

Fight Against Child Trafficking



Challenges before the
Media

Objectives

- To address the issue of human trafficking in a holistic and rights-based manner. By this I mean a correct and sensitive approach that takes into account several aspects such as right to life; right to security; right to privacy; access to health services; right to self-determination of the trafficked persons and addresses the core issue of prevention, protection and prosecution so as to bring about a determined effort to prevent trafficking.

India's North East and South East Asia

- The magnitude of the problem as it exists in **India's North Eastern Region** is alarming and it continues to grow. The problem is further compounded by the inadequate and ineffective legal protections

The North Eastern Region is surrounded by as many as four international borders and is connected to the "mainland," India by a narrow chicken neck corridor along the Assam-Bengal border. This geographical positioning of the North East states makes it highly vulnerable to illegal trans-border movement of militants, arms, drugs and now trafficked persons. **The most affected international borders are those that the region shares with Bangladesh and Myanmar.** Lately Bhutan has been used as a safe haven by traffickers to hoodwink law enforcement authorities.

The South East Asia Perspective

- The issue of trafficking in persons has to be understood from a South Asian perspective so as to dig deeper to understand the whole business of human trafficking between North East India and other countries.
- A steady increase in the reported cases of girl child being trafficked out of this region and forced into prostitution and other kinds of activities.
- The number of unreported cases was estimated at over 50 persons last year.
- According to **action research study on trafficking in Women and Children in India 2002-2003** conducted by the **National Human Rights Commission, UNIFEM and the Institute of Social Sciences (ISS) New Delhi** there is a steady growth in the number of girls who have been trafficked out of the North East.
- Problems in Bangladesh and areas which are situated close to the international border with some North East States where girls are sold almost at regular intervals yet to be highlighted

Media: Challenges and Demands

Accept the facts:

- Problem area: Media Approach while reporting human trafficking
- Conflict: Growing demand from media by civil society actors

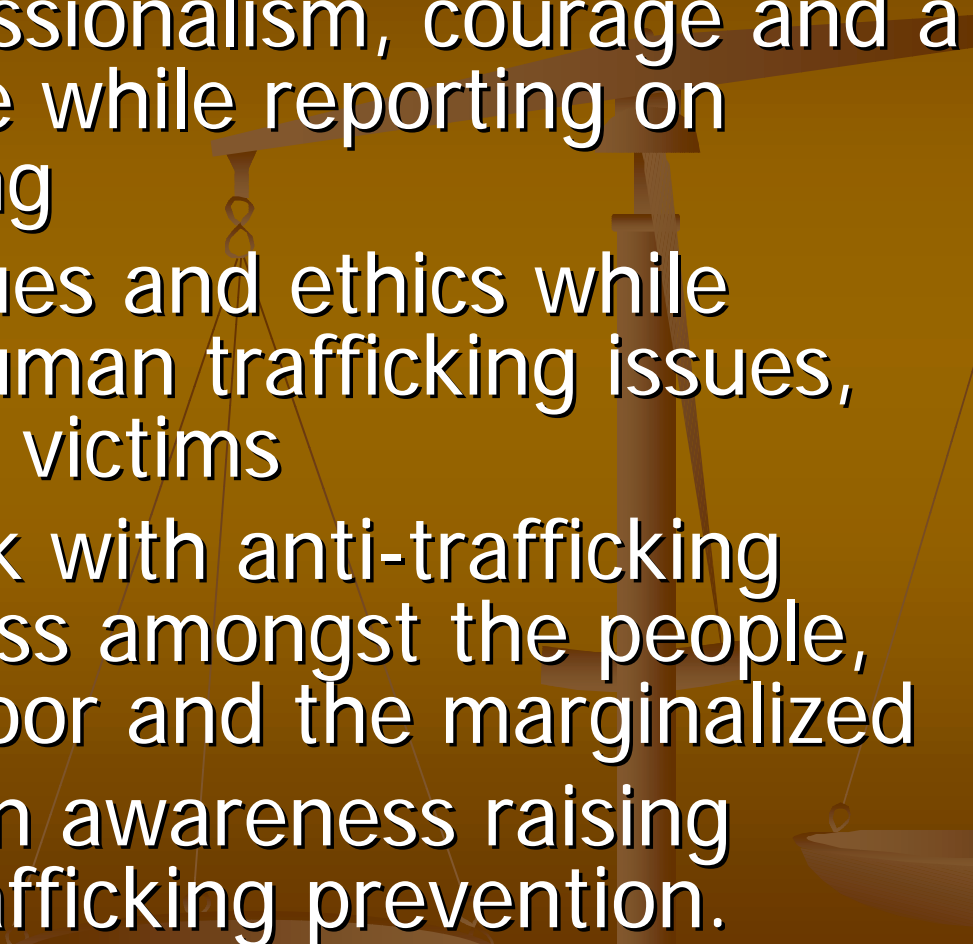
Actual Need: Awareness-raising campaigns in the media.

