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HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND THE FAMILY: EXAMPLES FROM SRI LANKA ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC ISSUES EXPERIENCED BY FAMILIES OF THE TRAFFICKED DUE TO TRAFFICKING

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Abstract: Human trafficking is a global problem affecting most countries including Sri Lanka. Issues of trafficking are commonly focused from the point of person trafficked. However, its impact is also felt by other parties – most importantly their families. Yet this aspect of trafficking has not received much attention. This paper fills the gap by discussing the issues faced by families of the trafficked in Sri Lanka, due to trafficking. The study is based on primary data collected in 2016 from persons who logged complaints on trafficking at the Repatriation Section of the Ministry of Foreign Employment, Sri Lanka by applying purposive sampling method and triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data. The results revealed that the families of the trafficked, in contrast to families of other migrants, are doubly affected – i.e. the issues faced at the origin due to trafficking as well as their mental strain due to the circumstances of the trafficked at the destination. While families of the trafficked are also impacted by consequences faced by families of other migrants such as deprivation of care givers, there are specific social and economic issues connected particularly to trafficking. Lack of remittances, burdened with the debts connected to the migration process, necessity to send money to the victim, severing ties with family members and social stigmatization from community are some among these. The study suggests that policy processes should strengthen the mechanisms to reduce trafficking; this will not only benefit the potential trafficked, but also their families.

Keywords: Human trafficking, Social impacts, Economic impacts, Family

Introduction

Migration occurs in many forms for many reasons. Among them, trafficking is of major interest currently as it is a global problem affecting every continent and most countries, including Sri Lanka. As noted by Sarker and Panday (2006), trafficking exists at the intersection of migration and organized crime. The Council of Europe's 'Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings' defines trafficking in persons as "recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by improper means (such as force, abduction, fraud, coercion, deception) for an improper purpose including forced labor or sexual exploitation" (United Nations, 2000). According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2014), approximately 900,000 persons, originating from different countries are trafficked around the world annually. Trafficking calls for attention as it is a crime and violates

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human rights and dignity. Baldwin et al. (2011) revealed that trafficking is modern day slavery, a global industry of exploitation that generates billions of dollars in international profits each year. It is therefore a major challenge that needs to be overcome.

Many policies and regulation have been formulated to reduce human trafficking at international and national level (United Nations, 2000). These are based on policy and research literature that reveals about the social, economic, psychological and health impacts faced by the trafficked (Jayatilaka, 2008; Sarker & Panday, 2006; United Nations, 2008 are some among many). The United Nations (2008) notes that "Trafficking is a crime against individuals. As such, the consequences are most directly felt by trafficked persons" (p.81). This idea is a reflection on how many view the consequences of trafficking. Yet the consequences of trafficking are not only on the trafficked; it also has profound consequences on their families. However, very little attention has been paid to this segment of the population impacted by the trafficking process. When the family is focused with regard to trafficking, it is generally how the family reacts towards the trafficked (United Nations, 2008). The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2014), notes that Sri Lanka is the main hub for human trafficking in the South Asian region at present. Therefore, it is necessary that research on different aspects of trafficking becomes a focus in the country. This paper contributes to migration literature, especially on human trafficking by drawing attention to a different perspective with regard to the issues of trafficking.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to examine the issues experienced by families of trafficked persons. In this study these issues have been examined under three specific areas: (i) social issues experienced by families; (ii) economic issues experienced by families and; (iii) psychological issues experienced by families.

As noted above, other than passing remarks, no study has focused primarily on the issues experienced by the families of the trafficked. Therefore, this study is more inductive in nature, and the objectives were very broadly categorized as above, to seeks the realities at ground level. Therefore the study is more in line with the methodological approach of 'grounded theory' (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The inductive logic emphasizes on building arguments from the particular to the general (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998) and hence the study will provide a base for future research.

