

538428/2020/O/o Under Secretary

By Speed Post

No. 24013/4/2020-ATC
Government of India
Ministry of Home Affairs

Women Safety Division, 2nd Floor,
Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium,
India Gate, New Delhi-110002
July 6, 2020

To

The Chief Secretaries of all States and UTs
The Director General of Police of all States and UTs

Sub: Advisory on preventing and combating human trafficking especially during the period of COVID-19 pandemic.

Sir/Madam,

Trafficking in Persons is a serious crime affecting a large number of people across the globe. Human trafficking not only affects women and children but also men. Trafficking in persons can be both cross-border as well as within the country, from one State to another. Traffickers often exploit the vulnerabilities of people by making false promises of a new job, better income, better living conditions and support to their families etc. While such promises of perpetrators appear legitimate to people, unfortunately it makes many men, women, and children easy prey for exploitation.

2. Domestic violence, psychological or emotional abuse, neglect and other forms of trauma and violence makes a person vulnerable to human trafficking, who may be looking for a release from his present situation. Children and youth are more likely to be persuaded or tricked by criminals who take advantage of their emotional instability and missing support system. Once trafficked, the victims fall prey to many forms of unfair treatment such as forced prostitution, forced labour, forced begging, forced marriages etc.

3. The outbreak of COVID-19, starting about mid-March, has put the world under enormous strain and continues to affect the lives of a large number of people. The Government of India has taken various measures to flatten the infection curve. In close consultation and coordination with State/UT Governments, the Central Government has continuously endeavoured to provide guidance to States and UTs on a range of issues through various advisories issued from time to time.

4. For strengthening the law enforcement response against trafficking in persons, the Ministry of Home Affairs has released funds to State Governments from time to time for setting up Anti Human Trafficking Units

(AHTUs) in 50% Police Districts of States. An amount of Rs. 25.16 crore was released to States during the period 2010 to 2019 for setting up AHTUs in 332 Districts. **Recently, a decision was taken to establish AHTUs in all Districts of States and UTs** and also establish AHTUs under the border guarding forces such as BSF and SSB in border areas to check and curb transnational trafficking. Rs. 100 crore were allocated from Nirbhaya Fund for setting up new AHTUs and for strengthening existing AHTUs, covering all districts of States/UTs. Funds have been released to States and UTs in March, 2020. Guidelines for setting up new AHTUs and upgrading the existing AHTUs were also issued to all States and UTs. **It is expected that the States/UTs would have initiated necessary action to set up and upgrade AHTUs in all Districts of States/UTs.**

5. To recapitulate the scheme of AHTUs, it may be noted that AHTUs are integrated task forces to prevent and combat trafficking in persons and comprise of a group of trained sensitive officials of Police, Women and Child Welfare Department and other relevant Departments of the State. AHTUs function as coherent units to prevent and combat trafficking. The objectives and responsibilities of AHTUs include, taking up the crusade against all criminal aspects of the crime of human trafficking; ensuring focused attention in dealing with offences of human trafficking; conducting rescue operations whenever they receive information about trafficking activities either from police sources, NGOs or civil society; ensuring a victim-centric approach; functioning as the grass root unit for collection and development of an exhaustive database on all law enforcement aspects of the crime, including information on traffickers and trafficking gangs etc. While the Central Government has provided financial assistance for setting up physical infrastructure in these Units, it is the responsibility of States to depute suitable manpower to manage these Units.

6. **States/UTs are advised to immediately set up new AHTUs and upgrade the infrastructure of existing AHTUs** in all Districts of their State/UT with the financial assistance provided by the Central Government and **make these Units functional on most urgent basis.** Suitable officers of Police and other Departments of the State/UT, especially from Women and Child Welfare Department, Labour Department, Social Welfare Department, Health and any other Department or agency of the State, considered appropriate by the State/UT, may be nominated without delay. Immediate instructions are required to be issued to these AHTUs to take proactive action in preventing human trafficking. **Labour Department of States** need to play a significant role at the present juncture and needs to pool all its resources to address the situation of exploitation of vulnerable people.

7. The following measures may be followed in all States and UTs, in close coordination and cooperation with neighbouring State authorities as well, where considered necessary:

(i) **State Governments should immediately evolve a coordination mechanism** among various departments in the States and UTs (Home Department, Police, Labour Department Social Welfare Department, Women and Child Welfare Department, Juvenile Justice Boards, Child Welfare Committees, Health Department, Railways and border guarding agencies like BSF, SSB, etc.) to handle issues of human trafficking. **This mechanism may be monitored at the highest level in the State/UT.** Periodic reviews should be held with all stakeholders and appropriate guidelines may be issued to them.

