

## **Rehabilitation of survivors of sex trafficking victims in the vigilance home, Chennai- In-depth case study Analysis**

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### **Abstract:**

Trafficking is an organized crime that violates basic human rights. Trafficking in persons is the control of one human being by another for the purpose of exploitation. "Although only a small percentage of trafficking victims go for rehabilitative facilities, or "shelters," these facilities can play a significant role in a comprehensive effort to address human trafficking" (USAID, 2005). The term "rehabilitation" means the process of helping a person to readapt to society or to restore someone to a former position or rank. Rehabilitation of the trafficked victim is often challenging and complex. It differs for each victim. Causes are to be revealed and treatments are to be individualized, hence, the treatment process not all times can be generalist, for the resilience level differs from person to person. And this is the reason, why rehabilitation is also referred to as "treatment." This paper highlights the rehabilitation process of the victims in the vigilance home, Chennai. This paper also suggests the holistic method of rehab process of rehabilitation and its significance in building the resilience of the rescued trafficked victims. In this article, the overarching aim is to consider the theoretical perspective of the holistic rehab model for survivors of sex trafficking. It further adds to how efficient the rehabilitation model can be in building the resilience and thereby smoothening the reintegration of victims back to their family and community. This article also explains the concept of environment modification as an essential component in the reintegration process.

Hence this paper highlights some of the measures which need to be taken to ensure effective rehabilitation and reintegration of victims. It also points out that, without building the resilience of the individual, the rehabilitation efforts will have a limited impact on the victim and it may highly affect the reintegration process.

**Key Words:** *Trafficking of women, Rehabilitation, social work intervention.*

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## **Introduction:**

Trafficking is an organized crime that violates basic human rights for the purpose of slavery, commercial sexual exploitation, organ transplant, begging, circus, drug, arms, and missiles, etc. Trafficking is an organized crime. Trafficking is a business for many, while trafficking is of three types,

1. Drug trafficking,
2. Arms trafficking
3. Human trafficking.

Human trafficking refers to the criminal practice of exploiting human beings by treating them as commodities for profit. The illegal trade and exploitation of human beings for forced labor, prostitution, and reproductive favors are termed human trafficking. India is fast becoming the source, transit, and destination for human trafficking (Nair, 2005). According to the Trafficking Protocol adopted by the United Nations and co-signed by all UN members in the year 2000, human trafficking can be defined as the 'recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt' of person through force or coercion against their will for the purpose of prostitution, forced labor, and slavery. However, human trafficking is a process and cannot be narrowed down to a single act; it has been difficult to arrive at a universally accepted definition for it (Global Human trafficking, 2017). This above definition is the agreed definition for trafficking by all the UN members. Sanghera in 1999 observes that in south India, the concept of trafficking is seen as a problem connected with crime and violence against women, but this has changed in the recent past, attempts have been made to view trafficking in human rights perspective. Trafficking is an unconscious phenomenon as the consequences of it are not fully known to either the victims or the parents or the community as a whole (Thomas William, 2008).

According to NCRB, human trafficking consists of crimes such as importation of girls from foreign countries, procuring, buying and selling of minors for prostitution. Human trafficking is

modern-day slavery that involves the illegal trade of exploiting human beings especially young girls and women for the purpose of some form of forced exploitation

Human beings are traded for four main reasons,

1. Bonded laborers
2. Forced laborers
3. Organ trade
4. Sexual exploitation.

Young girls and women are the most vulnerable group of trafficking. It is modern-day slavery. Trafficking of women involves the deal of selling and buying of women as property for sexual exploitation. Therefore, it requires both a seller and a buyer. There are two ways of looking at the trafficking since there is a demand, there is a supply.

The burden of trafficking: According to UNICEF every two minutes a child is being prepared for sexual exploitation. Every year 1.2 million children are being trafficked across the world, while the statistics of 1.2 million exclude the millions of children who are already been trapped in the system of trafficking. Every year, 20,000 girls from Nepal are trafficked and send to India and other Middle East countries.

