



Preliminary inferences from primary data on girl child victims rescued from the sex trade in Mumbai

(2015 - 2020)

ABOUT PRERANA

Prerana is a civil society organization that started working in the Red-Light Areas (RLAs) of Mumbai in 1986 with a view to eliminate second generation trafficking ('ESGT') i.e. trafficking of the children of the sex trafficked prostituted women into the sex trade, its allied activities or exploitative labour. To achieve this, Prerana evolved several path-breaking interventions, piloted them, evolved a success story out of each intervention, and disseminated them widely to facilitate their mainstreaming. Prerana expanded the scope of its intervention to address the issues of the prostituted women of the RLAs especially to fight violence against them and to protect their legal and human rights. It also started addressing other child rights issues, gradually including working with children rescued from commercial sexual exploitation through Post Rescue Operations (PRO), children rescued from begging through its project 'Sanmaan' (the Honour), and child sexual maltreatment through its initiative 'Aarambh' (the Beginning).

ABOUT THE STUDY

Prerana has been working with child victims rescued from commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking (CSE&T) over the past two decades. As per the Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection of Children) Act, (JJA) 2015 and the Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, (ITPA) 1956 once a child victim is rescued from the sex trade, they are to be presented before the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) instituted under the JJA for their care, protection, and rehabilitation. Prerana works with the State for providing victim assistance, in both the immediate as well as the long-term post-rescue phases.

Over the past five years, Prerana has worked closely with 109 rescued girl children who were referred to the child protection system as victims of commercial sexual exploitation. In the course of Prerana's work with these children, information about their age, home state, site of exploitation, etc. was gathered. This study aims at constructing the overall social profile of these girl children by analyzing this information gathered with a view to facilitating a better understanding of their situation.

The primary data were collected over the following points;

- Age at the time of rescue,
- Completed standard of formal education at the time of rescue,
- State of origin of the victim,
- Sites of their commercial sexual exploitation

The primary data analysis is also nominally supplemented by our observation and other qualitative data.

Age at the time of Rescue



Total 109

6 - 12	02	2%
MORE THAN 12 UP TO 14	13	12%
MORE THAN 14 UP TO 16	37	34%
MORE THAN 16 UP TO 18	57	52%
TOTAL	109	100%

AGE AT THE TIME OF RESCUE

Age is a critical factor while understanding the crime of sex trafficking. Under the Indian law trafficking and sexually exploiting a trafficked person are punishable offences but doing that with a minor carries higher punishments. Similarly post rescue treatment due to a minor victim and procedures to be followed in their cases are different from the one given to an adult victim. It is important to understand the 'age' factor of the victims rescued from CSE. Post rescue, as per Section 94 of the JJ Act, 2015 when in doubt, the age of the child can be determined by the Child Welfare Committee by seeking documentary evidence or through a medical age determination test. As per Section 2(14) of JJA, 2015, children rescued from CSE are considered as children in need of care and protection. The rehabilitative services offered to such a child differ from the assistance offered to an adult victim under the ITPA, 1956, and other relevant central and state schemes. Thus, age is a critical factor to be studied while understanding the crime of CSE&T.

Analysis

- 2 (2%) children were rescued when they were between 6 years and 12 years of age.
- 13 (12%) children were rescued when they were above 12 and below 14 years of age.
- 37 children (34%) were rescued when they were above 14 and below 16 years of age.
- 57 children (52%) were rescued when they were above 16 and up to 18 years.

Level of formal education at the time of rescue



= 28 children

Never went to School



Primary School
1st to 4th Std.



Middle School
5th to 7th Std.



Secondary School
8th to 10th Std.

= 78 children



= 03 children

Junior College
11th and 12th Std

NEVER WENT TO SCHOOL	28	26%
UPTO 4TH STD.	17	15%
5TH TO 7TH STD.	35	32%
8TH TO 10TH STD.	26	24%
ABOVE 10TH STD.	03	3%
TOTAL	109	100%

