

Trafficking in Person through Ethio-Djibouti and Somali Routes to Middle East Countries: Investigating Violence and Abuse against the Migrants

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Abstract

Trafficking in person is now day a dreadful global problem and terrible crime. It is plaguing East Africa, where people continually migrate for different purpose. For the last three decades Ethiopia became source and, to some extent, destination and transit country of trafficking in person. Some of the dominant routes of human trafficking in East Africa are the routes passes through Ethio-Djibouti and Ethio-Somali to Middle East countries. The objective of the study is to investigate the violence and abuse against the migrants during their journey and in the destination country. A mixed research method was employed to substantiate data obtained though qualitative with quantitative technique. Interview schedule, key informant interview and in-depth interview were instrument of data collection. The sampling technique was snow ball sampling technique. The sample size was 63 (returnees of human trafficking). Both primary and secondary data were obtained. Qualitative data obtained were analyzed by SPSS (version 20). Qualitative data obtained were analyzed thematically. The result indicates that trafficking in person via Ethio-Djibouti and Somali routes to Middle East countries were faced different kind of abuse such as physical, psychological, sexual, forced labor, hunger and financial exploitation. Recommendations are: Awareness raising movement on the problem of human trafficking shall be given for both rural and urban community in collaboration with experienced victims or returnees, The existing proclamation on human trafficking shall empower regional authorities especially police commission in way that they can collaboratively work with federal police to prevent the escalation of human trafficking, Ethiopian government shall make continues collaborative work with neighboring countries to jointly fight against practices of human trafficking and Strict movement on foot and vehicle patrolling of human trafficking in the eastern routes shall be done during night especially in border areas faraway from main road and towns close to border.

Keywords: Trafficking in Person, Violence , Abuse

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

As we enter the 21st century, we continue to grapple with a plethora of ills plaguing the world, such as poverty, hunger, a fragile environment, widespread discrimination, and war. Fundamental human rights are too often denied by those in control, whether in governments, communities, or in the home. There are numbers of human rights violations in the world, but one of the most dreadful crimes in recent years is the selling and buying of people for profit, known as human trafficking. According to Article 3(a) of UN Palermo protocol (2000) human trafficking is “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Hence, trafficking primarily involves exploitation. According to Innocent Research Centre (2005), exploitation comes in many forms, including: Forcing victims into prostitution, subjecting victims to slavery or involuntary servitude, compelling victims to commit sex acts for the purpose of creating pornography, deceiving victims into dept bondage. The problem of human trafficking within countries and continents still exists on a large scale in Asia and Africa. Yet increasingly, victims often travel long distances to their point of exploitation where there is a demand for cheap labor and sexual service, recalling the long voyages of the global slave trade of earlier centuries (Louise Shelley 2010).In the East and Horn of Africa, people are on the move for various reasons, including the search for asylum and protection. Different violence and abuse are widely reported along the routes taken by refugees and migrants alike (UNHCR, 2012). Ethiopia is a country of origin and transit for the trafficking of human beings. It is obvious that Ethiopian men, women and children are trafficked both within and from the country to outside gulf countries.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The ILO (2005:1) sees human trafficking as having an adverse effect or consequence on the victims of it.

According to the same source, overall, approximately 80 percent of trafficking involves sexual exploitation and 19 percent involves labor exploitation. Moreover, the article published by Katherine, L. and Michael, J. (1997), the negative impact faced by those migrated illegally are physical abuse, intimidation, emotional abuse, minimizing, denying, and blaming economic abuse, organ removal, mental and psychological health. According to IGAD consultative progress on migration report 2015 Ethiopia is a major source of irregular migration in the IGAD region. In spite of a number of initiatives by the Government and other stakeholders, irregular migration remains a challenge for the country. The report also showed the eastern route via Djibouti (Obock), Somaliland, Punt land (Bosaso) and Yemen into Saudi Arabia, Gulf Countries and the Middle East share the largest number. Both findings of researchers and reports of concerned organizations showed the continuity and increment of the human trafficking activities in this region. ANPPCAN (2005) suggested that, While the problem of human trafficking and forced labor is well documented in some regions, notably in West Africa, the South East Asia and Eastern Europe, very little information exists in the East and the Horn of Africa. IOM (2008) also prove that, trafficking in persons has been a reported problem in Eastern Africa for several years but there is overall lack of primary research on human trafficking in this region. Therefore, this study is undertaken to assess the violence and abuses trafficking in person faces.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study is to examine the types of violence and abuses trafficking in person faces during their journey and in their destination country

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1. Study Area

The study has covered human trafficking practices in the dominant routes of Eastern Ethiopia which passes through Dire Dawa and Harar city, Jigjiga town and Afar regional state. The cities, town and region were purposively selected due to the fact that they are the main routes of human trafficking from Ethiopia to Middle East countries.

2.2. Sampling Design and Technique

Non probability sampling design was made to get reliable and accurate information. Researchers have employed snow ball sampling technique for this particular study. i.e. you identify someone (a sample) from your population willing to be in your study. You then ask them to identify others who meet the study criteria. Each of those identified individuals is then asked for further recommendations. It means one sample respondent recommends another, other recommends another, and the other recommends another.

2.3. Sources of the Data

The primary data were collected from study participants including victims or detainees in process, returnees, and police officers. Secondary source of data were collected from a variety of sources including journals, previous research, websites record and reports from court, and police bureau

2.4. Data Collection Instrument

The following instruments of data collection were employed. Such as: Interview Schedule with both open-ended and close-ended questions. Key informants interview was another instrument used for data collection. The informants were police officer, and Judges. They were purposively selected for key informant interviews. In depth interview was also made with victims (returnees/captured) of human trafficking.