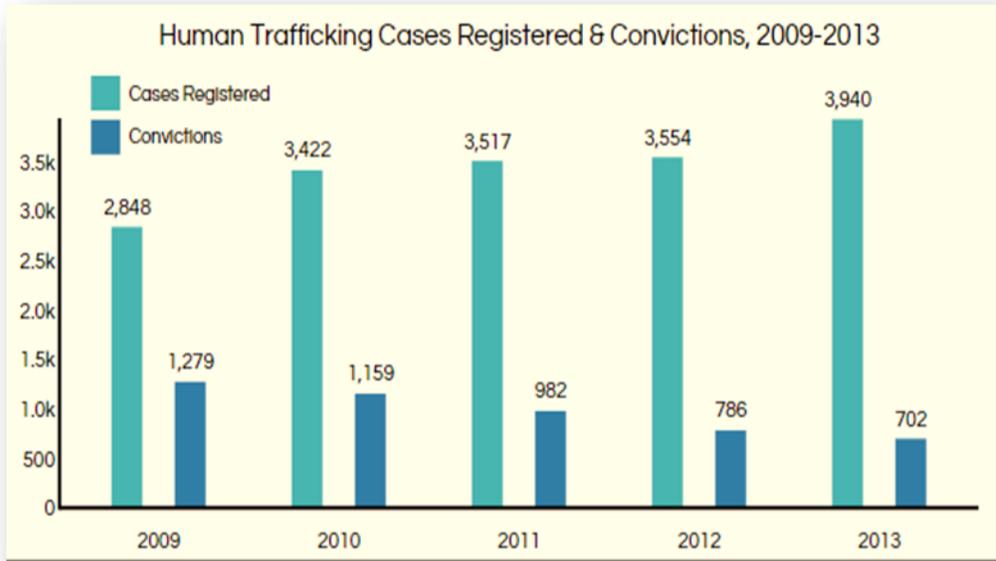
India still remains in Tier 2 countries since 2011. According to the National crimes record bureau (NCRB), 2015, police investigated 4,203 trafficking cases, while 3,363 cases of sex trafficking, 77 cases of bonded labor, and 763 trafficking cases where the reason is the combination of or wither sex or labor trafficking. In 2014 it was 3,056 trafficking cases, including 2,604 cases of sex trafficking, 46 bonded labor cases, and 406 cases under article 370.

Year	sex trafficking	bonded labor	Under 370	Total trafficking cases	Total prosecutions
2015	3,363	77	763	4,203	2,387 traffickers
2014	2,604	46	406	3,056	2,596 traffickers

*\*Source: National crimes record bureau (NCRB) 2015*

During 2015, there was 2,387 prosecution's case of traffickers, including 2,180 under alleged sex traffickers, 16 under alleged labor traffickers, and 191 traffickers under article 370. While comparing it with the number of prosecution cases in 2014, it was 2,596 alleged traffickers.

According to the Global slavery index 2016 report published by the Walk Free Foundation India (Australia-based), estimates that India is home to 40 percent of the world's estimated slavery of 45.8 million slaves.



\*Source: National crimes record bureau (NCRB 2015)