Methodology

The study³ is based on primary data collected from family members of trafficked persons coming to the 'Repatriation Section' of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Sri Lanka to lodge complaints on trafficking. These family members included spouses, parents, children, siblings or a close relative of the trafficked. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected from the respective family members about the issues faced by the whole family. Quantitative data were collected using a questionnaire survey and qualitative data through in-depth interviews. From among

³ Study on Human Trafficking, 2016.

those who came to lodge complaints related to trafficking issues at the MEA during the period 05.09.2016 to 21.11.201, one hundred and fifteen (115) persons were selected as the study population. They were selected by using purposive sampling method based on the willingness to participate in the questionnaire survey. Subsequent to answering the questionnaire survey, all of the 115 persons were asked if they were further willing to participate in a detailed discussion, and 65 agreed. These 65 family members were selected for the in-depth interviews to collect qualitative data. The quantitative data was analyzed with SPSS⁴ and the study uses uni-variate and bivariate analyses. Quantitative data is mainly used in the paper for a descriptive analysis of the sample. Qualitative data⁵ was analyzed using content analysis focusing on the main themes that were in the in-depth interview guideline that focused on the objectives of the study. The analysis is mainly based on the qualitative data.

Results

Any form of migration has both positive and negative consequences for the left behind family members. For example, due to female labour migration, which is prominent in Sri Lanka, there are economic gains on the one hand and loss of care givers for the family, on the other; in particular, the adverse effects are severe for small and young children (see Asis, 2006; Chandra, 2002; Hettige et al., 2012; Ratnayake, 1999; Schmalzbauer, 2004; Senaratna, 2012 among many for consequences of migration). Some of the issues faced by the families of other (especially labour) migrants, such as loss of care givers are also common to families of the trafficked. Although these were identified when collecting data, this paper will not focus on them; the paper will only touch upon issues that are specifically connected to trafficking.

Profile of the families affected by trafficking

One hundred and fifteen (115) family members who came to lodge complaints about a trafficked person were included in the study. Therefore, the study captures 115 families impacted by trafficking. According to the information given by these 115 respondents, the total number of family members impacted were 451. Majority (93%) of the families were nuclear in nature – i.e. the trafficked person, spouse and children or the trafficked person and his/her consanguineal family. The rest (7%) were extended. This suggests that majority who were affected by trafficking were the immediate family of the trafficked. Table 1 shows the age distribution of the family members.

Table 1: Age distribution of family members affected by trafficking

Age group	Family members	
	No	%
>15	137	30.4
15-59	266	58.9
60 or above	48	10.6
Total	451	100

Source: Study on Human Trafficking, 2016

⁴ Statistical Package for the Social Sciences.

⁵ Pseudonyms will be used for all in-depth interviewees.

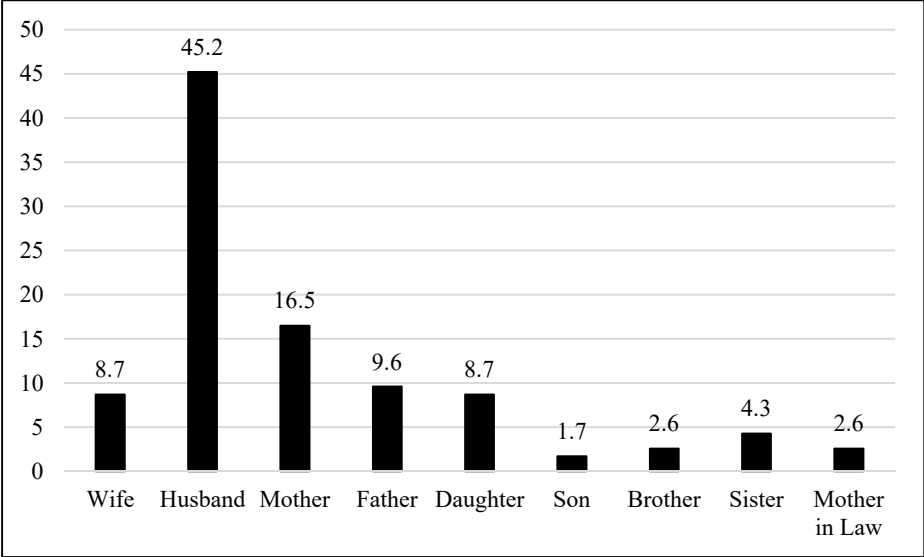
Most of the family members were in the working age group (15-59 years). Around 40 per cent were in the dependent age groups; either young (below 15 years) or old (60 or above). However, in a practical sense some of them were not dependents, especially those aged 60 or above who came to lodge complaints - if the trafficked person had no spouse, it was usually a parent who took the primary role in trying to rescue the trafficked. Many parents in this sample were aged 60 or above and some were wage earners.

