

Criminalisation of sex buyers
Workshop with Stakeholders
Report - WINS, Me and My World, NNSW
5th July, 2018 at A.P Secretariat, Amaravati

Background:

With increased incidences of trafficking the A.P government felt the need to address it in a multi pronged approaches. One of such strategies envisioned was to apprehend and arrest clients of sex workers under the guise that they are part of the trafficking network seeking sexual favours from trafficked victims. The workshop was hence to discuss on the aspect of criminalising sex buyers and so wishing to prevent trafficking of women into sex work. A draft amendment was formed amending several criminal laws such as IT(P)A, POSCO etc., to apprehend sex buyers.

Introduction:

The Special Commissioner of the department of WCD expressed grave concern that commercial sexual exploitation is a major issue in AP, and it is a sad fact, that many girls and women rescued from the brothels of Pune, Mumbai and Delhi are from the state of Andhra Pradesh.

It is unfortunate, that despite powerful legislations such as ITPA, 1956, POCSO 2015, in place, the conviction rates are low, and the demand is ever increasing, while the perpetrators go scot free, the victims are left languishing in shelter homes, unable to speak to anyone from outside and being treated as criminals under the law. Understanding the plight of the “victims” of such rescue operations, the Government constituted a High level committee to study the impact of the law, and its effectiveness on the ground, and suggest a way forward. Members were from the Judiciary, Law enforcement, Academicians, Voluntary organisation working on anti-trafficking, and Lawyers who got together, held meetings, formed social media groups, read international laws and submitted their report.

They expressed differential views and opinions on the issue, some suggested, to introduce a new Act, as it is a grave issue, and so that it would get the much needed focus and attention, while others, felt, the existing laws and provisions with some amendments could serve the purpose. Good many numbers of members have expressed that the draft amendments as path breaking, would be eventually circulated to Public for comments and suggestions.

Discussions that ensued:

The National Network of Sex workers, requested the government, for inclusion as they claimed that “nothing about us, without us”, and presented themselves to be inclusive to framing any

law concerning sex workers. Their Knowledge partners also received the draft copies of amendments.

A Consultant presented the focus was on the following points (1) Punishing sex buyers of minors (2) Dependents on the earnings of minor in sex work, (3) public servant buying sex from minors, (4) landlords renting out the premises (5) Gang rapists .

In POCSO different crimes are defined and redressal mentioned. It is not limited to gang rape criminals but also applies to sex buyers of minors, and it is also described in IPC 370(a), 366 (a) & (b). The demand is propelled owing to easy transportation, high profits, and police not targeting the buyers were listed as causes and to root out the evil. Strategies discussed involved public education in schools, Rotary clubs, units of NCC, NSS, who can join hands with Anti human trafficking unit to mitigate the problem.

Social media was accused of paving way for increase in crime rate concerning trafficking. Inmates of govt and private homes, residential schools are at risk and fall prey to unscrupulous gangs. So, they should be tried in special courts, Fines and punishment are defined in POCSO Act, IT(P)A, SC /ST PO Act, and landlords renting out the premises also be penalised.

As a remedial measure, Orphans and victims of such crime be categorised and treated under backward class provision. Trial procedure, special representative and advocates hired in assisting delivery of justice.

What was strategized by the government:

Draft Bill sought for Registry of Sex offenders, which will be maintained by police officers. Such offenders would be referred to do mandatory community service up to 200 hours, fine imposed range from rupees 5000 to rupees one lakh. There is also the correctional training for sex offenders, which can fix the problem of those breaking the law. NGOs then informed that government officials that ideas such as Registry of offenders, naming and shaming are adapted from other countries and is actually invalid as per the constitution of India.

Are summary trials necessary?

Participants were posed a question about summary trials. Does such a thing lie in the existing law? Such trials may fail if the implementation is done in bits and pieces. Virtual filing can hasten the process. Victim witnesses' protection service, 2006, was pressed by WCD and DGP through an official letter. Police supported the victim and kept them in protective homes during the hearings and this was helpful. Low conviction rate is because of lack of a strong witness protection service, resulting in perpetrators being acquitted and thus becoming bolder.

