The International Research Experience for Students and Young Researchers Program (IRE) sponsored by GSICS, Kobe University provided me with the opportunity to conduct a field research from July 1 to September 11, 2011. During the field trip, I visited India, Nepal and Bangladesh to collect firsthand information for my Ph.D. dissertation entitled “Prospect of Human Security in South Asia: the Case of Human Trafficking in India, Bangladesh and Nepal.” I interviewed security specialists, academic scholars, government officials, civil society representatives, trafficked persons and some traffickers/pimps in these countries. I also participated as an observer in police training workshops and seminars in order to acquire up-to-date knowledge about anti-trafficking initiatives in the region. In addition, I visited some red-light areas of these countries which are known as hubs for trafficking in women and children.

I started my mission through visiting the Institute of Defense and Studies Analysis (IDSA) in New Delhi. IDSA is a non-partisan and autonomous body which conducts research and policy relevant studies on all aspects of security. Its objective is to promote national and international security through the dissemination of knowledge on security related issues. It has been ranked as one of the top think tanks in Asia over the last few years.

At IDSA, I met Dr. Smruti S. Pattanaik, Dr. Puspita Das and Dr. Nihar Nayak, the Research fellows of the institution who are working on the security issues relating to border management among India, Bangladesh and Nepal. Dr. Das has edited a book entitled *India’s Border Management, 2010* which explores current border issues in these three countries.
and efforts of Indian government to deal with the border disputes through border enforcement and bilateral treaties. She mentioned that irregular migration across the Indo-Bangladesh border is a common phenomenon and sometimes trafficking in human beings takes place within the continuum of this migration. She noted that the main problem of trafficking is associated with the demand for cheap and exploitative labors such as prostitution of women and girls. So, she suggested for reducing the demand in order to combat trafficking. Dr. Nayak discussed the issue of trafficking within the backdrop of daily Nepali migration to India. He mentioned that migration is an inseparable part of the daily livelihood of Nepali people. He pointed out that root causes such as economic insecurity and decade-long conflict in Nepal have pushed many women and children into trafficking. He suggested that government initiatives and anti-trafficking laws need to focus on these root causes.

My next visit was at the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS) in New Delhi. There I interviewed Major General Dr. Dipankar Banerjee, the Founding Director of IPCS. According to General Banerjee, trafficking is an issue of human rights violation. It is not an issue of hardcore security, but a problem that is associated with ineffective law and order of the state. He mentioned that it is an enormous problem in the region particularly in India. Nepal and Bangladesh which needs to be seen from a socio-economic and a broader human rights perspective.

My third visit was at Jawaharlal Nehru University where I met Professor Dr. Partha Ghosh, the Chairman of South Asian Studies and Professor Dr. Anuradha Chenoy of International Studies department who is the co-author of the renowned book Human Security: Concepts and Implications published in 2007. Professor Chosh shared his view about trafficking and illegal migration problem from Bangladesh to India. Professor Chenoy discussed the emerging human security issues in the region among which trafficking is a growing concern.
After meeting the above academic scholars, I visited the following places and resource persons (government officers, UN officials, NGO personnel and police) in New Delhi, various districts of Kolkata and Jharkhand states in order to gather primary information. Basically, I used semi-structured interview and participant observation as the methods for collecting information. I used open-ended questionnaire so that I could have meaningful answers from the interviewees by effectively using their knowledge and feeling. I tried to encourage them to share their own opinions by creating a friendly environment and allowing them for discussion in order to make the interview interesting to them. All of them shared their valuable suggestions and comments regarding the problem of trafficking.
With Ms. Anju Dube (at the left), Program Officer at the UN Women. Picture of the regional office of UNODC (at the right). At UNODC, I met Project Associate Swasti Rana. Both of them shared their valuable opinion regarding the UN initiatives and gaps in combating trafficking at the regional level. (July, 2011)

Photographs with the staffs and survivors of trafficking in Stop Trafficking and Oppression of children and women (STOP) (at the left) and the chairperson of Action Against Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Children (ATSEC), South Asia, Mr. Manabendra Mandal (at the right), July, 2011. Mr. Mandal was the key person in Kolkata who helped me to get in touch with various resource persons in West Bengal. I have learnt from him about the current domestic legal efforts and sate-wise NGO initiatives against human trafficking in India. STOP is an NGO which is working on rehabilitation and integration of trafficked persons. They help trafficked survivors with providing job, for example, as cook and waiter/waitress in cafeteria. The picture at the left is one such cafeteria called Koushis where survivors are employed.
Mr. Sanjay, Program Officer of Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee at Sonagachi, Kolkata (at the left). Sex workers and their children in Bowbazar red-light area, Kolkata (at the right). Durbar is a renowned sex worker’s organization in the world which is working for the rights of the sex workers in Kolkata. Sex worker’s children in Bowbazar brothel shared their concern about trafficking and their future plans. (July, 2011)

