

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND POVERTY: A CRITICAL CONNECTION

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Abstract

Human trafficking, as it is defined by international law, subsumes all forms of non-consensual exploitation. That is, whenever people are forced or lured into exploitation – no matter if movement of victims is involved – it is considered human trafficking. Human trafficking is the second most profitable underground industry after drugs in the world. Around the globe, its yearly earnings are \$35 billion to \$37 billion and it's estimated that at least 1 million people are trafficked each year. Poverty is one of basic factors that make individuals vulnerable to trafficking. While trafficking victims come from a range of backgrounds, including from economically privileged families, trafficking is linked inextricably with people with a lack of resources, notably job opportunities. Criminals take advantage of these vulnerable people, offering them a way to escape the harsh realities of their lives. People become desperate enough to enter into fraudulent employment schemes or be deceived into prostitution. Traffickers target people who have few economic opportunities and those struggling to meet basic needs. Ending trafficking requires addressing the demand of sex and cheap labour, which contributes to the enormous profit for the trafficker. It entails ending the poverty that makes human beings vulnerable to trafficking. In this paper, I will present a detailed study of how poverty is one of the main reasons of human trafficking and further discuss the preventive measures which have been implemented by state governments in providing eventual facilities in curbing the trafficking.

Keywords: Human trafficking, poverty, cheap labour.

INTRODUCTION

Human Trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons by the threat or use of kidnapping, force, fraud, deception or coercion, or by the giving or receiving of unlawful payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, and for the purpose of sexual exploitation or forced labor. Human trafficking is the fastest increasing criminal industry in today's world, coming in second after illegal drug-trade. (International Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children)

Globally, there are around 20 to 30 million slaves today; that equates to about three in every 1,000 people. Human trafficking, or modern slavery, generates about \$32 billion a year, making it the third-largest criminal activity in the world after drug

and arms trafficking. Human trafficking is generally split into two categories: sex trafficking and labor trafficking.

Human trafficking can be caused by a wide array of factors depending on the region, type of trafficking and cultural and social factors. However, there are some trends that are found with trafficking in general and across a wide range of regions. These include violence like civil unrest, internal conflict and war, lack of human rights, poverty, oppression and a general lack of opportunity.

Some of the most vulnerable people to trafficking are those who are migrating or displaced. This can be caused by a "push," like conflict or natural disaster, or a "pull," like the change for better economic and social opportunities.

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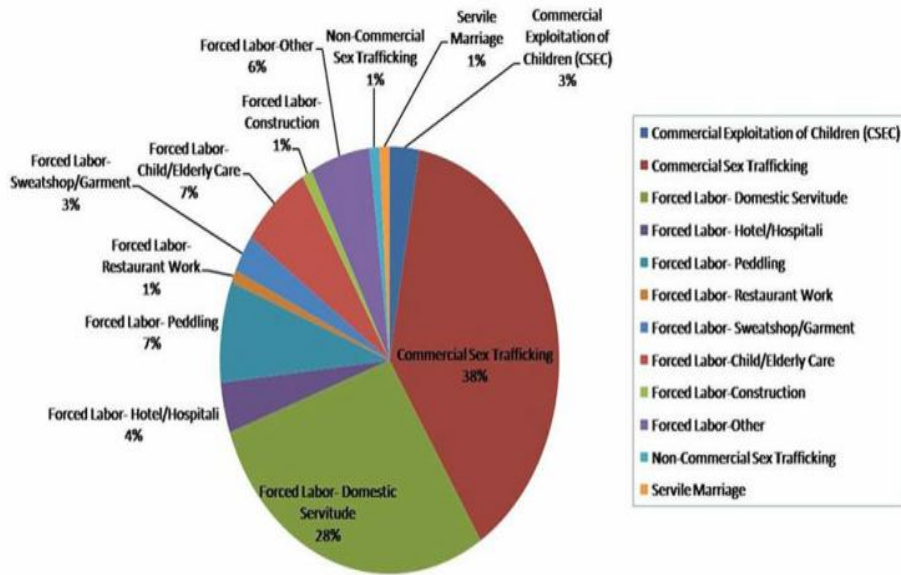


Figure. 1 : Classification of Human Trafficking

Poverty is a major cause of vulnerability to human trafficking. Because people who are impoverished are more motivated to seek better conditions, they tend to be exposed to conditions that make human trafficking easier. Vulnerable people seeking better conditions for themselves and their families may be trafficked through job offers, training and false economic opportunities.

Human Trafficking and its relationship with Poverty

Poverty is a condition of incapacitation of human being to experience a moderate livelihood, his inability have access to basic essentials of life and the uncertainty of what tomorrow has for him. The World Development Indicators (2004) explained that poverty is the deprivation of common necessities of life such as food, clothing, shelter and safe drinking water and may also include the deprivation of opportunities to learn, to obtain a better employment to stay out of poverty. The Bank Report (2005) explained that poverty is the inability of the individual to attain minimum standard of living.

The correlations between human trafficking and other social justice issues, such as poverty, are complex. Poverty is a major driver of the human trafficking industry. Those trapped in poverty are keen to obtain a better life for themselves and their families, and these vulnerable people are preyed on by unscrupulous people offering jobs, training, opportunities, remuneration and better life prospects.