The families captured in this study represented 21 districts of the country. Killinochchi, Mannar, Mullaithivu and Vavuniya districts were not represented. The highest proportion (14%) of the families were from Kurunegala and the second (13%) from Colombo. Less than one per cent of the sample families (0.9%) were from Trincomalee and Ampara districts. None and low representation from Northern and Eastern districts does not necessarily indicate low level of trafficking; very likely it could be the distance to the Repatriation Section in Colombo which was a constraint. More than half of the families (64%) were from rural areas and the lowest (11%) was from the estate sector.

Profile of the persons who logged complaints

As noted above, this study collected primary information from persons coming to the ‘Repatriation Section’ of the MEA to lodge complaints about persons who were trafficked. Figure 1 indicates the relationship of those lodging complaints to the person who was trafficked.

Figure 1: Percentage Distribution of Persons Who Logged Complaints According to the Relationship to the Trafficked Person



Source: Study on Human Trafficking, 2016

Figure 1 clearly indicates that all those who logged complaints were immediate family members of the trafficked. The highest proportion (45%) was the husband, and it is very much higher than the others who logged complaints. Eighty-two per cent of the

trafficked in this sample were females and 67 per cent of them were married. In comparison to a husband, only 9 per cent of the complainers were wives. This is because only 18 per cent of the trafficked in this study were males and only 43 per cent of them were married. Data indicates that, for all husbands who were trafficked in this sample, it was the wife who was at the MEA to lodge complaints. The next highest percentage among the complainers was a parent (26%); out of this there were more mothers compared to fathers. Ten per cent was the child of the trafficked with more daughters than sons. In total 46 per cent of the complaints were from a person other than a spouse and among that group the majority were females. Whether females members were more impacted by trafficking, were more sensitive towards the trafficked or whether there were no/less male members able to come to the MEA is a issue that needs further investigation.

Issues faced by the family due to trafficking

The results indicate that the families of the trafficked persons are different to usual migrants because they are affected in two ways. First, they face issues at the origin due to factors related to trafficking. Second, they are also emotionally affected by what happens to the trafficked at the destinations; which is not so for the usual migrant. All these issues reported can be broadly categorized as social, economic and emotional (consequently health). As noted above, the focus of this paper is only on issues due to trafficking and not those that are common to all migrants including the trafficked. The social issues faced by families will be discussed first. Three main social issues faced by families were identified in this study: a) severing of family relationships and its further consequences and; b) household unrest and social stigma and; c) conflicts with the community and the (trafficking) agency.

Social issues

Severing of relationships

One of the most visible social factors faced by the families was the involvement of relatives, friends or villagers in the trafficking process and the consequent breaking of relationships, especially family ties. In this study 33 per cent of the traffickers were close associates, with 4 per cent being immediate family (Table 2).

Table 2: Percentage Distribution of Traffickers

Relationship of trafficker to the trafficked	Percentage	
Immediate family	3.5	} 33.0
Other relative	6.1	
Friend	17.4	
Villager	6.0	
Agency		67.0

Source: Study on Human Trafficking, 2016

Involvement of a family member and the consequent severing of ties is shown by the case of Nimal, whose wife was trafficked by her mother and used as a prostitute. Nimal gives details as follows:

“My wife was taken to Italy by her mother in 2014 for six months. But already two years and eight months have passed, and mother will not allow her to return. My wife

calls me and says that her mother sells her to men. My mother-in-law does not allow my wife to come back. Now we have no relationships with my wife's family because of what mother-in-law did"

In another case a woman was trafficked by her husband. As the mother Leela notes: "My daughter got married through a proposal. In 2016 my daughter's husband stole her jewelry worth 10 lacks and later took her to Dubai and sold her to other men there. We did not expect the husband to do this to her"

