

**Welcome to the
Presentation on**

**WORK OF THE BANGLADESH
CHURCH IN COMBATING
TRAFFICKING AND SLAVERY
AND
EXPERIENCE OF WORKING WITH
LAW ENFORCEMENT PARTNERS**

Scenario of Human Trafficking in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is one of the source countries of women and children trafficking. In 2014 about 50,000 women & children were trafficked to Malaysia and Thailand (Source: the report24.com, 26.07.2015) from Bangladesh. A UNHRC report states that in the first three months of 2015, about 25,000 Bangladeshis and Rohingyas have been trafficked. Among them 300 died during journey due to lack of food, drinking water and physical torture (Source: Daily jhenaidah, 12.5.2015). Trafficking of minors have been also occurring internally and also across the border to India, Pakistan, Malaysia and many Middle Eastern countries.

Involvement of Catholic Church of Bangladesh in Anti-trafficking

- Caritas Bangladesh as an organization of Catholic Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh (CBCB) and under the umbrella of CBCB, has been first involved with anti-trafficking program through its two nationwide umbrella projects – 1. Development Extension Education Services (DEEDS) Project in 1979 covering 51 sub-districts and Integrated Women Development Project (IWDP) later renamed as Gender and Development Program (GDP) in 1992 covering 7 sub-districts to protect women and children from exploitative conditions of trafficking through capacity building, awareness raising at community level and strengthening local networks of the Peoples Organizations (POs) or Community Based Organizations (CBOs) for initiating advocacy campaigns and networking in the traffic prone areas.

Involvement of Catholic Church of Bangladesh in Anti-trafficking

- In 2002, Caritas Bangladesh undertook a project titled “Prevention of Trafficking of Women and Children through Awareness Building” in partnership with a local NGO Mukti Kushtia to prevent women and children from sexual exploitation and slavery with funding support from Asian Partnership for Human Development (APHD) and Caritas Australia. The project continued till December 2011. Aim of this collaborative program was to arrange a ‘shelter home’ for rescued women and children.
- During this period a number of Caritas staff (35-40) have been trained and participated in different national and regional (South Asian) workshop/conferences.

Involvement of Catholic Church of Bangladesh in Anti-trafficking

- CB has been involved with key national level advocacy organizations (Bangladesh Mohila Sangstha/Bangladesh Women Association, Mohila Ainjibi Samity/Women Lawyers Association, National Girl Child Advocacy Forum and International level advocacy organizations (COATNET-Christian Organizations Against Trafficking NETwork, and COMPASS- Coalition of Organizations and Ministries Promoting the Abolition of Slavery at Sea implemented by Unites States Conference of Catholic Bishops etc., to work jointly for prevention of human trafficking.

Involvement of Catholic Church of Bangladesh in Anti-trafficking

- **Focal Geographical Areas:** The entire high-risk zone (Kushtia, Meherpur, Jhenaidah, Chuadanga, Jessore, Shatkhira, Rajshahi, Thakurgaon, Sherpur, Brahmanbaria and other risk prone areas of trafficking) in Bangladesh.
- **Target Sectors:** Grass roots level POs/CBOs, development worker of the local grassroots level NGOs and local community leaders of the High Risk Zone (HRZ) area, some women and children traffickers, and local men of the HRZ area, Schools, Colleges, local police stations, etc.

Current endeavor of Caritas Bangladesh in combating human trafficking

- The Strategic Plan of Caritas Bangladesh has set one strategic objective that reads “Improvement of Socio-Economic Condition and Dignity of the Extremely Poor and of the Vulnerable Communities” in order to attain specific objective to strengthen the safety of the vulnerable communities, especially for internal migrants, beauty parlor workers, garments and domestic workers and children engaged in hazardous activities.
- Awareness raising and sensitization programs through all Parishes under eight Diocesan offices in Bangladesh

Current endeavor of Caritas Bangladesh in combating human trafficking

- Facilitation to carry out local level advocacy on trafficking issues by the Organized Peoples Organizations (POs)/Community Based Organizations (CBOs) is going on.
- Relationship with Local Government Administration is going on to extend their support to PO leaders for prevention of human trafficking through participating in the advocacy campaign of POs/CBOs.
- CB has Policy on Combating Trafficking in Persons for its staff, volunteers and vendors.

Current endeavor of Caritas Bangladesh in combating human trafficking

- Setting of Child Friendly Spaces at Camp of Kutupalong under Cox's Bazar for Forcibly Displaced Children from Myanmar.
- Disseminate information for awareness building against Human Trafficking through Publication of leaflet/Posters focusing on anti-trafficking messages and collection of case studies, video films and documents from other organizations.

Current endeavor of Caritas Bangladesh in combating human trafficking

- Some specific projects that continue action of prevention of human trafficking are:
 - i) Promoting Safe Migration and Rights of Bangladeshi Migrants Workers;
 - ii) Prochesta (A project for improving the Health and Social Condition of the Vulnerable Semi-urban poor);
 - iii) Momota (A Project aiming to Improve the Health, Nutrition and Social Security of Working Mothers including their children of Dhaka City Suburbs);
 - iv) SAFE (Sustainable Approach for Fairness and Equity) (A Project for Promoting Health, Security and Psycho-social Condition of Poor Migrant workers;
 - v) Livelihood Improvement through Formation and Education (LIFE) funded .

Current endeavor of Caritas Bangladesh in combating human trafficking

- Apart from the above initiatives, awareness and sensitization programs on the consequences on women and child trafficking are also conducted through a number of projects like Integrated Community Development Projects (ICDPs), Family/Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction Projects, Vocational and Technical Training Projects, Emergency programs, Caritas Microfinance Program and Justice and Peace Program in collaboration with Episcopal Commission for Justice and Peace of CBCB throughout the country.

Current endeavor of Caritas Bangladesh in combating human trafficking

- As a member of COATNET and to express solidarity, Caritas Bangladesh takes part in International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking on the 8th February each year.
- CB has been actively participating in the “Share the Journey Campaign” launched by CI.

Experience of working with law enforcement partners

- CB has good relationship with Local Police Stations. Therefore, victims are getting support in filing general diary without any harassment. Officials of Law enforcement also take part in various discussions on awareness building programs.
- Caritas gets support of security from Local Police Stations while organizing social events such as drama, workshop, rally, etc.

Experience of working with law enforcement partners

- ⦿ Human Rights organizations cooperate CB in dealing various complicated cases.
- ⦿ Sometimes it takes more time to settle case due to official complicity.
- ⦿ The government had not dedicated adequate resources to pre-trial investigations and short timelines for the completion of cases led to inadequately prepared and subsequently unsuccessful prosecutions.
- ⦿ Sometimes Law Enforcement Officers expect return gifts for their service to the victims.

Some Pictures with LAW Enforcement Partners during implementation of Projects

