
Every Person has the right to be protected from all forms of Human Trafficking

– a campaign for awareness and action

The Background

In 2013, the UN member states adopted a resolution which was designated on 30th July as the World Day against Trafficking in Persons. They declared that such a day was necessary to raise awareness of the situation of victims of human trafficking and for the protection and promotion of their rights. Since 2013, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd whose mission is centred around women and girl children, apart from field-level interventions, organise campaigns from time to time in the form of rallies and public meetings through which they propagate and uphold the rights of the vulnerable groups such as women and children.

Observation of World Day against Trafficking in Persons (WDATP 2023)

In Amaravathi, this year, for the convenience as well as for the increased number of people's participation, the World Day against Trafficking in Persons was organised on 31st July, 2023 since the 30th July fell on a Sunday. In continuation of their mission, the Sisters and their Partners-in-Mission in association with the Leaders of Women Groups in and around Amaravathi region, students from Pallotti Junior College, Amaravathi and St. Augustine's English Medium School, Amaravathi, organised a rally and a public meeting.

Mr. Brahman, Circle Inspector (CI) of Amaravathi region, Mr. Vijayasagar Babu, the Vice President of Amaravathi Village Administration, Rev. Fr. Vinod and Bro. Suresh of Pallotti Junior College, Mr. Nagendran and Mr. Babu Subani, Sub-Inspectors of Amaravathi Police Station, Sr. Deanna Pereira, Counsellor for Children and Women, Sr. Vinnarasi, Local Community Leader of Good Shepherd Convent, Amaravathi and Director of Community Development Projects, Sr. Gracy, Sub-site Director of CHALICE Children and Community Sponsorship Programmes of Good Shepherd Convent, Amaravathi, Mr. Laxman, Business Coordinator, Economic Justice Project, Good Shepherd Convent, Amaravathi, Mr. A. John Aruldass, Mentor and Documentation Coordinator of Adolescent Girls Project of Good Shepherd Convent, Amaravathi were the special invitees and speakers at the campaign organised in view of the World Day against Trafficking in Persons.

The Theme of WDATP 2023

The theme of the World Day against Trafficking in Persons this year is "Reach every victim of trafficking, leave no one behind". This is very much close to the strong belief of our Mother Foundress, St. Mary Euphrasia who says "No one should be lost in the chaos of our times". St. Mary Euphrasia, the Foundress of the religious congregation known as Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd believed that "God is like a compassionate Shepherd whose love for all is boundless. Following the spirituality, Sisters of the Good Shepherd respond to the call to reach out to everyone and enkindle the spirit of empathy in all people, a sense of each one's unique

worth and an inestimable value”. Hence, prevention of human trafficking and safe migration is one of the focus areas of the mission of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd around the world.

Rally against Trafficking in Persons

Human trafficking is one of the worst forms of human rights exploitation and violation that includes “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of 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. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs”.

In order to create awareness among the various sections of people in and around Amaravathi region, a Public Rally was taken out on 31st July 2023 at 11 am from Pallotti Junior College, Amaravathi to the Centre of Amaravathi town. The rally was jointly flagged off by Mr. Brahmam, Circle Inspector (CI) of Amaravathi region, and Mr. Vijayasagar Babu, the Vice President of Amaravathi Village Administration. Students from St. Augustine English Medium School and Pallotti Junior College, Amaravathi, Adolescent Girls Studying at MISSIO-Austria-supported Computer Training and Spoken English Course organised by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, Leaders of Women Groups from the Self Help Women Groups in Amaravathi region – altogether 456 of them participated in the rally. Participants raised slogans against the practices that lead to human trafficking and at the crossroads, the participants formed into a circle where they listened to short speeches and raised slogans to express their commitment towards curbing the activities and practices that give way to human trafficking.

Public Meeting on Human Trafficking

Soon after the public rally, a public meeting was organised in which leaders of women groups and the adolescent girls 62 of them attended. Special invitees from different disciplines were requested to address the women and adolescent girls who were able to come together on this occasion.

Key Topics Discussed in the Public Rally and Meeting

Special Invitees	Message Conveyed
<p>Sr. Deanna Pereira, Counsellor Women and Children Development, Good Shepherd Convent, Amaravathi</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St. Mary Euphrasia, the Foundress of the Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd in her lifetime witnessed the violence and sufferings experienced by the victims of human trafficking and took special interest to rehabilitate them. • Following in the footsteps of St. Mary Euphrasia, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd have taken ‘prevention of human trafficking and safe migration’ as one of the focus areas of their mission in few selected countries where the issue is much prevalent.

