



- Stopping at source area
- Awareness
- Counseling
- Improving opportunities for Education and Employment
- Law Enforcement

Tharuni's Intervention to stop Trafficking of girls from Villages of Warangal District

Tharuni works for the all round development of Adolescent Girls in the District of Warangal, Andhra Pradesh. In the process Tharuni has set up 200 Balika Sanghams (Young Women Clubs) in seventy villages in three Mandals to bring them together and help them realize their potential.

Trafficking in District Warangal:

Though never measured empirically, it is known that Warangal has high prevalence of trafficking of young girls for sexual exploitation. The tribal girls and girls belonging to Scheduled Castes and other Backward Castes are sold off, sometimes knowingly, and at times in the guise of marriage or employment. Girls from the district are trafficked to Mumbai, Pune and Delhi. Abject poverty, lopsided economic development, lack of proper irrigation, coupled with a well connected rail and road network across the country, makes the girl

children from the district vulnerable to being trafficked. While girls can be trafficked for many purposes, the most prevalent among them is the trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation. The traffickers take away the girls under the guise of work factories, and traffic them out of the district, through well networked rackets. Girls end up reaching the red light areas of Mumbai, Goa, and Delhi cities. The girls who return to their villages end up with STDs and sometimes with HIV/AIDS.

Commercial sexual exploitation:

The district has an alarmingly high rate of mobile prostitution, where girls are forced to prostitute alongside the highways. Tribal girls are taken away from villages in vehicles for a week or a month and the vehicle is parked on the highways, where exploitation takes place. Most of the girls are from remote habitations (thandas) from Mahabubabad, Gudur and Kuravi Mandals, where there is concentration of Lambada tribes. In many cases, the parents and in-laws approve this due to poverty, unemployment, lack of awareness, etc. As Warangal has very good railway connection to different cities like Mumbai, Delhi, etc these girls sometimes end up in the brothels in these cities. Local prostitution is thriving in the district, and it is a common sight in evenings to see young girls being forced to prostitute in SUVs. Adolescent girls from the ST community are picked up from the hamlets under the pretext of giving them temporary employment in a factory, and are forced into commercial sexual exploitation.

Tharuni's Experience:

Tharuni had met few girls from Tribal hamlets (Thandas) who were in to Mobile Prostitution and brought this to the notice of Media and Government few years back. But now, Tharuni could stop Trafficking of girls at the source level for the first time. This could happen only due to the Balika Sanghams which were set up for girls in the villages which is helping Tharuni to know the movements of Girls at village level.

Tharuni's village facilitator from Madhyalagudem village came to know that some of the Balika Sangham members are leaving to Hyderabad to work as employees in a Company. All these girls are in the age group of 16 – 18 years and are 10th Standard pass and are working as agricultural Labour as their parents could not send them for higher education. Their families are poor and the girls have to work to keep the family going. Their job in the Company at Hyderabad (which is 130 KM away from their village) will be packing of Kurkure (Chips) and they will be paid Rs 3000.00 to Rs 6000.00 per month! The Facilitator got panicky as she knows that such high salaries will not be paid for such meager jobs and alerted Tharuni Team. When an enquiry was made,

Tharuni found that a girl from Malkapur(a neighboring village) who was classmate of Madhyalagudem girls has instigated the Girls to join the company. She got this information from local PET (Physical Education Teacher) from Malkapur Government High School with whom she had close acquaintance. This girl went to Hyderabad and the in-charge of the company asked her to bring more girls and he promised her more salary as she has to motivate the girls to join the company. She started contacting girls from neighboring villages and could motivate fifteen girls. In the first go, two girls form Madhyalagudem went to Hyderabad along with her and could not find any company over there except a small room where a man called Manager was sitting there. Some how these girls could not attract the attention of the so called manager and were sent back asking them to bring more girls who are attractive.

Tharuni Team got the address and phone number of the Company and tried speaking to the manager, but they said there is no company here. Then District Collector and Superintendent of Police were informed by Tharuni and the case details were handed over to the local Circle Inspector on the instructions of S.P. Warangal. Mean while Tharuni Team spoke to the Girl's parents and could stop all the fifteen girls from going to Hyderabad. Tharuni being a member of CACT (Campaign against Child Trafficking) is trying to investigate the case at Hyderabad.

Tharuni's Intervention:

Tharuni has to go long way to fight these deep rooted evils in the rural villages of District Warangal. For this Tharuni started Balika Sanghams to stop Child Marriages and Trafficking in these villages which are rampant. Savings and Education could bring these girls together. Within six months the girls could save more than one and half Lakh rupees in these seventy villages from their earnings and parent's support. They are able to take loans for pursuing higher education and for setting up independent Production units. The training and marketing support is being given to the Girls in different Livelihood options by Tharuni Resource team. This enhances their confidence levels and is giving them support to post pone their marriages. Regular activities like Training Programmes on Health & Laws pertaining to Women and Competitions in Arts and Sports are being held for capacity building of the girls.