Monetary Compensatory system:

Monetary compensation for the victims vis-à-vis those who buy minors for sexual exploitation or a trafficker should be from the confiscated property of such trafficker, and like in the USA, it should be done within a short time frame.

One participant clarified, we are talking about criminalising demand side, not about trafficking, which is separate issue altogether to be dealt with. By expanding the work of the police to apprehend sex buyers there will be dilution of addressing traffickers while addressing only victims among whom would be women who are into sex work on their own volition. Sex buyers are essentially those who enter into a sexual favour service for which they pay a consideration and hence if the sex is actually adult consensual then it should not come under the purview of any law.

Another participant said, source and demand is not tackled. Local brokers should be punished. The one at high end brothels go unpunished. So, the women are re-trafficked, but the culprits are not punished. Landlords and owners of the building, employees, who are sex buyers of minors, should be punished. FIR even if registered makes no dent in the void of victim protection. Court constable and his clique divert and negotiate for a compromise. Weak link in the family is picked by the gang, so that the case snaps. Police and legal wing should take the entire responsibility till the justice is delivered.

There are small hitches like producing ID documents, Aadhar card, legal heir documents etc, if there is a mismatch the rescued women are let off. In counselling they manipulate the narratives and it changes the course of action through court directive, so girls are sent back home. They again return back to the trade along with their friends. Public Prosecutors also advise for compromise and NGO efforts involved in rescue goes down the drain.

Sex Buyers are not Traffickers:

Sex buyers are not traffickers. We should not miss the core of the problem that is “trafficking” per se. Clients are only buyers of sexual services and are not traffickers. To track the buyers is not practically possible and implementing the law would pose challenges. A participant pointed out that if there is an attempt to arrest sex buyers, there may be many among those who were present in the workshop who may be arrested. Further such a law would result in increased corruption as the police would be tempted to demand money from such clients. More importantly sex workers who had come of their own volition would be forced to go underground and the mafia would take control of their lives and there would be increased violence on and violations of human rights of sex workers.

It was felt that peripheral issues are not the point. It is not a matter of supply and demand. Sex is a need, not a legal issue; as long as the buyers exist there will be sale of sexual services. While clients are not visible, sex workers are, so, the predominantly visible women are arrested and punished, most of the time. The police would take an easy way out for implementing the law through raids and rescue operations, as the case has always been. If the client is the focus,

it will be an effort is in futility, and will definitely lose focus on traffickers who are the real criminals.

A study reported that 53.8% clients seek minors for sex and such buyers should be punished. This being a valid point, the way forward is to co opt sex worker organisations to effectively apprehend and implicate such persons.

In cases of rape it has been only penetrative sex brought under punitive action, while, it should include all types and forms of sex (including oral sex) that should be brought under the purview of such law.

In support of co opting sex worker organisations, it was told, that the sex workers would be the first to know the new entrant in the area and by the time police come to know, it will be late, say six months down the line, so AHTUs should include sex worker organisations in their team while conducting raids in order to differentiate between those trafficked and those who are in sex work of their own volition.

Conflating trafficking and sex work:

It is essential to clarify two different issues, trafficking and sex work. While they should not be conflated, there is an intersection of exploitation that needs to be addressed. The difference is brought out by the honorary Supreme Court as well as the Justice Verma Committee. They have clearly distinguished that Trafficking is not equivalent to sex work and is not the same. It was with great concern that the SC advisory very clearly articulated that consenting adults having sex should not be brought under the ambit of law. Distinction of this has been missed out in so far 370 A(2) which while criminalises demand of trafficked victims, it has specifically maintained through Sec 370 A 1 and 2 that trafficked minors is a problem, in any form of work and not just providing of sexual services.

Policy of naming and shaming is a serious violation of human right, even rapists, or murderers in our country get such harsh indictment. We all know that accessing sexual service is done by many, including differently abled persons and all have the basic human rights to express their sexuality.