Use and Misuse of Media: While real requirement is to focus on issues and awareness-raising campaigns of various forms through advertisements, television debates and documentaries, instances of use of media for various types of mileage has led to conflicts.

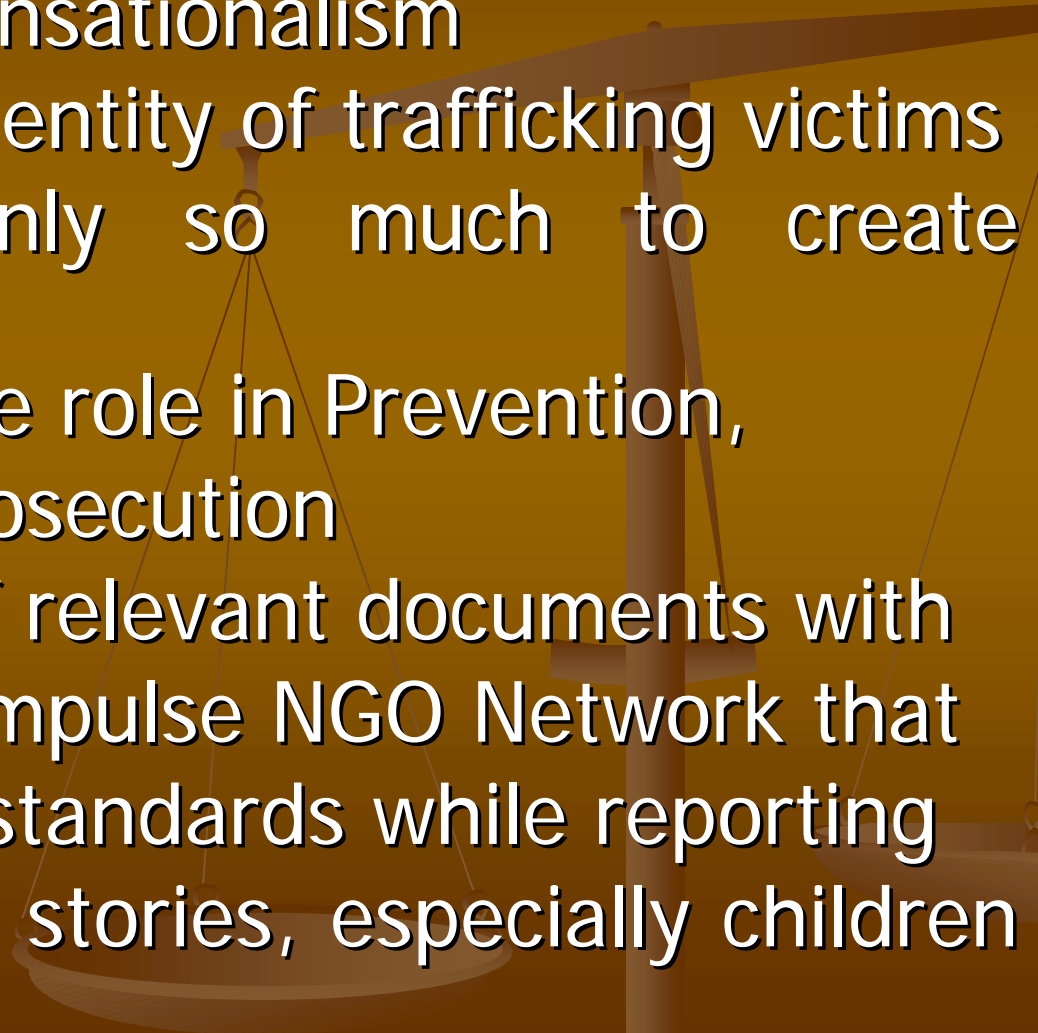
Management of Media and Civil Society demands: Managing Civil society needs becomes extremely important and proper use of media to create a balance and reduce conflict.