When family members engage in trafficking the pain is more severe than when it is done by an unknown person. Family is the strongest support mechanism in a crisis or vulnerable situation and in this case the family support mechanisms dilutes or breaks, which is a considerable social impact. It is not only damaging of relationships that occur, for some, damaging relationships have led to other issues such as stated by Palitha:

"We were living in my wife's house after marriage. My wife was deceived and trafficked by her mother. As I wanted my wife back and was taking action to get her back her mother has chased us from the house ...I have two children and now we don't have a permanent place to stay"

As shown above, the severing of relationships in connection to trafficking for some families was with other family members. But for others, it was with the trafficked person him/herself. In some cases it was emotional due to the trafficked person engaging in adulteration which later led to trafficking. The present study revealed that extra-marital affairs was a cause for later becoming trafficked. In the sample, nine per cent were trafficked by their extra marital partners. The extra marital relationships had damaged the family relationships before the trafficking. However, ironically, it was the family members, especially the spouse who later tries to help the trafficked, and not the extra marital partners:

"I am a father with three children. I worked in a remote area and wife started another relationship. After I found out we started fighting and wife eloped with that man to Colombo. Then she went to Dubai and her boyfriend supported her travel. But the boyfriend was helper of the traffickers and got money from them. They sent her illegally. My wife's behavior has impacted all of us. I feel angry about her – but she is the mother of my children"

(Nihal)

In the above case the emotional ties between the spouses were damaged, but the legal ties remained. But in others, though there were emotional ties there were no legal ties. The process of migration had broken the legal family ties. The quote below shows these complexities.

"My wife migrated with her mother hoping to earn an income. According to mother's advice she divorced me and married someone so that it would be easy to migrate through family R visa. His true wife is also from the village. This was a deal for money. But now my wife realized that she was deceived by her mother. Although she is my wife and we have two children...she is not my wife legally now. So, I have to

face issues. If I take action the man who married her will also fall into trouble. Now his true wife is also against me saying we are harassing that family by exposing the man”

(Sena)

Although the husband is trying to get his wife back, he is fearing that he may have to face other legal issues as he is now divorced from the wife and the wife’s second marriage was done for money and not using proper divorce procedures.

In summary the trafficking process results in damaging relationships with family members as well as with the person who was trafficked. From another angle, it damages emotional and social relationships as well as legal bindings.

Unrest and Stigma

As noted above, a considerable proportion of the trafficked has been unknowingly caught in trafficking due to their extra marital relationships. Nine per cent of the trafficked in this sample were trafficked by their extra marital partners. Apart from that, some also elope with Agency persons (Agents who recruit persons to migrate) due to their dire need to migrate - when people are desperate to migrate and have no opportunity they are ready to go through any illegal procedure not realizing the repercussions. Feingold (2005) says that trafficked persons build relationships with others and leaves with these persons not knowing that they will be trafficked. In this study 34.8 per cent had eloped with an Agency person without informing the family. This is in contrast to other migrants who do not migrate without informing the family. When a family member goes missing, it not only creates chaos in the household but also generates gossip and brings stigma to the family. The situation is evident from the following revelations by Kapila, Latha and Kasun.

“I have three children aged 15, 12 and 7. I am a farmer and have a good income – I owned a herd of buffalos, 13 acres of paddy land, a tractor and two houses. But my wife had gone to Colombo without informing me with an Agency person from Walachchene has gone abroad. Afterward through villages I got to know that she had been sharing a room with the agency person for three days in Colombo. After that I can’t engage in my economic activities and have mental stress. The children are severely suffering. Due to my wife’s act our family is socially disgraced”

(Kapila)

“Family objected to my sister’s migration. Then she eloped with and Agency person to Colombo. We have not heard from her for 6 months. We don’t know what has happened. We are very worried – that is why I came here

(Latha)

“We had problems. But she did not have to go with another man. Other villages also have marriage problems. Now she has done more damage to the family”

(Kasun)

Stigma comes not only due to people having extra marital affairs or eloping with Agency or other persons, as seen by Mala’s revelation.

