

Addressing Trafficking of Women Migrants: Sanlaap

Tara's experience encouraged Sanlaap to begin a new project, rebuilding the lives of young girls and women who were survivors of trafficking, training girls in life skills and providing them with education about their rights and how to identify traffickers, as well as the need for informing the police in the case of malpractice. At home, the girls are connected to vocational trainings to ensure they are able to make a living, look after themselves and educate others about trafficking. This ongoing project has been run by Sanlaap since 2010, with the support of UN Women and the NGO, Child Rights and You (CRY). At least 40 girls and young women have been identified and trained under this project.

Though Sanlaap initially started out by only providing rehabilitation support to survivors who have been rescued and preventing second generation prostitution, they slowly realised the need to get involved in the source areas and carry out prevention activities to combat the challenge of trafficking. Sanlaap generates awareness of safe migration, trafficking and violence against women at the community level by involving community leaders and ensuring community policing. Sanlaap also undertakes sensitization programmes for *panchayat* members (village level institution of local self-government) and district administration personnel, alongside undertaking capacity building for Community-based Organisations (CBOs) working on issues of trafficking through a series of trainings, including on migration and trafficking.

In addition to this, Sanlaap runs four shelter homes in and around Kolkata for minors rescued from commercial sexual exploitation, girl children of women in prostitution and other vulnerable girl children. The shelter homes house more than 250 girls. These homes offer a holistic programme encompassing education, mental health intervention, vocational training and economic initiatives, dance movement therapy and legal aid.

Source: Sanlaap (www.sanlaapindia.org)
Social Inclusion of Internal Migrants in India, UNESCO, 2013



How Tara Survived Abuse with the Support of Sanlaap

When Tara came to the Sanlaap shelter from Mumbai, she had been sexually abused and was HIV positive. According to Tara, some men had paid money to her parents to take her to the city and provide her with work, and if she did not become a prostitute her parents would have to return that amount; an amount that Tara's parents were not in a position to put together.

Tara had anticipated that there would be men who, posing as her family, would try to contact her, and that they should be avoided. To protect Tara from these traffickers, a report was written by the psychiatric counsellor at Sanlaap stating that Tara was depressed and could not be released from the shelter. Tara blossomed at the Sanlaap centre, completing all activities given to her and not fearing to talk back in favour of the rights of the girls who lived at the shelter.

After two years, Tara went back to her home and Sanlaap entrusted her with the responsibility of working with other survivors of trafficking and other vulnerable girls in her surroundings. She reported to the panchayat (village level institution of local self-government) and the other community based organisations that worked in her district. She became part of the Awareness Building Project that Sanlaap was undertaking, looking out for girls going to work in cities, cautioning them to remain alert and aware of the person facilitating their journey, and maintaining details of their address and phone number. Tara also helped in rehabilitating an abused girl who returned to the panchayat from the city with the help of the police.

Source: Sanlaap (www.sanlaapindia.org)

Social Inclusion of Internal Migrants in India, UNESCO, 2013