Communication Awareness: More communication between Media, NGOs, Police, public etc

Media Role: The Positive Approach

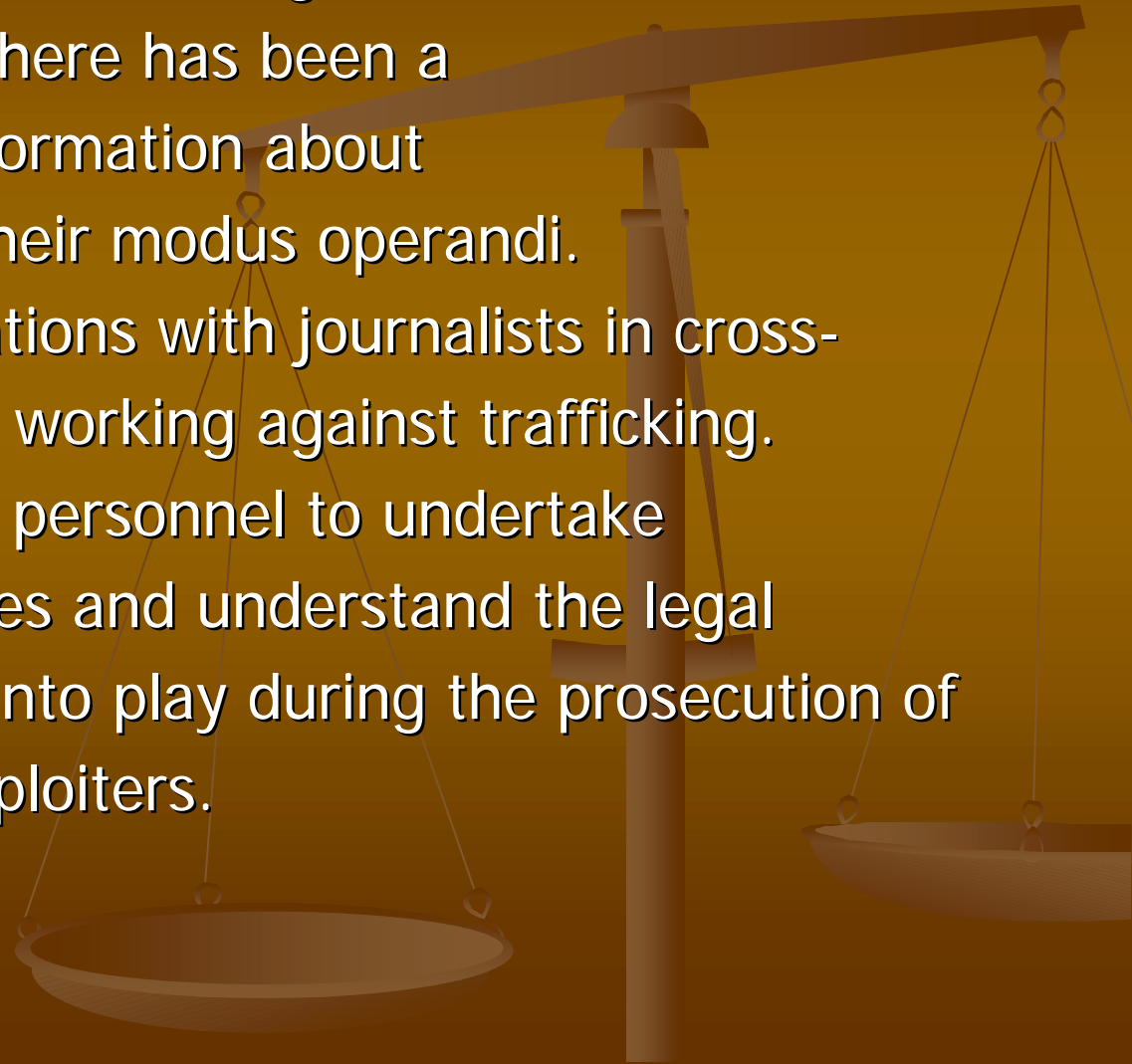
- Display of professionalism, courage and a humane attitude while reporting on human trafficking
 - Adhering to values and ethics while writing about human trafficking issues, especially about victims
 - Building network with anti-trafficking actors, awareness amongst the people, especially the poor and the marginalized
 - Equal partners in awareness raising campaign on trafficking prevention.
- 

