK CONCERNS”**

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INTRODUCTION

About Human Trafficking

Human trafficking as organized crime has been existing among civilized humans for centuries. Growing magnitude is an indication of ailing improvement in society. Despite many treaties, legislations, and protocols, control over human trafficking requires extra attention. Like terrorism, it has been recognized as one of the major problems not only in India but also the world over. India is a source as well as the destination for trafficked women and children from Nepal and Bangladesh for commercial sexual exploitation. Nepali children are trafficked for forced labor and Indian women are trafficked to the Middle East for commercial sexual exploitation. Indian migrants who move enthusiastically every year to the Middle East and Europe to work as domestic servants and low-skilled laborers mostly end up as part of the trafficked victims. Thousands of women are engaged in commercial sex work in any part of Gujarat states like Surat, Sabarkantha, Rajkot, Anand, Junagarh, Vadodara, Gandhidham, Ahmedabad , Dahod, and the area along with National Highway (NH) eight. The majority of them have been forced into the illegal trade through traffickers. Women are trafficked to Gujarat for commercial sexual exploitation from West Bengal, Rajasthan, Orissa, Assam, and Nepal.

The Supreme Court of India directed the government to establish an organized crime investigative agency by December 2015-2016 to investigate human trafficking cases and rescue and rehabilitate victims; the establishment of such an agency was pending the passage of the draft anti-trafficking bill, although, in India, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) had allocated 832 million Indian rupee (INR) to fund the agency.

AHTU in India

Anti-Human Trafficking Units (AHTU) continued to serve as the primary investigative force for human trafficking crimes. At the beginning of the reporting period, of the more than 600 districts, 226 had active Anti Human Trafficking Units (AHTU); so far, despite researchers' sincere efforts, it is not known if the number of Anti Human Trafficking (AHTU) increased at a national level. However, many Anti-Human Trafficking Units (AHTU) are working throughout India but the fact remains that incidents of illegal human trade are not fully under control.

AHTU in Gujarat

In 2010-2011 Anti-human trafficking Units were working to prevent/control the illegal human traffic in, especially Gujarat state. Initially, it began with 5 AHTUs. It was heartening to note that by 2019-20 the number has increased 8 times more i.e. 40 Anti Human Trafficking Units according to official data. All the 40 AHTUs are actively working to control/prevent human trafficking in Gujarat State. The list of 40 Anti Human Trafficking Units (AHTUs) in Gujarat is at the following location.

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Ahmadabad-City | 21. Jamnagar |
| 2. Ahmadabad-Rural | 22. Junagadh |
| 3. Ahmadabad-WR | 23. Kachchh-Bhuj |
| 4. Amreli | 24. Morbi |
| 5. Anand | 25. Mahisagar |
| 6. Aravalli | 26. Mehsana |
| 7. Bharuch | 27. Nadiad |
| 8. Banaskatha | 28. Narmada |
| 9. Botad | 29. Navsari |
| 10. Baroda – City | 30. Porbandar |
| 11. Baroda – Rural | 31. Patan |
| 12. Baroda – WR | 32. Rajkot – City |
| 13. Bhavnagar | 33. Rajkot – Rural |
| 14. Chhota-udepur | 34. Sabarkatha |
| 15. Dahod | 35. Somnath |
| 16. Dang | 36. Surendranagar |
| 17. Dwarka | 37. Surat – city |
| 18. Gandhidham | 38. Surat – Rural |
| 19. Gandhinagar | 39. Tapi |
| 20. Godhara | 40. Valsad |

AHTU Functionaries

They are generally considered as team members/task forces who are directly or indirectly responsible for controlling the Human trafficking incidence.

All the Police functionaries who are specifically appointed in AHTUs i.e. Police Inspectors (PI), Police Sub Inspectors (PSI), Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI), Head

Police Constables (HPC), and Police Constables (PC) from the urban and rural part of Gujarat.

Research Questions

- What is the profile of AHTUs and Other Functionaries?
- What are the current formal/informal structures, procedures, and practices?
- How do the AHTU functionaries manage in actual situations?
- What are the hurdles faced by AHTU functionaries in the effective implementation of Anti Human Trafficking initiatives?
- What are their opinions and suggestions to improve the system?
- What contribution can the social work professionals make in preventing, and controlling Human Trafficking?