<p>Sr. Vinnarasi, Local Community Leader & Director Community Development Projects Good Shepherd Convent, Amaravathi</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education is a key to prevent the practice of human trafficking; hence, children, especially girl children must continue their formal or vocational education. • Children must make use of educational opportunities and learn to protect themselves from potential dangers that endanger their rights and learn to mitigate challenges in life. • It is very important for the adolescent girls and the youth to develop analytical and decision-making skills in order to prevent themselves from falling prey to human trafficking and related violence.
<p>Mr. Nagendran, Sub-Inspector of Police (SI) Police Station, Amaravathi</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increasing unemployment rate aggravates the risk of vulnerable populations being victims of trafficking in persons. ▪ Increased use of technology in our personal and professional life continues to grow, and it is important to recognize how these technologies create chances and more opportunities for trafficking in persons and other forms of abuse to flourish. The same technologies can also be used as innovative tools to prevent and respond to human trafficking. For example, the Disha app, an initiative taken up by the State Government of Andhra Pradesh for the safety of women, is gaining popularity day by day. Girl children must download and make use of such mobile applications, including other toll-free phone numbers by which they must learn to seek support to rescue and protect themselves from potential abusers.
<p>Mr. Subani, Sub-Inspectors of Police (SI), Police Station, Amaravathi</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Human trafficking can happen anywhere, as long as the environment contains vulnerable conditions. ▪ Lack of access to education and job opportunities, violence and harmful social norms like child marriage are all factors that push individuals into situations of trafficking. ▪ It is the responsibility of each individual to be aware of the strangers who might woo them with false promises. ▪ It is advisable that everyone makes use of critical thinking whenever he/she is in danger. ▪ Focus your attention on education, as it is the tool for individual empowerment and social change.

<p>Sr. Gracy, Sub-site Director, CHALICE -Children and Community Sponsorship Programme, Good Shepherd Convent, Amaravathi</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are many ways that people get caught up in trafficking, but life is in the individuals' hands and it is up to the individual to decide if she/he wants a good life or not. Hence, everyone has to put their analytical minds to work to decide good for oneself.
<p>Mr. Laxman, Business Coordinator, Economic Justice Project, Good Shepherd Convent, Amaravathi,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a recent study titled 'Child Trafficking in India: Insights from Situational Data Analysis and the Need for Tech-driven Intervention Strategies', jointly done in India by Games24x7 and the Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation (KSCF), founded by Nobel Peace Laureate Kailash Satyarthi, it was revealed that Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Andhra Pradesh are the top three states with the maximum number of children trafficked between 2016 and 2022. (Source: Hindustan Times, 30th July, 2023). This data is quite disturbing and calls us to take action that would prevent the practice of human trafficking in the state of Andhra Pradesh.
<p>Mr. A. John Aruldass, Mentor and Documentation Coordinator, Adolescent Girls Project, Good Shepherd Convent, Amaravathi</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Human trafficking is as old as human life. From the Old Testament, in Genesis creation story we read that the Serpent trafficked Eve with false promises in the garden of Eden. The downfall of mankind started from that point onwards. Hither too it was the Eve who is termed as vulnerable and became the target for trafficking, this connotes that victims of trafficking are the vulnerable and hence the vulnerable need to be educated to prevent themselves falling prey to such practices. ▪ Human trafficking has several faces; the recent form is the 'voluntary trafficking', being practiced by the use of smart phones. Attracted by the messages being spread in the social media, there are people who are being trafficked for various purposes. ▪ In this world of technology, beware that, the traffickers are using internet technology in Human Trafficking operations. Traffickers exploit technology to identify, persuade, manipulate and abuse their victims. ▪ As technology is growing fast, the modalities of human trafficking too get changed. ▪ Social media needs to be handled properly to protect oneself from becoming the victims of human trafficking.


	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be aware of photos being taken and posted on the website without your consent; never allow unknown people take your pictures. ▪ Do not get lost in social media; it is a double-edged sword.
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Conclusion and Reflection

Every day, in every country in the world, human traffickers exploit people for profit. The poor and the vulnerable are most 'at risk'. From the studies we come to know that over 70 per cent of the detected human trafficking victims are women and girls, while nearly one third are children. Child trafficking is about taking children out of their protective environment and preying on their vulnerability for the purpose of exploitation. This has largely been controlled in India, however incidences of child trafficking are not uncommon in certain pockets. The efforts to curb the same by the Government are quite laudable. Thanks to the efforts put in by the Government and the Non-Government organisations and institutions.

Tackling human trafficking brings us closer to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which call for eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls, combatting organized crimes and eradicating forced labour, abuse, exploitations and violence against children. Fighting this global scourge means building a society that leaves no-one behind.

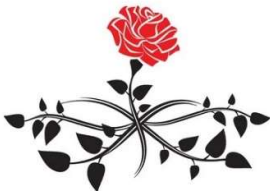
At this time of tribulations and trafficking of different kinds, we fondly remember the Catholic Patron Saint for the survivors of human-trafficking who was bought and sold as slave and had endured untold sufferings for the most part of her life. As a slave, she is said to have been brutally assaulted and cruelly treated merely because of her state of slavery. Despite the torture, her answer to a question raised by a young student who asked Bakhita what she would do if she were to meet the captors, Bakhita said that she would kneel and kiss the hands of the captors, for, if these things had not happened, she would not have been a Christian and a religious today. This is an indication of the 'merciful love' she practiced in her life.