### **The burden of Trafficking in Tamil Nadu:**

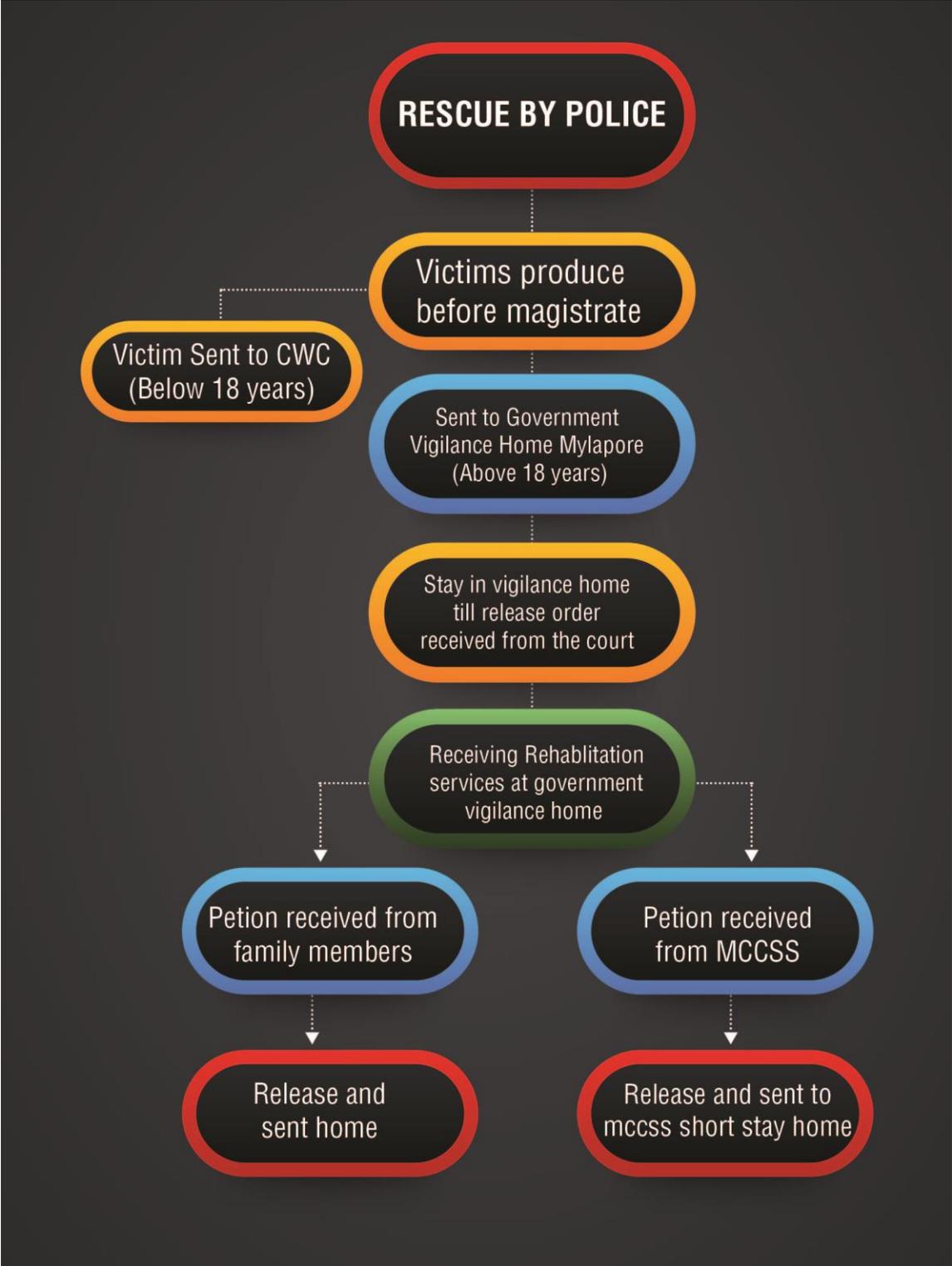
Tamil Nadu is the source, transit, and destination for human trafficking. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) 2014, Tamil Nadu is the second-highest state in India, next to West Bengal in terms of human trafficking. Tamil Nadu had 509 cases of human trafficking in 2014 with 590 victims and all of them were listed under various sections of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956.

### **Experience of women:**

Right from the day, when they are trafficked, they are kept in captive, abused torched to the core. During the initial days, girls and women are torched, abused and blackmailed to the maximum in order to submit to the demands of the brother owner, pimps, and clients. Various studies have reported that new girls are subjected to torture to 'break them in'. It is one of the worst human rights violations. They are beaten, restricted and starved so as to break their will and ensure their co-operation in the sex trade. Psychological abuse, threats, and violence are an integral part of the process. Victims of sex trafficking endangered to all kind of abuse, their traumatic experience results in huge psychological damage and are vulnerable to various forms of exploitation.