The Meghalaya Experience:

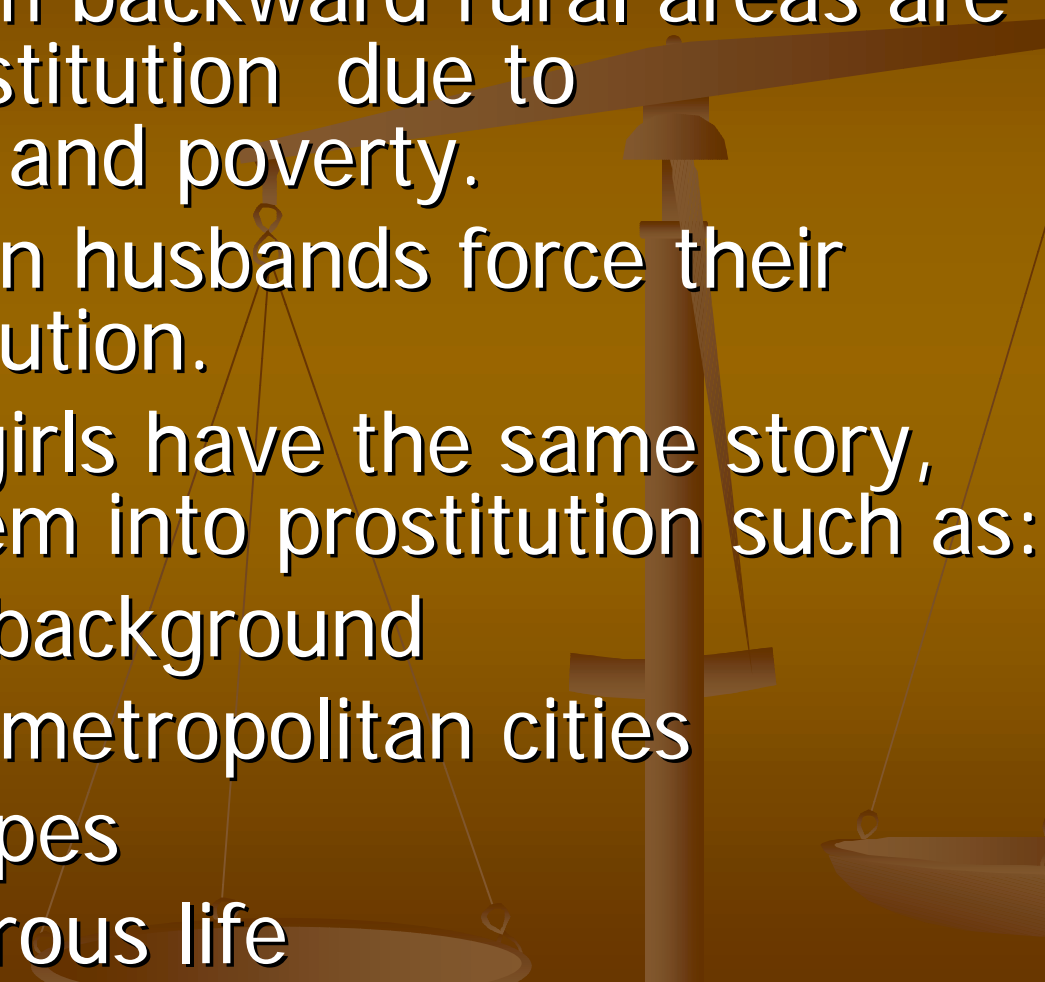
- Professional handling of trafficking stories
 - Avoidance of sensationalism
 - Protected the identity of trafficking victims and reported only so much to create awareness
 - Played a positive role in Prevention, Protection and Prosecution
 - Development of relevant documents with assistance from Impulse NGO Network that improved ethical standards while reporting trafficking related stories, especially children and
- 