"The chains are too tight, loosen them a little, please!"

A TRIBUTE TO
St. Josephine Margaret Bakhita

Oh! our dear loving St. Josephine Margaret Bakhita,
We internalize the sufferings you have undergone;
Reading your history, we cry within us;
Your sufferings started when you were 9 years old;
All through your life, you suffered at the hands of the traffickers;
The trauma of abduction you experienced pains us;
Hundreds of scars by the whips engraved on your back are the
marks of our failure to love one another;
We are extremely sorry for the permanent scars on your back;
You are in our heart and mind;
We love you endlessly;
We commit ourselves to prevent human trafficking;
We commit to stand by the trafficked;
We pray for all human-trafficking survivors;
We love you St. Josephine Margaret Bakhita



The United Nations (UN) classifies human trafficking into three categories, namely sex trafficking; labour trafficking and the removal of organs. But, in the today's context, one needs to look into the other forms of human trafficking which are being practiced without being labelled as human trafficking. It is understood that wherever there is unemployment, people's labour is exploited for some sparse sum of money; such situations are being used to woo people for the economic benefit of the well to do. Hence, wherever people are underemployed, it is a fact that human trafficking is being practiced in different forms. Similarly, wherever human labour is extracted beyond the accepted hours of work, there human trafficking, no doubt, is practiced. Similarly, in the name of caste, a vast section of people are deprived of wealth in terms of land and property or educational opportunities, they are treated as lesser human beings and such people's human labour is under-valued and the payment for their labour is much less compared to those who have so-called 'white-collar' jobs. Such inhuman practices need to be included under the practice of human trafficking.

Slavery has different forms and faces. When we hire persons for a lower salary, we are enslaving people; when we are not listening to the voices of the people at the margins, we are enslaving them; when we are over-extracting work, we are enslaving them; when we are turning a deaf ear to the cries of the lowly and the weak, we are enslaving them; when we fail to empathise with the victims of violence and torture, we are enslaving them. Millions of people around the world are living in slavery, awaiting their turn for a free and harmonious life. Let us join hands and create a society that upholds the dignity of human community and respond to the cries of people living on the fringe of society, and free them from exploitation and trafficking.

"You have to adapt to all circumstances. Do the best you can, while remembering that, according to the spirit of our calling, we must be everything to everyone. Do well all that you do".

- St. Mary Eupharasia

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PHOTOGRAPHS

of the

WORLD DAY AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS



Human trafficking awareness rally in Amaravathi town was flagged off by Mr. Bhrammam, Circle Inspector of Amaravathi region, Mr. Vijayasagar Babu, the Vice President of Amaravathi Village Administration.



School students from St. Augustine English Medium High School, Amaravathi, Pallotti Junior College, Amaravathi, Adolescent Girls from the Good Shepherd Computer Training cum Spoken English Course, and Women Leaders of SHGs in Amaravathi region participated in the Human Trafficking Awareness Rally along the main streets of Amaravathi town.



Along with Students, Adolescent Girls, and Women, Religious Leaders, and Police Officials joined the Human Trafficking Awareness Rally organised in view of World Day against Trafficking in Persons



Participants of the Human Trafficking Awareness Rally formed into a circle at the crossroads of Amaravathi town and raised slogans against the practices of human trafficking



Adolescent Girls studying at Good Shepherd Computer Literacy cum Spoken English Course actively participating in the rally against trafficking in persons.



The Religious and Government Officials actively participate and express their commitment towards curbing the different forms of human trafficking.



'Prevention of Human Trafficking and Safe Migration' is one of the focus areas of the mission of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd', says Sr. Deanna Pereira



'Adolescents and youth with critical thinking and decision-making skills will prevent a person falling prey to human trafficking', says Sr. Vinnarasi.



Police Officials explained the participants about the contributing factors for human trafficking and explained in detail how the internet and mobile phones have enabled trafficking to be executed easily.



Trafficking in persons is as old as the human history says Mr. John, one of the Partners-in-Mission of the Good Shepherd Sisters.



"Participating in the Human Trafficking Awareness Rally and listening to the talks by various people enabled me to be aware of the nuances of the issue of Human Trafficking and the need for being cautious with the life situations", says Ms. Nazma, an adolescent girl studying at Good Shepherd Computer Education cum Spoken English course in Amaravathi.



"All the events organised on this World Day against Trafficking in Persons indeed an opportunity for me to shape my future", Says Ms. Yamuna, an Adolescent Girl studying at Good Shepherd Computer Education and Spoken English course in Krosuru.



Happy indeed I am today to have learnt the different dimensions of Human Trafficking. This I will share with the members in my SHGs", says Mrs. Seenamma, Leader of Pethakurapadu Women Self Help Group.



Trafficking in Persons - an act of inflicting slavery on humans living at the fringe of our society. Let us be aware of it and fight against such inhuman practices. Together, everything is possible.