**Process of rescue and rehabilitation: (Reference to the state of Tamil Nadu, Chennai)**

The term 'rescue' refers to releasing and liberating girls/women, from the sexual exploitation Police (Anti-Vice Squad for trafficking) will be involved in the rescue operation, while rescue operation, costly gadgets, and money used for the sex trade are recovered. On the very same day, the rescued victim is produced before the magistrate, If the girl is minor and below 18 years of age, she will be taken to Juvenile Home and produced before Child Welfare Committee. Girls and women above the age of 18 years are remanded and convicted under the immoral trafficking prevention act and only then they can be admitted to the government protective homes in Tamil Nadu. The Government Vigilance Home in Mylapore is maintained by the governments, which are considered to be free from the risk of exploitation 'Shelter/protective homes' are statutory homes meant exclusively for girls/women rescued under the ITP Act (PRAYAS, 2002). They are kept in protective custody in the vigilance home till their family members (parents) or legal guardians are authenticated and verified by the regional Probation officer (PO) and after the family file petition to the magistrate, the case comes for hearing and after the court proceedings, subsequent release is made. Before the release order, the client will be sent to MCCSS for one-day counseling. From MCCSS, the client is will directly sent home.

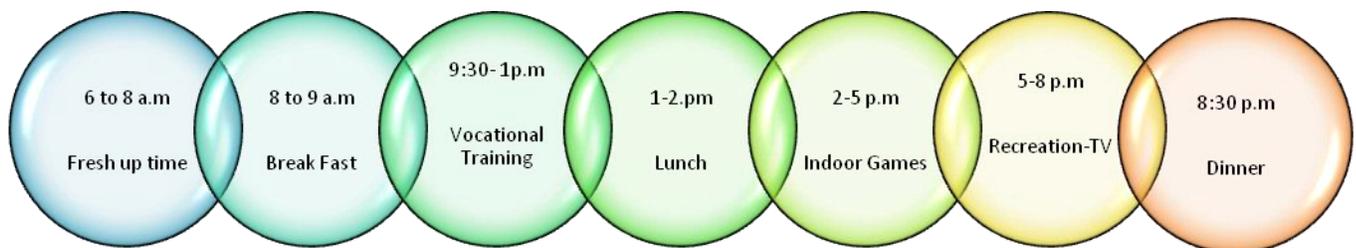


**Case study - Vigilance Home:**

In the vigilance home, victims are kept under supervision with limited mobility. The victims are provided with basic amenities, food, and shelter. The victims once enter the vigilance home; orientation is given to the victims by Peer Counselors about the Vigilance home. To make them comfortable, peer counselors are used to orienting the new victim.

In the vigilance home, the victims are under constant stress as they know very little about the status and progress of their cases. Some victims have the feeling of guilt, humiliated and they feel shame for what has happened in their life. Some feel relieved for they have been rescued and very anxious hoping to see their family members. While some fell very upset and angry for they miss the luxury life, which they don't get in the vigilance home. Certainly, all these circumstances de-motivate the victim to actively participate in the activities of the home, which in turn affect the rehabilitation process.

#### Day Schedule in the Vi0gilance Home, Mylapore.



The routine activities at the vigilance home include,

- Providing basic needs like food shelter and basic amenities.
- Vocational training like tailoring, jewelry making, quilling, etc. is given by different NGOs in the vigilance center.
- Celebration of all the special day including national and religious festival day.
- For recreation, victims are allowed to watch T.V from 5 to 9 p.m every day.
- The mentally ill victims are referred to the Zonta Resource Centre, Pallavaram, a Ngo working in the field of mental health.
- Counseling is provided by Psychologists from NGOs.

- Special diets are given for Women living with HIV, in the home.
- The drug/alcohol dependent victim is sent to the de-addiction center at the Institute of Mental Health, Kilapuk.

### **Legal proceedings:**

In the home, the stay of the victim depends on 3 weeks to one year. Therefore most of the victims wait for a long time for the petition to be filled by family members. Apart from family members, a petition will also be filed by MCCSS (Madras Christian Council of social service), those cases come to hearing and after the clearance, the victim will be sent to MCCSS home. The Court cases go on for years and many times not being aware of Court proceedings and formalities, the victim finds the whole process is a frustrating thing. There are also chances of her being bailed out and monetarily supported by her traffickers so that she ends up going back to the profession.

### **Challenges in the vigilance home:**

The government vigilance home Chennai at present has no educational facilities for the victims although the rules governing the daily routine of Protective Homes (Rules 20 & 21 provide for school education. (Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, 2003). The actual staff strength in both protective homes was less than the sanctioned strength. Victims are in continuous stress and these circumstances de-motivate the victim to actively participate in the activities of the home, which in turn affect the rehabilitation process.