Women who voluntarily take to sex work are more in AP, than the ones working from brothels; this was a research finding by ICRW.

Justice Verma Commission clarified that IPC 370 is to punish traffickers and the amendment is to protect not to bring sex workers and clients in ambit of traffickers, who practise the trade, on their violation, this is critical in dealing with trafficking and clients of Sex workers.

A participant explained, sex trafficking and sex work are conflated. Shelter home, housed 24 women, not one said, she was forced into sex work, but they are all sent to protection homes.

We are not actually catching the trafficker, what is our intention, what is our goal, are we trying to punish immoral people or improve the rights of sex worker, she wondered.

Decrease the sale of sex, will not accomplish the goals of punishing the trafficker. Human rights approach can do. Criminalising the buyer, and punishing him does not make any change. Here both are punished under IT(P)A , though the women is not treated as illegal or criminal. In Swedish law, she is not a criminal, while the man is, still, it has not impacted in reducing the demand for sex work.

Identifying the cases of sex trafficking by CBOs, is a possibility. They are able to identify new entrants immediately. Conflation in the definition of buyer, and the trafficker, clients as brokers, should not lead one to confuse with the “hard core criminal” – the trafficker from the client who buys sex from an adult sex worker who has come to sex work of her own volition. They are different categories, one (trafficker) a clear offender and the other (client) who only wishes to have a good time.

Knowing the situation in AP, the proposed amendments should not be rushed, If we do, one would be razing sex workers’ homes, their families. It is safer, if they work in situation, which is under their control. Criminalising their families, when seen in brothel and branding them as victims of trafficking is a serious violation of human right. Sex workers live along with their husbands in their families, but children have no knowledge of their mother’s trade.

Participants raised objections to the draft amendment which had words like “caning”, which was a typo error (as explained) and sexual “exploration” , which should be read as exploitation, They staunchly condemned, stoning like other countries, which is unconstitutional.

Taking both the views, a report with draft amendment was submitted to the Government by the High level Committee.

A study of criminalising sex buyers and it’s effects elsewhere:

Dr. Kim Walters, Asst. Professor from University of California, Long Beach, State University presented the laws in Sweden, criminalising the clients. Her presentation showed how punitive strategies in regulating paid sex, invariably was counterproductive to sex workers and their families and decriminalisation as an approach would be an enabling and empowering route for the betterment of sex worker community.

Secretary Home, asked for clarification, as how does the Act, actually work on sex buyers in Sweden? When the law decriminalise the woman, and the client is punished, the woman is left free. She is allowed to practise, but it criminalises her, indirectly. The Global network of Sex workers had the following to report - that, that Police used to chase driving fast in cars, they moved into houses, they used to clamp down the advertisers, also people responding to advertisements, were followed up, women, whoever is suspect is followed up. Surveillance is increased. Research found that sex workers went underground, and Swedish migrants, bore the

brunt, like people who looked different, without identity documents and papers were criminalised, and men who migrated to live with them from their country were considered as clients.

In AP it is only a contract system that is operative apart from street based sex workers, lodge based and sex work takes place in dhabas etc, and these will be raided. In the context of rais, research has found that 77% women so “rescued” were back in sex work. These women had entered into severe debts during incarceration. They were unable able to repay doing other work and as sole bread earner they had to make ends meet.

The Sex Buyer issue:

The question was how is one going to identify the clients? How will the Police act? In such a big country like India, unlike Sweden, which is a small country. Especially when any law doesn't stop men from becoming child rapists.

But when adult women are in sex work on their own violation, it is not a crime. Justice Verma commission considered it as a private intimate affair between two consensual adult partners and should not come under purview of any law.

Sex buyers of children below 12 years will be heavily punished and children above 13 involved in elopement cases will be treated differently.

Buyer of children, coerce, torture and the crime can be very clearly implicated by law, it is practicable.