Aim and Objectives

The broad aim of this research is to understand the existing structures created to control/prevent human trafficking and find the scope to improve/enhance the current practices, procedures by using Social work strategies. Other specific objectives are

- To explore the prevalence of reported cases in AHTU.
- To study the Current process of actual formal/informal practices and procedures followed by AHTU to control human trafficking in Gujarat.
- To describe the expected standard procedure followed by the AHTU Functionaries in controlling the human trafficking of Gujarat state.
- To explore and describe the experience of AHTU Functionaries.
- To identify the difficulties faced by the AHTU Functionaries in Gujarat.
- To describe opinions and suggestions of AHTU Functionaries.
- To provide suggestions for structural and procedural improvement procedures based on Social Work Knowledge.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design/Method

The research is *exploratory in nature*. It is exploratory research because the study focuses on a relatively unexplored dimension of human trafficking, especially from functionaries' experiences.

The purpose of exploratory research is to gain familiarity with the issue of human trafficking from functionaries' perspective. The Quantitative data were collected by census survey method and Qualitative was through in depth interviews with key persons.

Universe and Population

All of the 40 AHTU functionaries from the universe of the study. The total population is 214. It must be noted that originally the population was limited to 63 in ten AHTUs from with gradual addition to the numbers of Anti Human Trafficking Units (AHTUs), this number increased up to 214 from the total of 40 units.

Census study covered 214 Functionaries from all original 40 AHTUs of Gujarat State.

Respondents were taken from 40 AHTUs of Gujarat state. These respondents included

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| 1. Police Inspectors (PI) - 38 | 4. Head Constables (HC) - 59 |
| 2. Police Sub-Inspectors (PSI) - 25 | 5. Police Constables - 46 |
| 3. Assistant Sub Inspectors (ASI) – 35 | 6. Lok Rakshak – 11 |

Sources of data collection / Tools:

Primary source of data collection is mixed method i.e. Qualitative and Quantitative design (Ql - Qn). The interview guide and Observation for qualitative (Ql) study. Semi-structural Interview schedule at the time of pre-testing and later structured Interview schedule is used for collecting quantitative (Qn) information (It is because of COVID-19 Pandemic the researcher was compelled to convert and used structured interview schedule as per advice of the police authority). The Semi-structured interview schedule has both close-ended as well as open-ended questions and structure interview schedules only have close ended questions, regarding experiences and opinions of AHTU functionaries in the implementation of anti-human trafficking initiatives.

Variables

- I) Independent variables: Education, Designations, Age, roles, and responsibilities
- II) Dependent variables: Experiences, Opinions, Standard Operating process, Problems, Awareness, suggestions

Data processing and analyses

- I) Quantitative data: - Simple frequency tables with cross tables.
- II) Qualitative data: - In-depth observation.

KEY RESULTS / FINDINGS (MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS)

Section I: Profile of Respondents

- The researcher found only two independent Anti Human Trafficking Units working in Gujarat state. These two independent units incorporated nine independent supporting staff. total 4 staff members in Ahmadabad city AHTU. These four incorporated three independent supporting staff (i.e. Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) - 1, Head Constable (HC) - 1, and Police constable (PC) -1) and 1 Police inspector as additional in charge in AHTU with the main charge of the woman police station. However, the resolution reference no E-X/XXXX/AHTU distribution/XXX/2012 granted a total of 6 vacant places in Ahmadabad-city (AHTU) in the year 2013.
- It was found that Surat city has 6 staff members (i.e. Police inspector-1, Assistant Sub Inspector-1, Head Constable -3, and Police constable). All are independent staff as per the guidelines. However, the resolution Reference No E-X/XXXX/AHTU distribution/923/2012 granted Police inspector-1, Assistant Sub Inspector-1, Head Constable -1, and Police constable-3 in the year of 2013.
- The majority of respondents were male. It was noted in many Anti-Human trafficking Unit (AHTU) that the ratio of female staff is not maintained. The study observed that many Anti-Human trafficking Unit (AHTU) of Gujarat state where the female police officials were not at all available.
- Multiple roles: No focus on AHTU

- The inertia of local police and lack of continuity in investigation affect the detection of accused / victim
- Putting charge sheet limits of 60 days not always observed though some do manage for timely preparation
- Less – low use of fast track mode

Section II: Respondents Awareness of Prevalence Of Anti Human Trafficking Cases.