(ii) **Generation of Awareness at all levels** is considered a very potent and effective weapon to fight the crime of human trafficking and exploitation of women and children. Therefore, special awareness generation campaigns may be organised by the District Administration to spread awareness at all levels, Panchayat, Taluka, Districts, every nook and corner of the State to protect vulnerable sections of society. **Making the community aware** of the perils of falling in the hands of unscrupulous persons who try to dupe them with promises of better life is of vital importance. Media plays a critical role in the spread of information. States and UTs may strengthen their digital and online channels and **generate awareness by all means of communication** viz. radio, television, newspapers, mobile phones and other publicity mediums. Ensure translation and audio-visualization of messaging and communication materials and other information into languages and formats commonly spoken and easily understood by all children and youth on the move.

(iii) **Community awareness programmes** on the issue of missing children and its links with human trafficking should be undertaken by the District Administration. Periodic interface should be organised with Public and Safety Awareness Campaign should be conducted in vulnerable areas, jointly by the district administration.

(iv) The law enforcement agencies may **engage with representatives of local Panchayats, community leaders, Village Watch and Ward, Municipal Committees/Neighbourhood Committees/ Resident Welfare Associations** etc. This will enable the community to get involved with the administration/police in identification, tracing and recovery of missing and trafficked persons.

(v) Because children can be transported on a large scale for wage labour, prostitution and trafficking, **Panchayats may be asked to maintain a register** of complete information about the persons living in the village and keep track of their movement.

(vi) Specific 'intelligence' and 'surveillance' mechanism to identify gangs, gather information about its history, affiliations, modus operandi to deceive people, activities of gang members, links with others, etc should be worked out by the Police Department. They may be appropriately sensitised about

this. Local police should keep a close watch on known criminals and traffickers.

(vii) Police Officers should be advised to undertake preventive steps such as identification of children in distress, watching out for suspicious persons, keeping special vigil at transit points, viz. Railway Stations, Bus Depots, Airports, Seaports, Border areas etc., and identify vulnerable population and susceptible pockets in the State etc.

(viii) Police personnel in outposts on borders should be trained to look-out for trafficked children on the borders. They should be sensitized to question and detect unaccompanied minors/children or accompanying adults with suspicious behaviours during checking of vehicles/public transport. Railway and Transport Department personnel may be associated with the crime meetings conducted by AHTUs from time to time as **keeping a watch on suspicious movement of people from one place to another can play a crucial role in checking this crime.**

(ix) Child helpline numbers, emergency response number 112 etc. should be displayed in public places to keep a check on human trafficking. Use of 112 Emergency Response Support System may be widely publicised to provide quick response.

(x) Police force should **make full use of CCTNS and CriMAC application** launched by the National Crime Records Bureau in March this year, which facilitates dissemination of information about significant crimes including human trafficking cases across the country on real time basis. These portals can help in locating and identifying the trafficked victims as also in prevention, detection and investigation of crimes. **Police officers at all levels may be sensitised about this.**

(xi) Police officers, especially those handling cases of human trafficking, **should be trained and sensitized at regular intervals.** It should focus on imparting knowledge of the substantial and procedural laws, court rulings, administrative procedures, skills in child friendly investigation, including interviewing, interrogation, scientific data collection, presentation in the court of law, networking with the prosecutors, facilitating victims/witness protection programmes etc.

(xii) It may be ensured that **shelters for destitute women and children in need remain open and additional facilities are made available** for women and girls; virtual and/or telephone counselling services should be provided and appropriate measures should be taken to ensure privacy for women and girls.

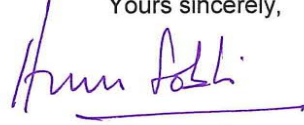
8. The aforementioned measures are indicative and illustrative in nature. States and UTs may devise, develop and implement further strategies to counter and curb the crime of trafficking in their jurisdictions and provide relief to such victims on top priority basis. Officials at all levels may be suitably

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briefed and provided guidelines in their regional/local language for better understanding and implementation of the instructions. This Ministry may be kept informed of the measures introduced in respective jurisdictions which can be emulated and adopted by other States as well.

9. **States and UTs are requested to issue suitable instructions** to all concerned in the State and sensitise officers at all levels to combat this serious and deplorable crime of human trafficking and prevent victimisation of vulnerable persons, especially women, children and youth.

Yours sincerely,



(Arun Sobti)
Deputy Secretary (PR & ATC)
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Copy, for information and action as necessary, to:

1. Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi.
2. Secretary, Ministry of Labour & Employment, Shram Shakti Bhawan, New Delhi.
3. Ministry of External Affairs, Protector of Emigrants, Akbar Bhawan, New Delhi.
4. Director General, Border Security Force, BSF HQr, Block No. 10, CGO Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi.
5. Director General, SSB, Force Head Quarters, East Block-V, R.K. Puram, New Delhi-110066.
6. Chairman, Railway Board, Rail Bhawan, New Delhi.
7. Principal Secretary/Secretary (Home) of all State Governments and UTs.
8. Nodal Officers for Anti Human Trafficking Units in all States and UTs.