But the important issue is the consent of adult women is ignored. They are not children. Earning a livelihood is critical for women. Women should be asked if they are into sex work voluntarily, and any action like asking her to sign a bond that she should give up sex work, amounts to trampling on her rights and should be banned and any police action be backed by evidence which unfortunately has never been the case.

In HIV prevention work, community of sex workers were involved as owners to the response and could relate their contribution through involvement and engagement.

A number of cases of trafficking were averted and reported to police. A study, can present the facts and findings. NGO's have helped. Sex workers do not necessarily induct other women into sex work. Exploitative practices are definitely there. Empowerment, enabling environment, organising and educating them to do the program will lead them to progress in life. India has a success story for the world. There is a need to trust and invest in them. Definitely, sex workers will help in rooting out the evil of trafficking.

A Few Pointers to way ahead:

The Home Secretary said that space is necessary, may be politically not be possible for the government, but informally through District Collector and SP can help out. It is no one's business to find out whether two persons in a hotel/lodge are married, ask them to open the door, show mangal sutra etc., Standing in bus stand and soliciting customers, without posing problems to the police and public may not be an issue, but whoever indulges in violence, should be taken to task. Legalising prostitution is not a solution either. So, the strategy is to make sex workers as additional members of AHTUs, identify traffickers, rescue women who are involved against their wish, and the minors, they can be sent to the Police station. Ability to recognise who is a trafficker, and a victim, trauma counselling and rehabilitation service, allowed to be work with police, may be not with a formal MOU, but can seamlessly be done. SOP can detail out things that can be done by the District Collector, and the Superintendent of Police, both in Telugu and English and it can be distributed.

Standardising what instruction should be followed is to be listed, and handed, down the line. We can draft trainings for constable and to all the police force on how to conduct raids and rescue operations and what human rights needs to be in place while doing so.

Voice of Sex workers:

Trafficking is something we are all against, said sex workers. Old sex workers induct other women, is a sweeping statement and painting everybody with the same brush is a misnomer, on the contrary, we have done our bit, and can show case evidences.

Rehabilitation, for instance, is like this in reality. Since, nine months, police, round us off, three times, every week, women are beaten up, so badly that they are hospitalised. Constables advise CI, to stop beating as, it will reflect badly on them. They are simply beaten to death, so sex workers go off to forests, as, they cannot give it up, as sex work is their livelihood and some space agreeable to both can solve the problem.

Another instance cited is that, as a part of rehabilitation a woman is set up a mobile fruit vending shop, Police restrict her movement. Do not work here, there; the woman cannot work under so many constraints. Situation is not in her favour, but it is not perceived as such. So, to sum up attitudinal change has to come over the police.

Thambalapalle, in Chittoor Distirct, Police call shelter home heads, to give counselling, and to send them back home, but they insist on a bond that they won't come again. This is a mockery. Para legal volunteers among sex workers are trained, but nothing is helpful, most of the time sex workers are made to go from one place to another to make their live more miserable.

In HIV prevention work NGO's elicited Police cooperation. Sex workers community based organisations (CBO's) were formed. Rowdy problem was addressed with the help of police. They distributed condoms, and they realised it was their livelihood and it is necessary, but realised trafficking as a different topic and felt that they should work differently.

Secretary WCD, AP said that the government has to work on sex workers' space, privacy, and one needs to work on that front. Senior sex workers, who wish not to continue in sex work, should ask what the government should do for them. Set of realistic demands can be listed out, training in particular trade can be asked, and will be provided as a special effort. The current Skill development scheme in the government is a mismatch.

Government provides training in nursing as part of rehabilitation, but there are sex workers who resist and claim that we are not forced into sex work. They say we have our needs to be addressed. Sex work is fulfilling our need; we are able to give education to our children, so they plead to understand sex work as work.

Sex workers questioned the Anti trafficking NGO's to give them the reports of sex workers who were forced and rescued. They strongly condemned that arresting sex worker or the clients is a death knell for them. They concluded that the National network of sex workers are in seven states, our children are getting educated. We as Partner Organisations have arrested new HIV infections, and have done it voluntarily, but, to fulfil our needs, sex work is our livelihood.