### **Role of NGO in the Rehabilitation Process:**

MCCSS Provides home-based environment care and support for the victim of trafficking. The Ujjawala project is funded by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, New Delhi with a special focus on prevention, rescue, reintegration, and re-habitation of trafficked survivors. One of the main objectives of the project is to provide rehabilitation services both immediate and long-term to the victims by providing basic amenities/needs such as shelter, food, clothing, medical treatment including counseling, legal aid and guidance, and vocational training. They also assist the rehabilitated victims to reintegrate back to the family and society at large. (MCCSS-Annual Report, 2017)

### **Rehabilitation services offered at MCCSS:**

- First and foremost it's a home-based environment.

- Providing Medical Checkup for all the victims' Examinations.
- Detailed Need assessment is done by qualified Professional Social Workers
- Counseling to all the victims at regular sessions with a qualified professional psychologist. If required Psychiatric assessment and intervention also provided for the victims.
- Providing employability skill training for the victims. 'Due to the fact that a lack of employment opportunities can increase a woman's vulnerability to trafficking, it is important to provide vocational training for the victims (MCCSS-Annual report 2016). Once the training is complete, the organization helps the victims to get employment.
- Prenatal and postnatal care is provided for the victims.
- Reintegration and reuniting with family members is an important aspect done by MCCSS- In many cases, family for the victims was also arranged.

### **Social Work Implications:**

Exposure to this type of vulnerability of human rights violations and sexual exploitation will have an everlasting effect on the lives of these women. At the same time, not all victims are affected in the same way, and in fact, many victims are resilient, able to heal and go on to thrive in the society much better. It depends on the individual, therefore the causes of the problem area to be revealed and rehabilitation process are to be individualized, hence, the rehabilitation process not all times can be generalist, and for the resilience level differs from person to person. And this is the reason, why rehabilitation is also referred to as "treatment."

The term "rehabilitation" itself simply means the process of helping a person to readapt to society or to restore someone to a former position. It talks about the ability to bounce back to the normal level. 'Rehabilitation and reintegration of the victim are the essential aspects. Rehabilitation of the rescued victims' indicates the efforts of restoration of rescued girls/women from the commercial sexual exploitation into mainstream society. This includes both social and economic rehabilitation by organizing multiple measures like vocational training, education, marriage counseling and so on (PRAYAS, 2002). As 'Rehabilitation' refers to the concept of restoration to a former state, this paper will highlight what could be possibly done to make the victim come out from the trauma of sexual exploitation. In the context of trafficking, rehabilitation means empowering the victim to be free from the physical, psychological and

social impact that she has been experiencing as a result of sexual exploitation and human rights violation. (Sanlaap& Terre Des Hommes, 2009).Rescue and rehabilitation of these victims is a complicated and long-drawn-out process. The rescue operation itself is a complex and traumatic thing for victims. Since most of these victims are less educated or illiterate and have few life-skills, their rehabilitation process becomes long-drawn and difficult. Added to these are problems related to addiction to psychotropic substances, food habits, unruly behavior and no systematic routine in day-to-day functioning. (Mukherjee et al. 1996)

Applying the resilience lens to the rehabilitation process can help the victim to bounce to the former state. This paper highlights the theoretical basis of the rehabilitation model and explains how this would help in building the resilience of the rescued trafficked victims. Resilience helps in building inner strength which enables the individual to survive pain, disappointments, and sadness. It is a positive sense of individual well-being. Resilience has been defined as the maintenance of healthy/successful functioning or adaptation within the context of significant adversity or threat(Garmezy, 1993). Resilience is built upon the complex interaction and operation of risk and protective factors at individual, family and community levels. It is very essential to understand that resilience is not a particular character trait but rather it is a process. So it can be acquired and built among the individuals for a better outcome (Mitchell. F, 2011). Better outcome refers to doing better than expected in difficult circumstances, which is very obvious in the case of victims of trafficking, Normal change in life after a very difficult and traumatic condition. As resilience is the human capacity to face and overcome the adversities of life (Daniel B and Wassell S, 2002) "Resilience is important because it is the human capacity to face, overcome and be strengthened by or even transformed by the

To build the resilience, there are two factors which highly contributes, internal factors which includes, coping mechanism and self-esteem of the individual and the external factors is the support system. In this article, the overarching aim is to consider the theoretical perspective of resilience as an important factor in the rehabilitation model. It further adds to how efficient the rehabilitation model can be in building the resilience and thereby smoothening the reintegration of victims back to their family and community. This article also explains the concept of environment modification as an essential component in the reintegration process.