540658/2020/Dy. Secy

No. CP-11/12/2016-US(CP)
Government of India
Ministry of Women & Child Development
(AHT Section)

Jeevan Tara Building,
New Delhi-110001
Dated : 23rd October, 2020

To

All Secretaries/Principal Secretaries of
Department of Women & Child Development
State/UT Governments

Subject : Advisory on curbing and tackling human trafficking-reg.

Sir/Madam,

Attention is drawn to the advisory issued by Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India vide letter no. 24013/4/2020-ATC dated 06.07.2020 on preventing and combating Human Trafficking especially during the time of COVID-19 pandemic (Copy enclosed for ready reference).

2. In continuation of the above advisory issued by MHA, it is reiterated that Trafficking in Persons (TiP) or human trafficking is one of the most serious crimes. It gets fueled by sheer avarice and blatant disregard and disrespect for human rights, dignity and needs on the side of perpetrators, and needs adequately supportive cultural, social and legal ecosystems for being prevented and countered.

3. The Government is making all out efforts to curb trafficking especially during the time of COVID-19 pandemic. Recognizing that women and children across the social and economic intersection may tend to be affected disproportionately due to Covid 19 pandemic, with unique and uneven levels of resilience and capacities to recover, the Government of India (GoI) has taken significant steps to ensure that national response prioritizes the voices, interests and needs of women and children along with other identified vulnerable social groups. In this regard, the Ministry of Home Affairs has released funds to State Governments/UT Administrations for setting up/strengthening of **Anti Human Trafficking Units(AHTUs)** in all districts of the country in March, 2020. Further, under the Nirbhaya Fund, Ministry of Home Affairs has also released funds to State Governments/UT Administrations for setting up/strengthening of **Women Help Desks (WHDs)** in 10,000 Police Stations across the country.



4 Accordingly States/UTs are advised to take appropriate action to make the AHTUs and WHDs functional on priority, if not already done. States/ UTs are further advised to create a dedicated monitoring mechanism for coordination among various departments in the State/UT to prevent human trafficking and for providing immediate assistance to the victims of trafficking.

5 **Awareness generation** is another key weapon to curb the crime of human trafficking. Therefore, awareness generation campaigns may be carried out from time to time at all levels right upto the Village/ Gram Panchayats to make people aware of the menace of human trafficking and its overall impact in the society. The helpline numbers namely **Women Helplines (181), Child Helpline (1098) and Emergency Response Support System (112 and 112 India App)** may be widely publicised and leveraged through media platforms including social media among masses to make them aware for seeking immediate assistance. Law enforcement officers may be adequately trained/ sensitised to handle trafficking related incidents with care and compassion and for prevention of the same.

6. The Ministry of Women and Child Development implements a Centrally Sponsored comprehensive Scheme 'Ujjawala' for prevention of trafficking of women and children, their rescue, rehabilitation and re-integration. The scheme is being implemented through the States/UTs. Accordingly, it is advised to ensure that victims of trafficking may be identified by law enforcement and other agencies and the facilities under Ujjawala scheme may be made available to them.

7 It is further reiterated that the Women and Child Development Departments of States/ UTs may take adequate steps in consultation with Police, Home and other relevant Departments of their respective State/UT to address the issue of human trafficking holistically by utilizing State resources and the support provided by the Central Government like AHTUs, WHDs and helplines. In this regard, the guidelines/advisories issued by the Government of India from time to time may be strictly followed in letter and spirit to curb the menace of human trafficking.

8. This issues with the approval of Hon'ble Minister of Women and Child Development.


(Daya Shankar)

Deputy Secretary to the Government of India
Telephone: 23070662

Copy to

Chief Secretary of all States/ UTs Government.

Annexure-III

Amount allocated to States/UTs from Central Victims Compensation Fund from Nirbhaya Fund	
Name of State/UT	Amount allocated & released (in Lakh)
AndhraPradesh	662
ArunachalPradesh	33
Assam	860
Bihar	722
Chhattisgarh	685
Goa	50
Gujarat	390
Haryana	550
HimachalPradesh	120
Jammu&Kashmir	170
Jharkhand	450
Karnataka	995
Kerala	760
MadhyaPradesh	2180
Maharashtra	1765
Manipur	34
Meghalaya	50
Mizoram	48
Nagaland	10
Odisha	1060
Punjab	410
Rajasthan	1545
Sikkim	23
TamilNadu	565
Telangana	590
Tripura	115
UttarPradesh	2810
Uttarakhand	125
WestBengal	1265
A&NIslands	15
Chandigarh	23
D&NHaveli	10
Daman&Diu	10
DelhiUT	880
Lakshadweep	10
Puducherry	10
Total	20000