Self organisation of sex workers have curbed trafficking and they have founded a bank, and aided education of their children, not only in Kolkata, HLPPT had given funds to strengthen the work of CBO's ,including MSM and their children in prevention. There are agencies like HELP also received funds to support CBO, the same kind of effort can be tried and activated. Nowadays , home based, brothel based, and many structures, have changed and get clients through phone call and are not seen. So, to undertake work with children below 18 these CBOs can aid in prevention of trafficking.

Nature, an NGO in Agency areas work alongside with POLICE, they use IEC materials. In AP migrant influx pose a problem, they were educated on the issues. Tourism is an issue, which adversely affects women and children.

Secretary Home, was very firm that law should be lethal for men abusing children, and cases of elopement should be dealt strategically, which should be more clear and realistic, in implementation.

Voices of Sex workers:

Sex worker organisations - CBOs have been involved in working on various fronts, though it was started with an idea to mitigate the HIV pandemic. CBO key persons have accomplished a lot in the field of welfare, and they can contribute towards criminalising sex buyers of children, if CBO's are chosen to work in partnership with them.

There was a Clear need to draft SOP to work with District Administration, Police along with the support of NGOs and CBOs.

Police lack focus on Trafficking issues, they need to be sensitised at local, mandal, district levels.

In Districts of Srikakulam and Anantapur children of Sex workers were admitted in KGBV residential Schools. Keia motors, trained 647 women in cleaning and safety maintenance of the machines. Integrated approach, with a provision of social entitlements needs to be given. Border areas, with easy transport for trafficking should specially be covered. Migrant communities were given public education on child protection and Rights protection issues.

It was felt that there is a need to start a seasonal hostels, welfare hostels for migrants so that they do not slip into the crack of trafficking. We should work in Thandas, they are trafficked for many purposes, including for bonded (contract) labour in spinning mills. Girls are preferred, as they are not distracted, devoted to their work and parents and companies and the middlemen make a huge profit. This evil design was thwarted with the combined police help of TN and AP, in 2015.

Targeted Intervention is implemented by 86 NGOs in AP, covering a lakh and above population. NGO's reach out and support in identifying the hidden population. They operate from different structures. One such is home based sex workers and disclosure of their identity is a serious issue. Registration is affected in sex work population as there is a demand to produce identity documents. So, general population shows high infections. MSM population is also increasing in numbers, they are again a hidden group like the other group which is transgender persons; they are also buyers of sex.

DRDA and other departments have many awareness programs. NGOs, bring women from the adjoining districts. Prevention should be from police and WCD we have human resource, they should be strengthened. Rescue can be assisted by police, rehabilitating the unlettered women in rural areas is a challenge, for Urban women they have better avenues of earning. 26 brokers were listed as they were sending women to Saudi Arab in the pretext of work. It is the same gang, which traffic women to brothels. Victim family should be helped. Agriculture based work is preferred rehabilitation measure. Many tribal persons go to Kerala, for begging, or to brothels in Delhi. Rescue within the country, is a possibility, but when taken abroad the situation changes, becomes almost impossible. Police Authorities get transferred, Law and order, routine work keeps them busy, so there has be a designated sensitive police to tackle this evil.

As a rehabilitation measure agriculture or land based work, providing one to five acres of land to grow millets and food processing training could help them get back on their feet.

Sex workers vehemently expressed that they take care of their children, but why is that incest, molestation is still not addressed in families. On the contrary, we, as sex workers have helped a lot of children, when their mothers are single, (note they are not sex workers) we have arranged marriage for them, we have settled them, we are helping our neighbours children too.

They continued to narrate their set goals in the national network. None should be in sex work by force and they would reach out and prevent young girls entry into sex work. This meant working with all vulnerable women and girls for their safety. They pleaded not to stigmatise them or their work and attempt to forcefully rehabilitate them.

It is a fact that many women still return back to sex work, because it offers more money. Society needs to address the larger economic situation, and offer real time alternatives. Most of our women are uneducated. Providing something as remunerative as sex work can only be a viable option.