### **Suggested Holistic Rehabilitation Model for Trafficked victims:**

This model is holistic in nature and this helps in building resilience among the victims to bounce back to the family. Rehabilitation targets improvements in individual functioning and helps in smooth transition to their family back to lead a normal life. No one survives without community and no community thrives without the individual."

These positive contextual, social, and individual variables are called promotive factors (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005), operate in opposition to risk factors, and help youth overcome negative effects of risk exposure. Fergus & Zimmerman (2005) identified two types of promotive factors: assets and resources. Positive factors that reside within individuals such as self-efficacy and self-esteem are defined as assets. Resources refer to factors outside individuals such as parental support, adults mentors and youth programs that provide youth with opportunities to learn and practice skills. Assets and resources provide youth with the individual and contextual attributes necessary for healthy development.

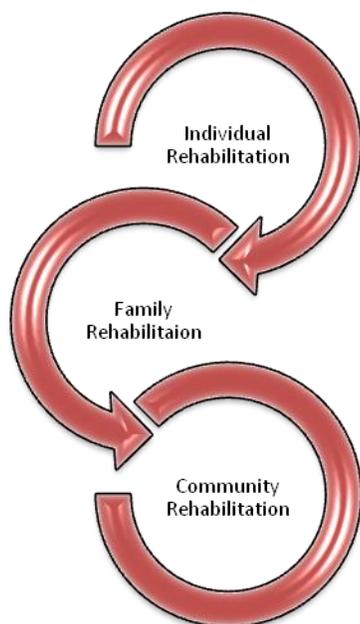
- Physical healing
- Psychological wellbeing
- Legal Assistance
- Economic Guidance and
- Social empowerment

Multidisciplinary Teams in the rehabilitation process:

The term multidisciplinary refers to a group of individuals who have been trained to collaborate in a systematic way, by using their varied range of skills, knowledge, and expertise to solve certain problems based on the same goals and objectives. These multidisciplinary teams' exchange and share responsibilities, right from assessing the problem at the beginning to the resolution of the process at the end. Rehabilitation is cross-sectorial and may be carried out by health professionals in conjunction with specialists in education, employment, social welfare, and other fields. In resource-poor contexts it may involve non-specialist workers – for example, community-based rehabilitation workers in addition to family, friends, and community groups. Rehabilitation that begins early produces better functional outcomes.

**Rehabilitation at three different aspects**

1. Trafficked Victim
2. Family Rehabilitation
3. Community Rehabilitation.



Presently, Rehabilitation does not involve the environment of the individual. When these individuals are sending back to home town, they are stigmatized and experience a lot of discrimination in the family, the individuals' emotional vulnerability, and adding on to lack of financial support to protect them, makes them ideal for re-trafficking. Since then they become subject to abuse through trafficking and become an easy victim of Traffickers (Michelle Simon, 2016). If the family members are not included in the rehabilitation process, and if no changes are made to the individual's environment the rehabilitation process goes unsuccessful.

**Suggestions:**

- Village Vigilance committee should be oriented about the possible traffickers and about the modus operandi of trafficking, so that they may be alert and help in identifying the trafficking, especially for the safety of the girl and family. If they are aware enough they

can work toward prevented further trafficking of young girls and women from those communities.

- The girl could be put in touch with other NGOs or agencies, which could further help her plan her future and assist with medication or necessary funding, as required.
- NGO or social worker needs to be accompanied by the rescue process as per the protocol of the ITPC Act.
- The police play a major role in prosecuting the traffickers. But it is important for the police to gain the confidence of the victim so that she can be assured that the police will do their best to bring these criminals to justice.
- The police should treat the girl with sensitivity and prepare her as a witness if required.
- The girl and her family need to be reassured that the police will adequately protect them against the criminals should they decide to testify.

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