“My sister went to work in a house but now she is sold to men. She is in a brothel and villagers got to know this. But they think she is doing it willingly for money. We can’t face the village. They pass hints. I now look after her children and can’t think of a marriage as my aged parents will have no one if I leave”

The society does not realize or does not accept that the victims have been trafficked and they are forced to engage in certain activities. Families of trafficked persons who have been forced to prostitution face this stigma often, and it has had severe impacts on the family, where in some cases the children have even stopped schooling. The present study reveals that there are many stigmatized names for these persons such as “Dubai Mala”, “Saudi Sriya”, “Qatar Shyamali” which do not represent a good reputation. Jayathilaka (2008) also notes similar views when she says that a trafficked person imprisoned for some reason is labeled as a “bad women”.

Conflicts with the community /agency

The third issue is the impacted family members getting into conflicts with the community and the Agency persons due to the issue of trafficking. This is visible from the case given below from a spouse of migrant female.

“In 2014 my wife went abroad through an agency without informing anyone. She has been put in to work in several houses. Now she is been kept in the agency at Dubai. My eldest son is 23 years old and he was following a technical engineering course at a vocational training center. Now he has stopped that and got into company of some bad guys. With his friends he has hit the agency person who sent my wife abroad. Police came to my place several times. My son has faced such a destiny because of the fraud agency people”

In this study instances were recorded of family members getting into conflicts not only with Agency personnel but also with people in the community. Due to reasons such as the migrant being branded in the home society as a person engaged in prostitution, or a criminal due to the false accusations made at the destination, family members have had fights with other community members as they know that the society’s accusations are unfounded. But it is very hard for them to prove themselves and are thus stigmatized.

Economic issues

For many in developing countries like Sri Lanka, decision to migrate is economic. Sending remittances to overcome economic difficulties is a positive impact of labour migration. However, when people seeking migration opportunities for employment end up being trafficked, it has several consequences. The economic issues faced by families at the origin take several forms: a) burdened with the debts that were taken for the migration process by the trafficked person; b) migrant not sending remittances; c) hindrances to wage earning due to time devoted to seek help for the trafficked and; d) necessity to send money to rescue the trafficked. Each of these will be discussed below.

Debt burden

Most of the economically deprived persons migrate by either pawning or selling whatever property they have or by borrowing money. It is anticipated that the income they earn can pay off the debts. But when these persons become trafficked the situation changes, as shown:

“My wife migrated to Dubai in 2015. She went after obtaining 2.5 lacks with high interest. We expected to settle it quickly with the money she earned. It is four months now since she went. Although, she went for a salary of Rs.45000/ per month, she does not get that. She has so far sent only Rs. 11,000/-. Debtors are coming home from everywhere ...now I have to find money to pay the debts”

(Sena)

As noted by the husband, he now has to earn an income for daily sustenance as well as additional money to pay the debts which has become a heavy economic burden.

Not receiving due financial benefits

The aim of labour migration is mostly to earn and send remittances. However, this study revealed that when the migrant is trafficked this aim is not met, either because wages are not paid, paid a lower sum than promised, or cannot earn an income due to imprisonment for illegal migration (29.4%), illegal migrants cannot work due to fear of arrest (23.5%). Kara (2011) shows that trafficking victims work at construction sites, agriculture sector, but get minimal or no wages. Siddisena and Ranasinghe (2016) mentioned that agencies promised high salaries but jobs aspirants realized that they have been trafficked only when they arrived at destination. In this study 70 per cent reported of low wages or non -payment of wages at some point. Further, at the time of the survey 97 per cent of the families were not receiving remittances (tables not shown).

Another reason for lack of remittances is the Agencies grabbing the wage and not sending to the family. Damayanthi provided the example for this.

“My daughter migrated to Dubai to look after a mentally disable child. Although she worked for two months, she didn’t get a salary. When she asked it was told that the salary was taken by the agency”

Damayanthi’s case shows how the agencies exploit the trafficked, and the family ultimately suffers.