Proposed amendments:

Supreme Court in 2010, set up a panel, with a three point agenda prevention, strategies, to rehabilitate victims who wish to come out of sex work, and for sex workers who wish to remain in sex work, be treated with dignity in commensurate with article 14.

In the 15th Interim report the honourable Supreme Court Panel has articulated that IT(P)A should be read down.

Entire systems and structure working on trafficking has to ensure that the laws implemented on the ground, be it rehabilitation schemes or shelter home has to adhere to the values of transparency and accountability.

Trafficked victims needs rehabilitation, but the same should not be offered to women who do not want such rehabilitation. But this incarceration seems to be an inevitability. There is this execution of bond demanded from women to sign that they would leave sex work. One wonders, where does that, come from, is it from Home affairs or WCD guideline?

Explaining this further, when sex workers are arrested, court fines them or puts them in Swadhar ghar. Then the Magistrate incarcerates the woman for a period of 21 days, no individual, or CBO is allowed to meet her. Even as lawyers, they are not allowed to meet the women. She is not allowed to speak to her family on the assumption that she would have pressure from anyone and everyone.

After 21 days, she is asked by the Magistrate whether she is a victim, and in IT(P)A, She can be put in home for a period of 3-5 years, for correcting her behaviour. One wonders what it means, who and what needs to be corrected. Meantime, we have heard many cases of abuse in shelters. Gujarat High court has orders to file status on the running of Homes. We have heard of multiple forms of abuse, sex workers face physical harassment, and trauma, not sexual abuse. As an alternative to eke a livelihood, the women are asked to learn sewing, which is not their calling.

Earlier UNODC supported program was a comprehensive program, on trafficking. Review and revisiting the program would be of use. Rescue van was also provided, it can be continued. In

the past human rights activists, writers were involved. Victim Profile is always from the same marginalised sections, they are either single women, or from marginalised sections.

The Home Secretary mentioned that the role of police should be restricted to rescue and it should do it effectively. The rest of the work should be left to WCD. Victim compensation can be provided if the list of such victims is forwarded to the Secretary Home. The NGOs can send it directly to the Government and the funds are available for dispensation and it would be of help to the victims.

The Legal process/wrangle:

In the FIR, victim is not willing to blame (name) the trafficker, but needs the seed money for her use. If she refuses to name the trafficker, FIR cannot be made and she would be ineligible to get the amount.

Legal secretary from AP women's commission informed that Nirbahaya fund is unutilised because field reports reaches late. So, despite having GO MS No.1, since 2003 having a detailed directive nothing seems to work, irrespective of AHTU and R&R Scheme being in place..

Police Officers are busy, they are not concerned as they are overburdened with their routine work, on one such occasion, when rescue operation plan, was made, one of the anti trafficking NGO (REDS) head's residence was looted and set ablaze, luckily she was away.

Where does the role of police and WCD start? Sent to Remand or to the shelter home, the sex worker has to wait till she is charge sheeted. Shelter home people ask for police protection, so that she can be produced in court. Women when produced in the court, should be asked about how they are treated as a means to check mechanisms of accountability. K.Sathyavathi, Editor of Bhumika Magazine, has studied the shelter homes. She is empanelled to visit, but sadly the environment, is so hostile that everybody in the home is treated as an enemy. Instead of sending her to such a shelter home, if the sex worker/victim is sent on remand, she would get bail and would allowed to speak to her people.

Police Chief asked what about the Women protection cells in these districts. These are the institutions run with public money. People should be able to meet the women but they are strictly not allowed in the name of protection. Not even the family members are allowed to meet the women as they are alleged as traffickers. Judicial activism is much needed.

Training to NGO, is critical. Minors are trafficked, it should be dealt accordingly. Concentrating on people who ask for help is critical as they are the real victims. Judicial Officers and NALSA should know how to take this forward. Unfortunately conflation of issues is resulting in not hitting very hard at traffickers, but attacks Sex workers on the ground.