2.5. Method of Data Analysis

Data obtained through interview schedule were compiled and analyzed by using the SPSS (version20). Qualitative data obtained through key informants and in-depth interview was analyzed and presented after categorizing and sorting them.

3. Result and Discussion

This chapter is a presentations and analysis of the data obtained from the study participants.

3.1. Type of Violence Victims of Trafficking Faces

According to the UN definition of human trafficking, trafficking in person consists of several key elements: recruitment and facilitated movement of a person within or across national frontiers by means of coercion, threats or deception for the purpose of exploitation. According to Maggy Lee (2007) exploitation' is understood include not only prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation, but also forced labor or services, slavery, servitude or the removal of organs. The same source indicates that the range of trafficking harms may also

include high risks to personal safety, loss of all legal rights and personal dignity, physical abuse and, in the case of sexual abuse, exposure to sexually transmitted diseases and reproductive. The present study tried to investigate violence/abuse victims' faces during their desperate journey. Respondents were asked to respond on abuse and problem they faced. Hence, type of abuse and problems they faced were computed in terms of frequency and percentage as follows.

Table 1. Abuses and Problems victims of Trafficking Faces

| Abuses and Problems | Frequency | Percentages (%) |
|----------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Physical | 17 | 26.9 |
| Psychological | 6 | 9.5 |
| Sexual | 7 | 11.1 |
| Denial of food | 16 | 25.3 |
| Forced labor | 9 | 14.2 |
| Financial exploitation | 8 | 12.6 |
| Total | 63 | 100.0 |

The figure 1 above indicates that the highest percentage 26.9% (17) of victims of trafficking were faced physical type of abuse. Besides, the victims were asked about types of physical abused that they faced through open ended questions, the majority of the victims explained as they faced physical abuse such as a torturing, slapping, beating and other physically punishments by their traffickers. Paper for discussion at the Regional Ministerial Meeting on Promoting the Rule of Law and Human Security in Eastern Africa (2009) also state that once on the journey, migrants are exposed to extreme danger and many die along the way, not only due to the risks associated with the high seas, but also because of the conditions on the transit journey and the brutality of the smugglers. From the total respondents, 25.3 % (16) of them were also faced denial of food and exposed to hunger during the desperate journey. Due to the fact that, victims cross long distance in desert, hunger is a big problem victims always face. Similarly, from the total participants 11.1% (7) of the victims of human trafficking via eastern Ethiopian routes to outside country were faced sexual abuse. Through open ended question respondents explained that this kind of abuse was exclusively happened against female victims of trafficking. On the other hand, 12.6% (8) of the victims of trafficking were faced financial exploitation. Further, when key informant (police officer) interviewed he replayed as

"It is clear that the victims usually made financial agreement with trafficker before leaving their home. The financial agreement is immediate or paid on latter as loan. In addition to the payment they already pay or promised to pay, traffickers who locate in different routes sometimes detain the victims and force them to give money in which otherwise the victims cannot reach their destination. In the course of forcing the victims there is beating, torturing, and slapping and out crying the victims so that the parent hear the cry through phone and to pay ransom to save their child from that agony"

In using such mechanism traffickers financially exploit trafficked person. Therefore, victims face simultaneously torture and financial exploitation. From total respondents, yet 9.5% (6) of the victims of trafficking via Eastern Ethiopian routes to outside country were faced psychological abuse. Further when asked through open ended question about psychological abuse that victims faced and they explained that they passed through different desperate journeys and reach their destination, die in routes or trapped without reaching their destination. In the course of such desperate journey victims sometimes forced to look at already died, raped or fatally injured person. Being exposed to such worst case scenario makes the victims to get psychological problem. Still, 14.2% (9) of respondents replied that they faced forced labor. According to Ahluwalia Sheela (2009) trafficking for forced labor is less frequently discovered and reported than trafficking for sexual exploitation. It is difficult to distinguish victims trafficked for forced labor from migrant laborers. These victims often work in hidden locations, such as agricultural fields in rural areas, mining camps, factories and the private houses in the case of domestic servitude. Therefore, it is difficult to find victims engage in such kind of occupation.

4. Summary

The goal of the study was to assess human trafficking in Eastern Ethiopia via Ethio-Djibouti and Ethio-Somali routs. After interviewing returnee victims and key informants reviewing literature the following findings were made.

As major types of violence that victims of trafficking faces, the study result showed that 15 (31.5%) and, 25 % (12) of victims of trafficking were faced physical violence and denial of food respectively. The reaming 4(8.3. %), 5(10.4%),7(14.5%) and 6(12.5) faces , psychological, sexual, forced labor and financial exploitation respectively.

5. Recommendation

In line with the above findings, it is important to suggest recommendations that may serve as answer to the

perceived problem of human trafficking via Eastern Ethiopian routes to outside countries. Therefore, this paper provides the following possible recommendations.

Awareness raising movement on the problem of human trafficking shall be given for both rural and urban community in collaboration with experienced victims or returns

The existing proclamation on human trafficking shall empower regional authorities especially police commission in way that they can collaboratively work with federal police to prevent the escalation of human trafficking

Strict on foot and vehicle patrolling of human trafficking in the eastern routes shall be done during night especially in border areas faraway from main road and towns close to border.

Ethiopian government shall make continues collaborative work with neighboring countries to jointly fight against crime of human trafficking

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