- Awareness is good among the respondents in AHTU
- A child is most vulnerable victims in respective AHTU
- Most of the AHU starts investigating after four months in missing cases
- Pending ITPA cases are nil in the majority of AHTU.
- Most of the respondents are taking 60 days for submitting charge sheet in the court
- A poor effort for bringing ITPA cases on a fast track board.
- Poor awareness of knowledge for filling officials' complaints.
- Good clarity on the jurisdictional controversy.

Section III: Experience Related to Victims / Perpetrators

- Both males and females need training in interviewing skills.
- Female NGO workers and Female police officials are collecting statements of victims.
- The victim identification tool is not available in AHTU.
- Victims /witnesses called at a police station for carrying interrogation
- Respondents collect a one-time statement from the victims.
- Pen paper uses to collect the statement from victims.
- Good medical verification knowledge among the respondents.
- Counseling services are used as preventive measures to stop repeat victimization.
- Respondents are highly dependent on FIR for getting information about trafficked victims.
- Poor awareness on the website of trafficked victims.
- Poor computer knowledge.

- Poor adherence to guidelines on home visits and counseling.
- Respondents are not trained for AHTU.
- Poor awareness of victim's rehabilitation.

Section IV: Current Process of Actual Formal / Informal Practice Followed By Anti Human Trafficking Units.

- Poor awareness of NGO working Human trafficking areas.
- NGO lists are not available in many AHTU.
- Fall short of legal compliances to form an advisory committee
- Good awareness of the use of NGO services.
- A special desk/helpline for victims is not arranged in AHTU.
- NGO record available for raid/rescue/search operations.
- Poor planning for conducting raid/rescue/search operations.
- Poor record maintaining method of raid/rescue/search Operations.
- Poor understanding of raid/rescue/search operations can be an important link to human trafficking.
- Raids on trafficking mere formality, no focus to nab the network of traffickers.
- Poor briefing and de-briefing services provided by AHTU.
- Poor initiative to collect information about sex rackets.
- Poor in maintaining contact details of government officials.
- Partially aware of the important laws of human trafficking.
- Keeping track of camouflaged traffickers within local jurisdiction is neglected.

Section V: Standard procedure followed by respondents.

- Ignorance of government guidelines
- All AHTU have special officers with an additional charge.
- Training limited to officers-Ground staff untrained.
- Only 2 independent full flagged AHTU with infrastructure granted from MHA.
 - It is fact that only one separate AHTU is observed by research where the special trafficking officer is deputed with independent charge. The majority of the respondents replied that Anti-human trafficking units are internally administered/formed under the various main branch of the police department. For instance

- Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU) in ABC rural is internally formed and administering under the main Local Intelligence Branch (LIB)).
 - Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU) in XYZ city is internally formed and administering under the main Local Crime Branch (LCB)).
- Poor support on workshop organization to the supporting staff.
 - Poor awareness on raid/rescue/search operation.
 - Good awareness of witness requirement.
 - Poor knowledge on minimum female staff requirement at the time of raid/rescue/search operations.
 - Poor awareness of the problem of dealing with insufficient female staff in case of raid/rescue/search operations.
 - Poor initiative to stop child labor from unorganized sector.

Section VI: Difficulties Faced by the Respondents.

Following are the major problems faced by respondents while dealing with victims of human trafficking.

- | | |
|---|--|
| a) Language related problems | f) Less response from relatives |
| b) Victims are not aware of their exploitation | g) The time-consuming medical procedure of the victim |
| c) The problem in face recognition especially in children | h) Fake victim identification and the problem of mainstreaming |
| d) Lack of interest from the parent | i) Orphan cases consume more time |
| e) Lack of public response | |

Following are the major problems faced by respondents while working in AHTU at the administrative level.