Need to pay the Agencies/employers

Many of the families in addition to dealing with the debt burden created by migration and not receiving remittances, also have to pay the Agencies as their sole concern is getting the trafficked family member back home. Sujatha provides an example.

“My husband planned to migrate to Australia with the help of an Indian Tamil person. At first, they went to Malaysia and later travelled to Thailand in 2016. My husband called from there and informed me that they were arrested at the Bangkok airport. He also told that the visa was false – he was cheated by broker. At present, he is in “Kong

Don Samut Prakat” jail and he has been given a punishment for 05 months. Agency informed that I need to find money to release him. I had to pawn jewelry and send money”

A similar incident was reported by Jeeva whose daughter is employed as a housemaid in Dubai.

“... the family don’t pay a monthly salary though she works for 19 hours a day. She has got a skin disease in her leg and is in pain. But they don’t give her treatment. I sent money to the Dubai agency by borrowing at a high interest for the daughter to get treatment”

Baldwin et al. (2011) showed that traffickers pay medical bills for the trafficked but add the incurred debt to the overall debt burden of the trafficked, which the family needs to pay. Ghosh (1998) shows that because irregular migrants do not have professional qualification, training, or working experiences, they have to enter the informal sectors at destinations. In the informal sector they lose social protection and basic needs given by the governments. Therefore, they have to pay money even for medical treatment.

Some agencies and even the employers resort to threatening the families to get more money as told by Sumit.

“My wife migrated to Dubai as a housemaid through visit visa. She went to the Agency as she became sick while working asking them to send her back. Agency tells they want five lacks to send her back. If not, they are planning to sell her to another country. She was injured by them and they often telephone me and saying that they are going to kill her if money is not given”

Another example is Perera.

My wife migrated to Saudi Arabia for two years agreement. But the owner of the house is keeping her by force. When she wants to come employer asks me to send another housemaid or six lacks. Six lacks is a dream for me so it is a dream to bring wife back to Sri Lanka”

Hindrance to earnings through local employment

Studies on labour migration shows that, in particular, when the migrant is a mother who leaves young children behind, the father (who has to take care of the children) cannot engage in his own waged employment. However, the remittances subsidizes for this. The stories of family members of the trafficked are different. In addition to being deprived of not getting remittances from migrants as indicated above, they also lose time that they can engage in waged employment as they need to travel to the MEA to get help for the trafficked. Examples are given below.

“I have to come here (MEA) often to see what has happened to my complaint and what can be done. Then I can’t go for work”

(Kapila)

“Not that I can afford to come. But worried about sister. Sir at my working place (employer) has warned me about not coming to work”

(Mala)

Psychological issues due to the conditions of the trafficked person

A specific issue related to families of the trafficked at the origin face is the worry regarding the trafficked family member. This is added to the social and economic burden they encounter as discussed above and creates mental stress. In this study, the concerns about the trafficked took two forms: a) not having any information about the trafficked and; b) having distressing information about the trafficked family member. The following are examples.

Information ‘block’

Sixty-seven per cent in this study said that they have communication with the trafficked family member and 33 per cent answered “no”. Among the households that said that there was communication, 1.3 per cent communicated weekly, 1.3 per cent monthly, and 97.4 per cent once in a while. Among those with no communication at present, some had no communication since the day they migrated.

Example 1 - “Silva is a known person. He told that his sister living in Dubai is paralyzed and she wants a kind lady to look after her. Silva begged us to send my wife. He said that if we agreed he will help us with money. We agreed to his request as he was a known person and it was to look after a sick person. He said he needed my wife only for 2 months. After she migrated my wife called one day and said Silva cheated her and she works as a housemaid and the employer does not let her return. After that day there is no information about her”

Example 2 – My daughter migrated to Saudi Arabia in 2015 as a domestic worker through illegal documents. Two months after migrating she telephoned and said that the owner of the house often hit and burn her. One day while daughter was calling the employer broke her mobile phone. After one day daughter called again and cried asking me to get her back. That was 3.6.2016. After that she never called”

Example 3 - “He is my only son, he married a Japanese girl and they migrated to Japan in 2012. After two week he came back without his wife. But his behavior was abnormal. He did not say why. After three days he went to Japan again. Since then my son or his wife has not communicated with us. A friend of my son said that son’s wife threatened to kill him, if he does not come to Japan. Now his phone is off We don’t know my son is living or dead”.