LEVEL OF FORMAL EDUCATION AT THE TIME OF RESCUE

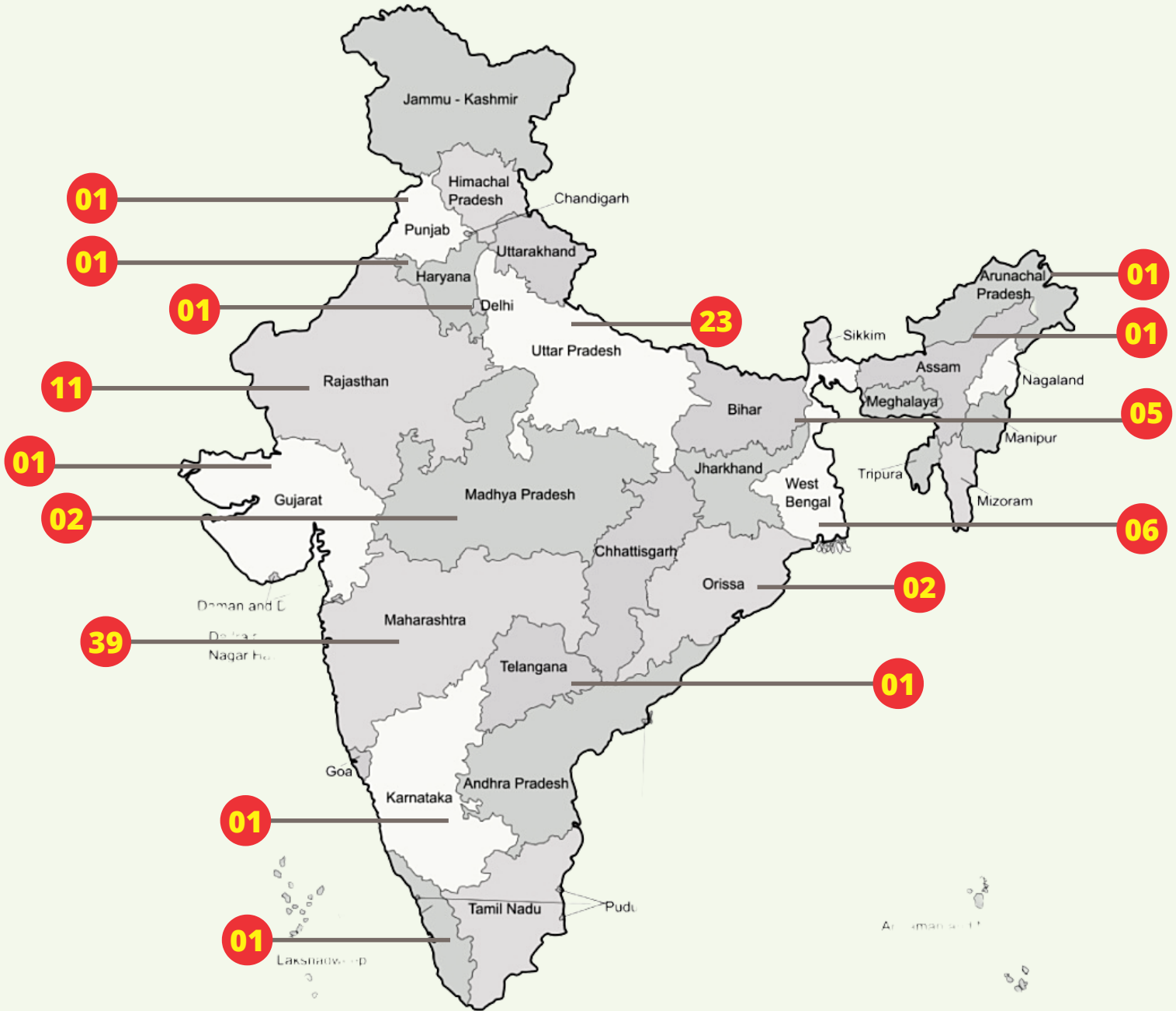
Education is one of the most critical inputs for individual development. It is closely linked to other significant primary inputs for survival such as food, clothing, shelter, etc. In a developing country like India, access to resources for survival is an ongoing challenge for the majority of its population. The situation is grim, especially for the marginalized, low caste, low-income communities. Lack of education is often seen as one of the critical factors, making families and children vulnerable and pushing them into exploitation. Formal education is a key to opportunity structures leading to upward socio-economic mobility. It also reduces vulnerabilities to a considerable extent. Besides, education also paves the way for children to be aware and to access various support systems in their immediate surroundings. The level of education of the children is a key factor in evolving the immediate and long-term rehabilitation plans for them. In a limited way, this analysis throws light upon the link between formal education and CSE thus developing a rudimentary understanding if no schooling or limited schooling has contributed to the vulnerabilities of these children and their families.

Analysis

- 17 (15%) children had completed their primary level of education (up to 4th Std.)
- 35 (32%) children had completed their secondary level of education (5th Std. to 7th Std.).
- 26 (24%) children had completed their first stage of senior secondary schooling (8th to 10th).
- Only 3 (3%) children had completed education above 10th Std.
- A striking number of 28 children (26%) had never attended a formal school prior to their rescue.

During Prerana's routine educational assessments of these victims, it is seen that the level of completed education does not reflect the level of awareness and knowledge. While the past level of education is critical in evolving the customized rehabilitation plans for the victims, a crucial challenge arises for children who have had no formal school education whatsoever prior to their rescue. Nonformal education options through Open Schooling and community-based learning serve as educational options for victims with no formal education .