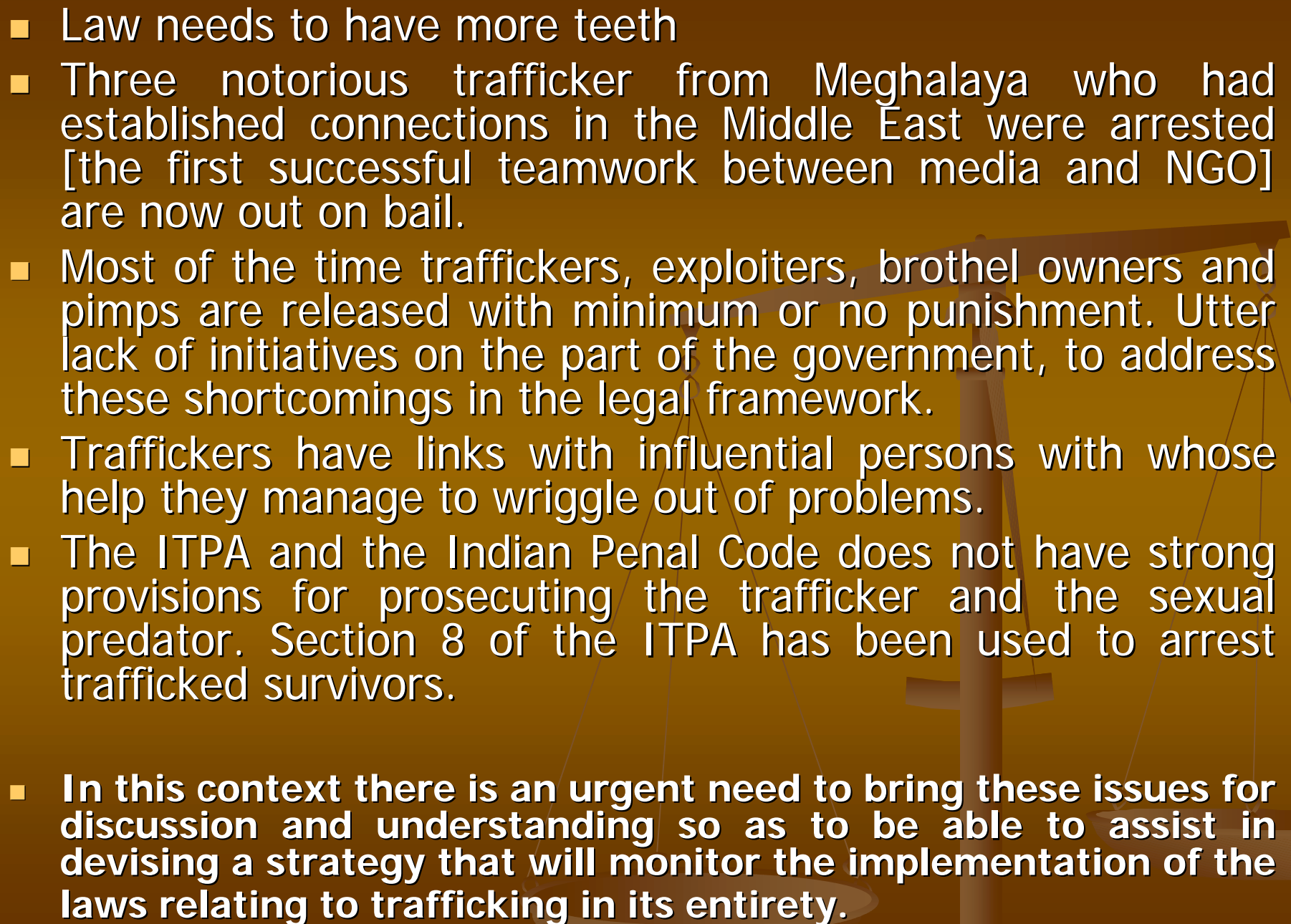
Creation of networks:

- In the North East, Meghalaya in particular from the first incident of trafficking that was exposed by the media there has been a healthy exchange of information about trafficking cartels and their modus operandi.
- Partnerships and relations with journalists in cross-border areas and NGOs working against trafficking.
- Willingness by Media personnel to undertake sensitization programmes and understand the legal framework that comes into play during the prosecution of traffickers and other exploiters.



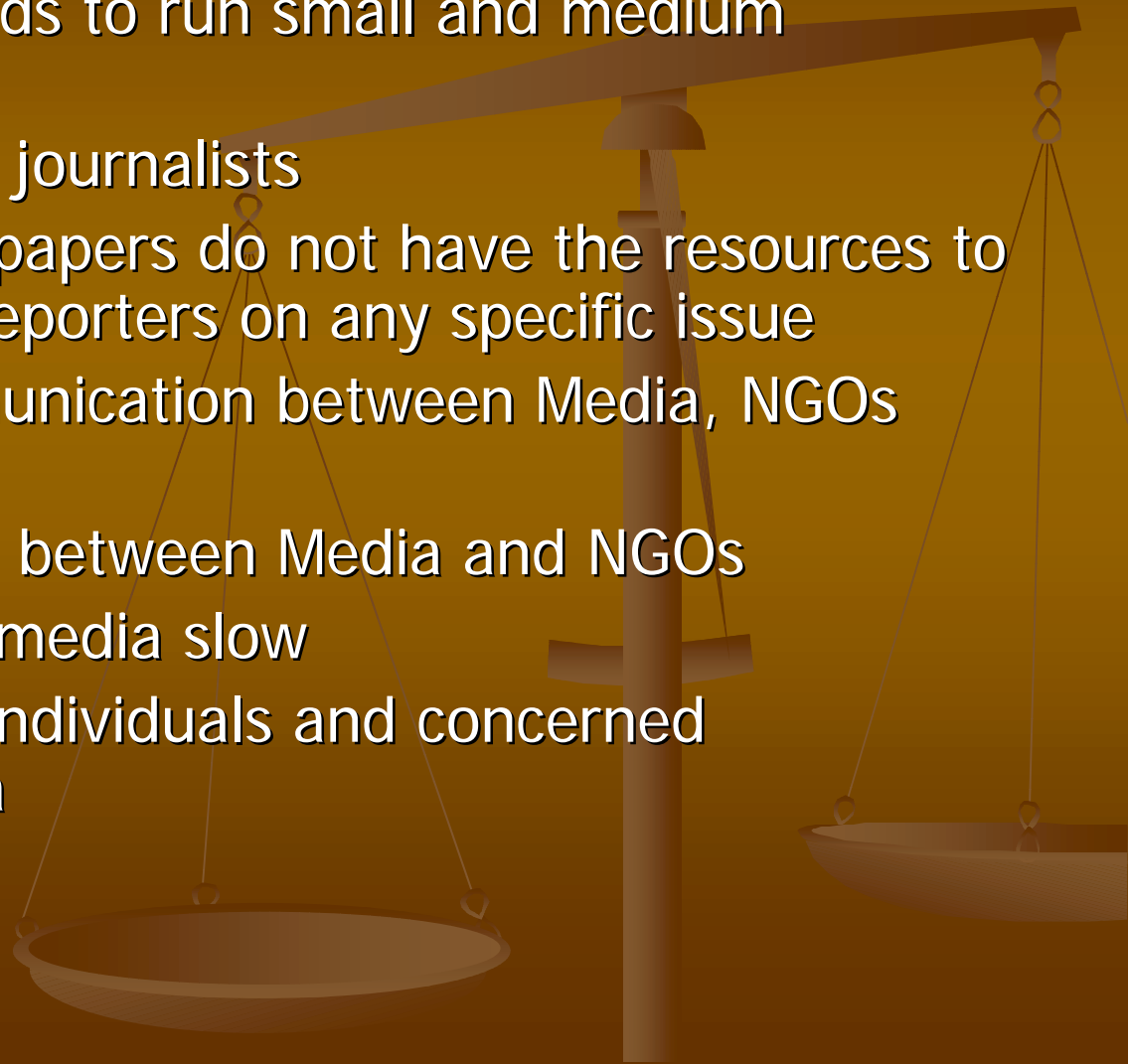
Media Findings: The North East experience