- a) Overburden of work because of Extra work like security in VIP functions, Additional charges, etc.
- b) Shortage of staff member including female staff
- c) No basic facilities and dependence on other departments for GPS tracking in AHTU.
- d) No independent trained staff.
- e) Lack of knowledge
- f) Lack of support from senior officials and constant transfer
- g) Lack of inter-departmental coordination / support.
- h) Lack of interest among the staff members for AHTU work.
- i) TA & DA related problem
- j) The problem in establishing investigation link in old cases. (AHTU is receiving cases 4 months later)
- k) Jurisdiction limitation of court.
- l) Geographically large areas need to cover (For example 10 or more district police stations are covered by GRP-WR).
- m) Permission procedure is time-consuming / No emergency permission.
- n) No secret fund allocation in AHTU.
- o) Careless attitude of other investigation branches, they are just waiting for four months and immediately transferring the cases to AHTU with less or no progress on it.
- p) A problem in temporary accommodation of victims of human trafficking.

- No external pressure while performing their duty.
- One case identified speaking about internal pressure at the workplace.
- The majority of the respondents are satisfied with their services in the police station not in AHTU.

CONCLUSION

In the previous chapter, we discussed the findings of the study of Anti Human Trafficking Units. Where respondents' information is analysed based on six major objectives. This chapter discusses the conclusion of each objective.

I. PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

It can be concluded that many Anti-human trafficking units are facing the problem of staff shortages. Despite the resolution, still many positions are unfilled in numbers of Anti-human trafficking Unit (AHTU). Respondents are well educated. Many Anti-human trafficking units do not have female staff members. Respondents have good work experience in the police department but have less experience in Anti-human trafficking Units. The study found that the average period of working is fallen in between one to six months for all staff members in Anti Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU). Respondents have poor awareness of the functions of Anti Human Trafficking Unit. Frequent transfer of senior officials and staff members enhance volatility of learning.

II. RESPONDENTS AWARENESS ON PREVALENCE OF ANTI HUMAN TRAFFICKING CASES.

Children are found to be more vulnerable compare to adult girls in many human trafficking units. Anti-human trafficking units start investigations four months later. Respondents complain about the insensitive attitude of the primary investigation branch towards investigating missing cases of children (the Primary investigation branch is the place where the missing case is registered and supposed to be investigated). It is good that pending cases of ITPA are very less. But they are not putting effort for bring the case on the fast track board in court. Respondents are submitting charge sheets within 60 days but proper awareness for charge sheet submission is still missing. They have a good awareness of the jurisdiction of controversial cases.

III. EXPERIENCE RELATED TO VICTIMS / PERPETRATORS

In many AHTUs Female NGO workers and Female police officials are collecting statement through personal interview of female survivor but it was shocking to know

that female survivor is interrogated by male officials in absence of female NGO workers in several AHTUs. There was no standard victim identification tool found in Anti-human trafficking Units (AHTU). Respondents are facing problems in the classification of human trafficking cases without victims' identification tools. Instead of going to the convenient place of victims/witnesses, respondents are collecting statements by calling them in a police station. It is good that they are calling women witnesses in the daytime. The statement of the victim is collected one time in many anti-human trafficking units. However, it can be recorded one or more times, especially after counseling. Moreover, Staff members have spent a lot of money from their pocket to sustain the Anti Human Trafficking Unit. They have contributed collectively to buying furniture, printer machine, and computer. Indeed, special resources are not available and some of them required a lot of maintenance in many Anti-Human Trafficking Units (AHTU). The government is carefully doing unnecessary paperwork (Running horses on paper - Kagaj Ke Ghode doda rahi he) with very limited execution. (E.g. the Old Mahindra bolero (Four wheelers vehicle) is provided in Anti Human Trafficking Units (AHTU) on paper but this vehicle required a lot of repairs. It was a fact that one cannot use this vehicle for following the traffickers because these vehicles have the capacity of running a maximum of four miles with a maximum speed of 20-40 km/hr on roads.)