Mr. Arjun Munda, honorable Chief Minister of Jharkhand state, Inspector General of Police and other state officials at the three-day police training workshop on combating human trafficking, 27-29 July, 2011(at the top). Chief Minister delivered his speech and thanked to all participant and committed to build strong network to fight against trafficking in India.

With Mr. Mohammed Aftab, National Manager of Save the Children, India at the workshop (at the bottom). He presented about the scenario of child trafficking in India and how police could deal with the problem in cooperation with NGOs.

(July, 2011)
In Nepal, I mainly visited important NGOs who have been working against trafficking since the beginning of the problem in the country. Following are some of the resource persons among many who I interviewed.

Dr. P.M. Nair, the Additional Director General of Police (Operations). He was the Project Coordinator of UNODC anti-human trafficking program and has written many books on trafficking in South Asia. He expressed about his valuable experience on working in this field. (August, 2011)

Ms. Durga Ghimire, President of ABC Nepal (at the top left). Mr. Sabin Gurung, Senior Program Officer of Maiti Nepal (at the bottom left). Staffs of Shakti Samuha with 2011 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report Hero Ms. Charimaya Tamang (2nd from the left of the top right picture). Ms. Durga is one of the pioneers of anti-trafficking campaign in Nepal that started in 1995. Maiti has become internationally recognized for its unique approach to human trafficking. Shakti Samuha is also another prominent NGO which is run by the trafficked survivors themselves. (August, 2011)
In Bangladesh, I interviewed government officials, NGO staffs and trafficked persons. I visited the Indo-Bangladesh border areas where people are assumed to be vulnerable to trafficking because of daily cross-border activity and displacement caused by natural disasters.

Photographs with trafficked persons in Satkhira and Jessore, Bangladesh, August, 2011. They shared their story of how they were trafficked, rescued and rehabilitated.

Photograph with Professor Ishrat Shamim of Dhaka University (in the middle of the top left), a renowned anti-trafficking scholar in South Asia and officer in charge in Ramna Police Station in Dhaka, August, 2011.

Photograph with the Program Director Mr. Shafiqul Islam of Dhaka Ahsania Mission (at the bottom left), September, 2011.

Photograph of a workshop on police training in Dhaka (at the top right), September, 2011.
I have also conducted interviews with UNICEF, ICRC and some other NGOs such as Sanlaap Kolkata, Prajwala Hyderabad, Child in Need Institution (CINI) in India, Women's Rehabilitation Centre (WOREC), Child Workers in Nepal (CWIN) in Nepal, Bangladesh National Woman Lawyers' Association (BNWLA), Center for Women and Children Studies (CWCS) and INCIDIN Bangladesh in Bangladesh apart from the abovementioned people and organizations. Besides, I interviewed public prosecutor and lawyer who are involved in prosecuting anti-trafficking cases in India. Some of the findings of the fieldwork includes: i) lack of authentic data on trafficking, ii) trafficked persons are victimized as illegal migrants, iii) anti-trafficking laws do not effectively address the problem, iv) rehabilitation and integration of trafficked persons remain some of the big challenges, v) trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation dominate the discourse of trafficking in the region, vi) border security or state security is the main focus for receiving government, not human security, vii) civil society, for example, NGOs have been trying to bring the issue of human rights abuse of the trafficked persons and pressure the government to look at the protection of the victims, etc.

IRE program indeed has given me the opportunity to conduct such a fieldwork through which I was able to experience some of the ground level realities regarding the problem of human trafficking in South Asia. I am grateful to all the interviewees and persons who were kind enough to arrange their valuable time and take part in the discussion. I am especially thankful to the trafficked persons who shared their life stories with me.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my Academic Supervisor Professor Dr. Ronni Alexander at the Graduate School of International Cooperation Studies (GSICS), Kobe University for encouraging me to apply for the IRE program. Without her continued and sincere academic support it would not have been possible to conduct such a valuable fieldwork for my Ph.D. dissertation.