- Young girls from backward rural areas are forced into prostitution due to unemployment and poverty.
 - Sometimes-even husbands force their wives to prostitution.
 - Almost all the girls have the same story, which leads them into prostitution such as:
 - Low Economic background
 - Wanting job in metropolitan cities
 - Having high hopes
 - Urge for glamorous life
- 

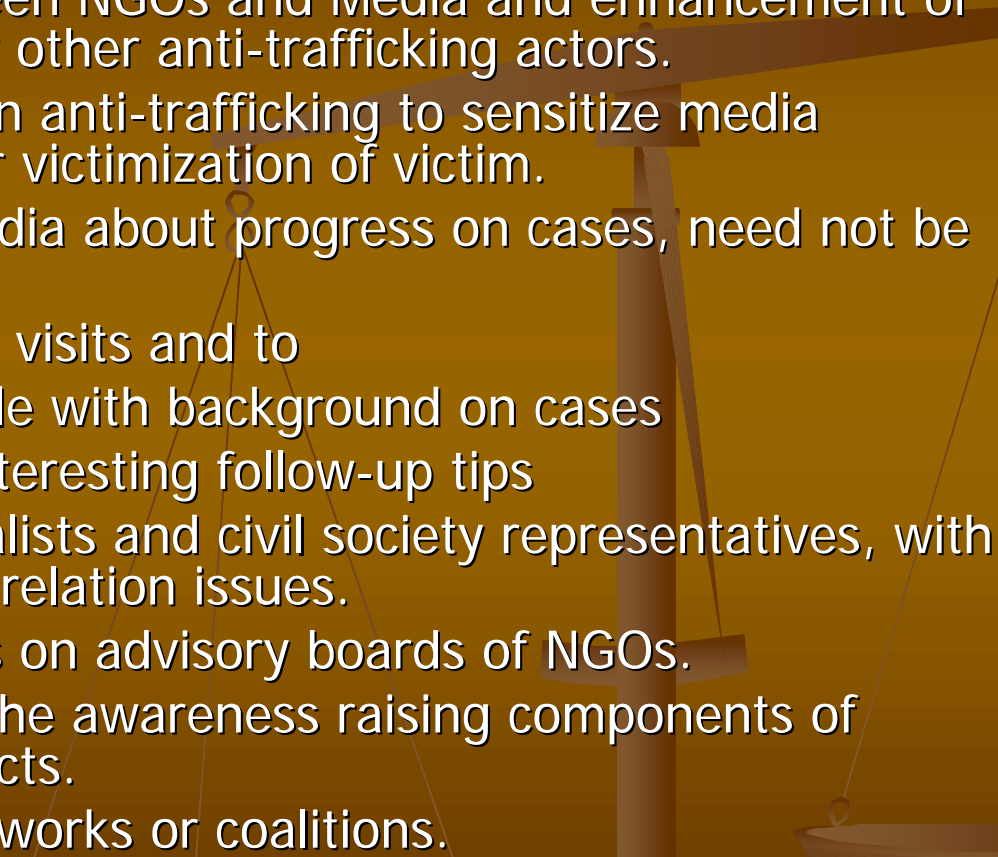
- 
- Law needs to have more teeth
 - Three notorious trafficker from Meghalaya who had established connections in the Middle East were arrested [the first successful teamwork between media and NGO] are now out on bail.
 - Most of the time traffickers, exploiters, brothel owners and pimps are released with minimum or no punishment. Utter lack of initiatives on the part of the government, to address these shortcomings in the legal framework.
 - Traffickers have links with influential persons with whose help they manage to wriggle out of problems.
 - The ITPA and the Indian Penal Code does not have strong provisions for prosecuting the trafficker and the sexual predator. Section 8 of the ITPA has been used to arrest trafficked survivors.
 - **In this context there is an urgent need to bring these issues for discussion and understanding so as to be able to assist in devising a strategy that will monitor the implementation of the laws relating to trafficking in its entirety.**

The Constraints:

- Lack of adequate funds to run small and medium newspapers
- No proper training of journalists
- The vernacular newspapers do not have the resources to spend to train their reporters on any specific issue
- Lack of proper communication between Media, NGOs and other agencies
- Tendency of mistrust between Media and NGOs
- Growth of electronic media slow
- Interest confined to individuals and concerned newspapers or media



The Answers:

- Cordial relationship between NGOs and Media and enhancement of cooperation with NGOs or other anti-trafficking actors.