State of Origin



State of Origin

MAHARASHTRA	39	36%
UTTAR PRADESH	23	21%
RAJASTHAN	12	11%
WEST BENGAL	06	5%
BIHAR	05	4%
MADHYA PRADESH	02	2%
ODDISHA	02	2%
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	01	1%
ASSAM	01	1%
DELHI	01	1%
HARYANA	01	1%
PUNJAB	01	1%
TELANGANA	01	1%
KARNATAKA	01	1%
KERALA	01	1%
GUJARAT	01	1%
BANGLADESH*	11	10%
TOTAL	109	100%

**Bangladesh is a neighbouring country*

STATE OF ORIGIN

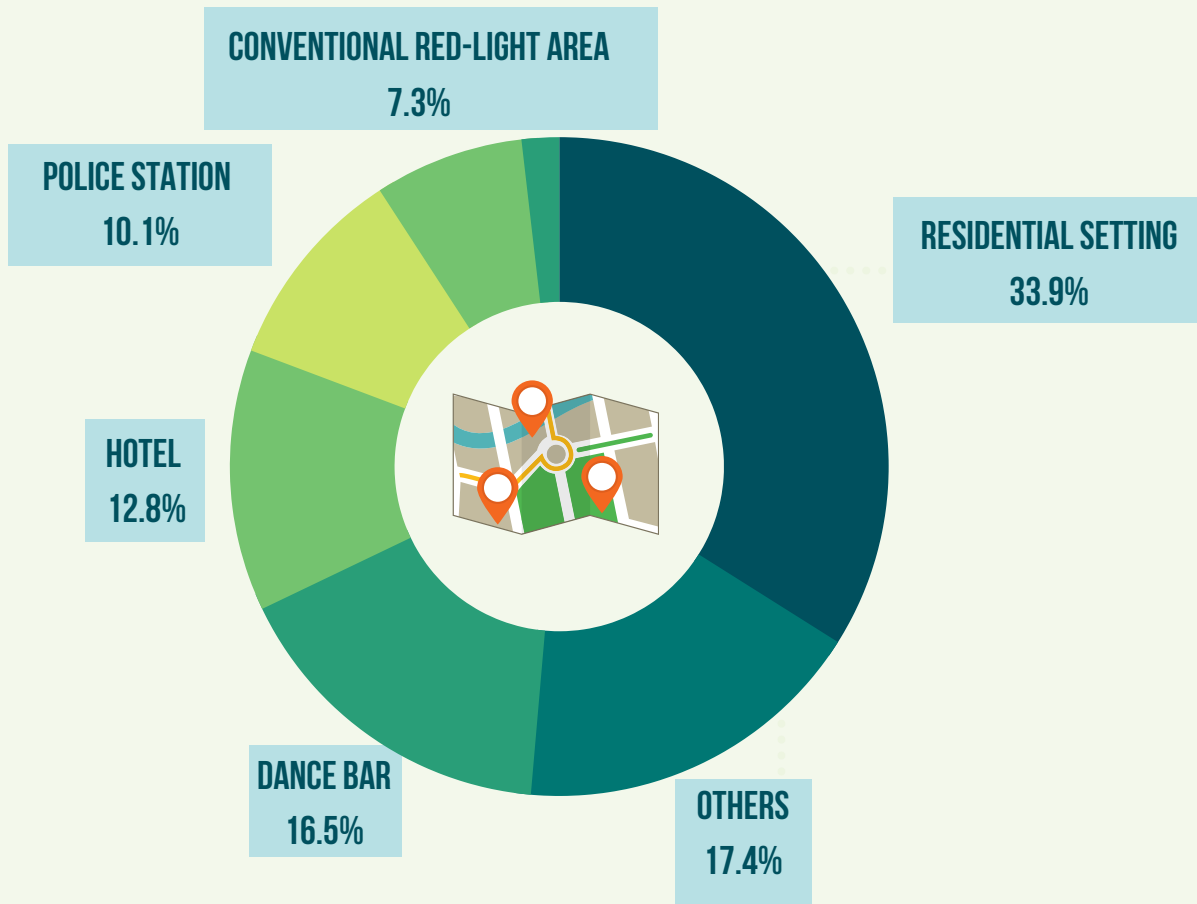
While understanding the crime of human trafficking, source area refers to a particular geographical region from where the victims get trafficked. It is also known as 'Origin'. Conventionally, it was believed and accepted that trafficking would usually take place from a lesser to a better-developed region. Destination area refers to the geographical region where the victims are received/transferred/bought/recruited or kept for the end purpose of sexually exploiting them. Trafficking can take place across different districts, states or countries.