IV. CURRENT PROCESS OF ACTUAL FORMAL / INFORMAL PRACTICE FOLLOWED BY ANTI HUMAN TRAFFICKING UNITS.

Respondents are not aware of conducting raids/rescue/ search operations as an important function of Anti Human trafficking Unit. They believed that conducting raids/rescue/ search operations is the responsibility of other branches of the police department (i.e. Modus Operandi Bureau (MOB), Local Crime Branch (LCB) and etcetera). It is fact that many respondents are not aware of the important link between missing children and human trafficking. The victim's case neither brief nor debrief by the respondents before and after the trial in court. Respondents are not taking any initiative to collect information about sex rackets. They are highly dependent on First Information Report. Respondents are using the support of other government officials but they are not maintaining their details in the formal register. Respondents are not much aware of the special legislation of human trafficking.

V. STANDARD PROCEDURE FOLLOWED BY RESPONDENTS.

Respondents are not aware of the guidelines issued by the Government of India / Ministry of Home Affairs for Anti Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU). Standard operating procedure (SOP) was not at all available in several Anti-Human Trafficking Units (AHTU). Most of the Anti-human trafficking Units have special officials but with an additional charge. Nodal officers are organizing training workshops on human trafficking for Nodal in charge in Anti Human trafficking Units. But Nodal in charge of Anti-Human trafficking Units is not organizing training workshops on human trafficking for supporting staff.

Respondents neither participated in raids/ rescue/search operation nor the Anti-Human Trafficking Units (AHTU) conducted raids/rescue/search operation last year. Several, responders are not aware of the importance of two witnesses in which one must be female during raid/rescue/search operation. They are unaware of female police requirements during raid/rescue/search operations. Respondents are not aware that special police officers do not require a search warrant for conducting a raid. Special / trafficking police officials can search the premises without a warrant on logical grounds. Many respondents believed that child labor prevention is actual responsibility of concern NGO/Government officials. Police are playing a supporting role by extending their support to NGOs / government officials. However, it should be done in coordination with police, NGOs, and government departments. Respondents are not aware of any monthly pamphlet.

This study gave me a lot of insights. Despite all the difficulties they are facing in Anti-Human Trafficking Units. It was heartening to note that they are taking full involvement and very supportive.

SUGGESTIONS BY RESEARCHER

- Dissemination & use of annual report and other researcher should be disseminated widely.
- The results and data should be shared with the stake holders 'doer' and their participation for control strategies should be sought.
- Newly inducted and transferred employees in AHTU should give training and should be sensitized about important of their roles.
- Similarly, frequent refresher courses should be organized for existing AHTU staffs to update about changes in policy and amendments in laws in vernacular language.
- Efficient and committed AHTU staff should be rewarded for their pro-active work and motivated through giving additional points for promotions.
- In absence of female staff help and support of nearest trained lady social workers can be taken. It should be paid service.
- A list should be prepared of the voluntary / paid professionals' social workers who are willing to support the AHTUs.
- Fear of police should be removed from the communities through community policing so that victim, their guardian or the witnesses can approach the AHTU or any other police station through given and take information about the human trafficking perpetrators.
- Special attention is required despite police reform; people still dread to go to police stations. A victim or witness finds it difficult to open comfortably and hence compliance with this guideline is a must
- It would be ideal to provide the latest pieces of equipment, gadgets to record the statements for scientific investigation. The budget allocation must be fair, if this is not possible the district authorities should convince the corporate house to support AHTUs through CSR funds.
- Strengthen the 'Khabar' network and idea of community policing, including a larger community network to identify traffickers.
- Easy access to computer-trained personnel who daily check the update and research wing of AHTU at the state level is a must.
- Probation officers are better trained for home study. During induction training, police schools/academies must allocate lectures and visits on social defense.

- All AHTU staff need training for developing behavioral skills and legal knowledge. At the earliest, all state-level police schools/academies must include an orientation program. Behavioral skill training and be sensitized to the nature of work.
- Guidance/legal aid is the right of victims. Strict compliance needs to be enforced by the court.
- Strict monitoring of compliance, computer training, and appreciation of those who are self-motivated people.
- Vehicle on-call can be arranged for seeking help from district level police authority or NGO.