 - Need for NGOs working on anti-trafficking to sensitize media personnel to avoid further victimization of victim.
 - Regular update to the media about progress on cases, need not be for reporting purpose
 - Taking the media for field visits and to
 - Providing the media people with background on cases
 - Provide the media with interesting follow-up tips
 - Joint trainings with journalists and civil society representatives, with particular focus on public relation issues.
 - Participation of journalists on advisory boards of NGOs.
 - Participation of media in the awareness raising components of NGOs' implemented projects.
 - Establishment of joint networks or coalitions.
- 

Motivation

- Journalists should be motivated to become part of anti-trafficking campaigns
- Incentives in the form of fellowship to train and learn about situations outside should be given
- Interactions and Debates on Television, Radio and other forms of media should be encouraged
- Presentations by Journalists, especially foot soldiers in seminars and round tables is important
- Should be encouraged in the documentation of best practices

The Campaign

➤ Slogan:

Speak out against human trafficking, against the government's policy on prosecution and prevention and also the unorganized manner in which rehabilitation of trafficked victims are carried out often forcing them towards prostitution.

I have drawn up plans to make a difference by using the media as tool to campaign against trafficking and this has motivated me to be a partner in anti-trafficking movements with organizations like the Impulse NGO Network.

***“Childhood under Threat” more than 1 billion children
are denied a healthy and protected upbringing”
UNICEFUSA, 2005***

Combat Child Trafficking

***“Only as we move closer
to realizing the rights of
all children will countries
move closer to their
goals of development
and peace”
Kofi A. Annan***

THANK YOU