The conventional understanding of certain socio-economically backward regions being source areas while certain others serving as destinations is gradually changing. Commonly recognized backward source areas are also acting as destinations for CSE while destination areas are also emerging as a source to lure, recruit, and traffic local young girls into CSE. The state of origin of the victims is thus useful to understand and analyze the background of the victim and their families in terms of prevalence of harmful social customs, economic and social backwardness of the respective State and district, the impact of natural disasters like droughts or other emergencies, etc. From an interventionist perspective, this would also be helpful in understanding state of origin.

Analysis

39 victims (36%) belong to the state of Maharashtra. Most of these victims from Maharashtra belong to the urban low-income slum communities of Mumbai and Thane districts. This essentially substantiates that the state traditionally considered as a destination state is also evolving as a source state for CSE&T. This is followed by the States of Uttar Pradesh 23 victims (21%) and Rajasthan 12 (11%). Some communities in these States have been infamous for following the harmful customs of inducting their young girls into the sex trade during their pre-pubescent age. The Bangla speaking belt of West Bengal, 6 (5%) and Bangladesh 11 (10%) also contribute a significant proportion. This is followed by Bihar, 5 victims (4%), Madhya Pradesh and Odisha, 2 each. 1 victim each belongs to the States of Gujarat, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Delhi, Haryana, Telangana, Punjab, Karnataka, and Kerala.

Site of Rescue



RESIDENTIAL SETTING (INCLUDING APARTMENTS, SLUM SETTLEMENTS, ETC.)	37	34%
OTHERS PUBLIC PLACES LIKE GARDENS, STREETS, BUS AND RAILWAY STATIONS, HOSPITAL	19	17%
DANCE BAR	18	17%
HOTEL (INCLUDING LODGES)	14	13%
POLICE STATION (VICTIM SELF-REPORTING)	11	10%
CONVENTIONAL RED-LIGHT AREA	08	7%
RESTAURANT	02	2%
TOTAL	109	100%

SITE OF RESCUE

Although not necessarily in every case in the majority of the cases, the site of rescue may be the same as the site of sexual exploitation. The site of commercial sexual exploitation helps one understand the nature of the sex trade and possibly the changes in the trend. The conventional red-light areas were the major hubs of the sex trade in the past. However, over the years several factors have brought about a change in this equation. The sex trade is becoming delocalized and/ or relocated. Speaking about Mumbai, conventional red-light areas like Kamathipura and Falkland Road being very closely located in the heart of the city are hot real estate properties and are being sought by commercial establishments and developers. The anti-trafficking activities of the civil society organizations and the police crackdown have contributed to making the sex trade operating out of the red-light areas increasingly non-viable. These factors have pushed the sex trade out of the conventional red-light areas and thus, has dispersed all over the metropolis.

Analysis

- The highest number of victims, i.e., 37 (34 %) victims were detained, commercially sexually exploited, and rescued from residential settings such as flats belonging to persons known or unknown to the victim, dwelling units in chawls and slums which were operating as brothels.
- 18 (16%) victims were groomed and commercially sexually exploited through the dance bars which served as pick-up joints or sites of sexual transaction.
- 14 (13%) victims were exploited at hotels/ lodging boarding houses, 8 (7%) victims were exploited in the conventional red-light area, 2 (2%) victims were rescued while they were at a restaurant (which was the meeting place between the exploiters of the victims and the customers).
- 11 victims (10 %) approached the police station either due to a missing case being registered in relation with them or to report the crime of CSE themselves.

While the law enforcement and other stakeholders have made efforts to keep the crime in check, the traffickers and exploiters have explored convenient and accessible means to continue commercially sexually exploiting children. The victims are either transferred for a few hours/days to these sites for the purposes of exploitation or are housed at these establishments themselves. Sometimes, they are wrongfully confined in these spaces for days, weeks, and months. In some cases where the immediate family members or the relatives are involved in pushing the victim into the sex trade, the family home might serve as a site of sexually exploiting the child.

19 victims (17%) were rescued from different places which conventionally would not have ever been suspected to harbour the sex trade. These include public places like hospitals, tea stalls, outside a shopping mall, railway stations, etc. In most of these cases, the police interjected the trafficker/ exploiter before the act of sexual exploitation.



www.fighttrafficking.org

*Your trusted knowledge partner in the fight against
human trafficking*

March 2021

Documentation

Kashina Kareem, Priti Patkar, Pravin Patkar,
Aaheli Gupta and Geetarani Lourembam

Design

Flarantxa Pereira and Azra Qaisar

Our mailing address is:

fighttraffickingindia@gmail.com

Copyright © 2021 Prerana, All rights reserved.