NGOs expressed that as a part of counselling, they speak about their health and condom use. Sometimes, women are sentenced for one month, it is a court decision. One day they may stay, the next day they wish to escape, their lifestyles, and habits are different, women do not like to stay in the shelter homes.

The Home Secretary reiterated that if she is an adult let her go.

But the fact of the matter is, Under Section 17 (2) of the ITPA, woman who is rescued can be handed over to the safe custody of her husband or parents or guardian. DPO has to write social investigation report, (Home Investigation Report) she should be given counselling, if he thinks she has corrected her behaviour she will be released.

Some think let her not be incarcerated, let her not be in the home, because it infantilizes adult women who are living independent of parents or their family. Many are heads of their households and primary providers for their families. In many cases, adult women do not inform their families that they are in sex work. When directed by the magistrate to produce a husband, parents and guardians in court, they are forced to contact them. In many cases such custody is accompanied by an affidavit of the woman undertaking that she will not do sex work in the future. In one such strange case, a 45 year old lady had to be released to her 19 year old brother, whom she had helped to get education.

Secretary WCD – a few thoughts:

There is complete lack of trust and hope on these women. Secretary WCD appreciated the matured reaction of NGOs and CBOs in implementation of laws related to prevention and rehabilitation of trafficked victims and Sex workers.

In Juvenile homes victims of minor marriages are kept and they have to be handed over to their parents. Such minors are trafficked and so are at high risk. SOP prevention of child marriage, is done. Roles of all stakeholders are explained. Many cases of Child marriages are prevented, but those already married, we are unable to revert. Child care institutions are being filled with such cases, and also in observation homes as well.

A few comments from the law enforcers:

The Addl.DGP, CID felt SOP for police is much required. He observed a Contradiction, where in sex worker community asked for freedom to practise their trade, without fear, and suppression, at the same time, some groups intend criminalising sex buyers. He emphasised that there should be clarity. Police harassment is a concern, when one plans to control the spread of HIV. Rehabilitation, finding an alternate income for trafficked victims, they need a different skill set, and he exclaimed that even a qualified graduate is lacking in today's world.

Many women are not forced into prostitution, but most often it is the financial need, and it is a valid point.

SOP, as far as instructions are concerned, it speaks of a liberal attitude, but a very difficult call to take. By and large, police would like to be politically correct, and does not wish show themselves in poor moral light. So, informal arrangement can be, made, No government can give full and open support, But SOP can be prepared and authorities can examine, review and can act, but not with the wrath of public, it has to stand the moral scrutiny and can serve as a guideline.

A few final words from Secretary WCD:

Change can come about in person and gender sensitisation is possible though the effort has to be focussed. There is always a need to know the other side of the coin, please train to get at the other side know. Most often, we are closed, we do not know what is on the other side, it is like a glass door. It would be wise to understand what the politicians say, while at the same time, the caste leaders could present their point of view, which might completely be anti to the former's view. But it helps. There were always officers who had taken bold steps, they were not blamed as "anti moral" instead they got a good name. It is dependent on the strengths and weaknesses of the person.

Shelter Homes and Trafficking issues are difficult areas of work. Somebody is imprisoned and NGO's have said they are protecting them, even not allowing them to move around, all in the name of protection. There is a need to do a lot of work in this area. What Government gives in the name of rehabilitation is peanuts compared to what women earn from sex work. This gap needs to be addressed. But such a challenge is difficult to address and it also not possible for the government to solve all issues.

NGO's are better placed to handle such issues, Government scheme may give Rs.1000 as pension or assistance, but that does not match with the support that NGO's can give on site.

If an evaluation is done on CBO's work for the welfare of sex workers, the government would be willing to put it in their report. Currently, work done for women by elites are captured in the WCD report, but today we were glad to get all the views from the rest of the society.

Vote of thanks was given by the Joint Secretary, WCD who thanked Spl. Commissioner WCD, Asst.DGP. Public Prosecutors, PDs, DPOs and NGO's and sex workers community.