Distressing information

Having no information is one issue. The study also showed that in cases where information was received it was distressing to the family members.

Example 1 - “The agency person promised that my husband will go to Italy. But actually, he had to migrate to “Sirariyan Island” in West Africa. The Island does not have good food, water and sanitary facilities. Therefore my husband suffered malnutrition and Malaria. I am thinking of him and suffering here”

Example 2 - "My wife migrated to Saudi Arabia in 2014. The house she found after migration was hell. After three months the owner Next six month she got the salary from the second house. But now although the contract time period is over she hasn't got salary for 18 months. When she requested for her salary saying she wanted to go back to Sri Lanka the owner her locked her up keeping her passport and she was sexually abused like an animal and now she bleeding from the vagina as a result. She lives in fear on her life"

Example 3 - "My wife migrated to Dubai without my acknowledgement. I have four children aged 03, 05, 10 and 13. Wife telephoned and said that the owner of the house is harassing her and to pay 2 lacks and bring her back to Sri Lanka. He doesn't have any person to keep my children safely and go for a job. Wife cries asking for money. The only solution I have is to drink poison and die"

Example 4 - "My wife has been kept in a room for 1 ½ day without any food. The householder threatens her to have sexual relationships with him and fulfills his sexual desires from her. Whenever she calls she cries. But what can I do"

The trafficked face harassments that distresses the family not only from their employers but also the Agency people themselves as seen below.

Example 1 - "Since my daughter couldn't bear the harassment, abuses and did not receive the salary she has gone to the agency. There the agency people have cut her mouth from scissors and has threatened her that if she tries to go back they would kill her and told them not to bother them and go back to home"

The only contact point for family members with the trafficked are the Agency persons. However when the Agency also enacts harassment to the trafficked as noted above the family has not consolation and help.

Conclusion and Suggestions

Human trafficking is a challenging issue for Sri Lanka as well as many countries in the world. Consequently, research as well as policy have paid attention to the trafficked and the issues they experience due to trafficking. However, the consequences of trafficking are felt not only by the trafficked, but their families as well. This paper addressed this significant gap in knowledge regarding the issues experienced by families of the trafficked. The study shows that the families of the trafficked are doubly burdened. They have to face challenges at the origin as well as face the distressing situation of knowing that their family member is in trouble. This is a specific situation that is not encountered by families of other migrants. The issues faced by the families are social, economic as well as psychological. Economic in the form of being victims of the debt burden created by the trafficked person for his/her migratory move complemented by not receiving remittances. To add to the economic burden many families have to send money to the trafficked for their health issues etc. And when it is a nuclear family the spouse of the trafficked has to attend to the task of getting back the trafficked which compromises on their wage-earning time. The study therefore shows that the families are entangled in a web of economic difficulties. From a social and psychological perspective, many families have lost one of the

strongest support bases in a vulnerable situation – their relatives, friends or neighbours because they have become allies in the trafficking process. Added to that, the family also has to face social stigmatization as the community does not realize that the person is trafficked and is engaging in socially unaccepted employment such as prostitution because they are forced to do so. To add to this, due to the stress they are going through the family members have sometimes initiated fights with Agency persons and community members who stigmatize the trafficked which has resulted in them being considered as breakers of the law. These insights provide evidence that family members of the trafficked should also be a policy focus. As a short-term solution, it is necessary that awareness is made among the general public that there is an institutional structure in the form of the MEA to support families of the trafficked; it is also necessary that branches/units connected to the MEA to deal with trafficking is established regionally, at least at provincial level so as to facilitate the travel and time of the affected family members. However, short term remedies are not sufficient and the best long-term solution is to take diverse steps to minimize trafficking – i.e. create job opportunities, strengthen law enforcement, strong monitoring of recruitment agencies, increase awareness programs so that trafficking is minimized. This will indirectly benefit the families of those who have the potential to be trafficked.

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