There are a number of main ways that people initially become trafficked: (1) Many women and children are kidnapped into slavery. (2) Some children are sold to traders by their parents. (3) Some children are willingly sent with a trader by their parents, who have been promised that their children will receive a good education, an apprenticeship or a good job and good prospects or even just adequate food. (4) Some women are married, only to find that their marriage is a sham, and that their new husband has sold them into the sex industry. (5) Some respond to job advertisements offering good pay for manual labour, only to find that they are imprisoned on arrival, subjected to vastly different employment contracts to what they had been led to believe, with no escape, and may be made to work for many years labouring for no pay at all. (6) Many women apply to sham foreign job agencies or to study overseas, and go

abroad willingly thinking they will receive education or have employment as a waitress or a nanny etc. only to find when they reach their destination that the reality is very different, and that they are imprisoned, raped and forced into the prostitution industry.

In the current economic scenario families either have no assets or their incomes are inadequate. In the countryside, agriculture is less profitable than it formerly was and land has become increasingly scarce. Women and children are therefore compelled to contribute more towards the family's subsistence than in the past. Households become increasingly vulnerable as margin shrink. There is a chronic shortage of paid work, particularly for unskilled labour. Youth unemployment is high in many places.

The shortage of adequate, free schooling is particularly detrimental to young girls. Many children have still not received a basic education and are dependent on others who can read and write. Where education is available at all it is usually at a cost. It is often ill-adapted to the child's real circumstances and seldom leads to paid work.

These all condition increase the poverty which in turn increases the chance of people either trafficked or are compelled to get in trap of the traffickers in search of a better employment or living condition.

Trafficking in Person: an Indian Perspective

States with highest level of poverty are where large number of victims of trafficking originate (i.e. Odisha, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and West Bengal) (Fig 1). On the other hand the richer states have both a lower percentage of people below the poverty line in addition to relatively high literacy rates among both men and women due to positive economic development resulting from globalization. They are generally the destination for the traffickers to employ the persons who have been bought/trafficked from the poorer states.

On the other end of the continuum, there has also been in increase in the demand for casual labour, which requires both flexibility and mobility. Poor individual that engage in migrant labour are particularly susceptible to the manipulation of the traffickers. Livelihood loss is positively co-related with increase in trafficking. India has experienced

this particularly in Fishing, weaving etc. Evidence from south India shows that where these factors are present and there are high probability of natural disaster, trafficking tends to be more common. This further compounded by low cost competition in south Asia, increasing the demand for cheap labour and encouraging employers to exploit unskilled labours by trafficking.

It is often argued that Feminization of poverty is driving the increasing trend of trafficking in women. Investment in female workers is lower compared to their male counter parts and women receive less of what society produce. This extends to education, health care and productive assets that could improve their wellbeing.

State-wise & Category-wise Cases Of Human Trafficking In 2012

State/UT	2012					
	Buying of Girls for Prostitution	Selling of Girls for Prostitution	Procurement of Minor Girls	Importation of girls	Immoral Trafficking (Prevention) Act	Total
West Bengal	3	56	369	12	109	549
Tamil Nadu	0	0	28	0	500	528
Andhra Pradesh	0	4	30	0	472	506
Karnataka	5	0	45	32	335	412
Maharashtra	0	2	31	0	366	403
Kerala	0	0	10	0	210	220
Total (All India)	15	108	809	59	2,563	3,554

Source: NCRB

Figure 2. State-wise Cases of Human

State	2014		
	Buying of Girls	Selling of girls	Forced Labour
Gujarat	2	15	175

Figure 3. Statistics of Gujarat State

Why Human Trafficking Increasing in India?

Fundamental theory of demand and supply is applicable to this situation as well. Men for work generally migrate to major commercial cities and from here the demand for commercial sex is created. To fulfil the supply all sorts of efforts are made by the suppliers like abduction etc. Young girls and women belonging to poor families are at higher risk. Then comes the economic injustice and poverty. If you are born to a poor family in North-eastern state of India then you are at a higher risk of being sold. If you are born to a poor family and a girl then these chances further increases. Sometimes parents are also desperate to sell their daughters to earn money.

Social inequality, regional gender preference, imbalance and corruption are the other leading causes of human trafficking in India. Parents in tribal areas think that sending their kids means a better life in terms of education and safety. Parents also pay about Rs 6000-7000 to these agents for food and shelter.

Forced marriage

Girls and women are not only trafficked for prostitution but also bought and sold like commodity in many regions of India where female ratio is less as compared to male due to female infanticide. These are then forced to marry.

Bonded labour

Though debt labour is not known much but it is illegal in India and prevalent in our society. According to the International Labour Organization there are more than 11.7 million people working as a forced labour in the Asia-Pacific region. People running out of cash generally sell their kids as debt labour in exchange for cash. Both boys and girls are sold for this purpose and generally not paid for years.

Victims of human trafficking have great chances of suffering from issues like mental disorders, depression and anxiety. Women forced into sexual trafficking have at higher risk of getting affected from HIV and other STDs.

Action against guilty

Under the Immoral Trafficking Prevention Act (ITPA) trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation is penalized. The punishment ranges from seven

years' to life imprisonment. The Bonded Labor Abolition Act, the Child Labor Act, and the Juvenile Justice Act prohibit the bonded and forced labor in India. Because of the brutal gang rape of December 2012, government has passed a bill in which it was related to sexual violence and making sex trafficking have been amended. But still there is a huge gap between enactment and enforcement of these laws. Because of widespread corruption and bribe, it is easy for agents for bring these young boys and girls for their profit. But there should be strict disciplinary action against everybody involved in such a crime then only this problem can be addressed. Also better education and other facilities should be provided at native places so that parents do not opt these ways for their kids. Above all attitude towards women and young girls must change.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Increasing employment opportunities for young people and improving working conditions

Overshadowing the whole situation is the fact that young people, particularly young women, have no employment and therefore no income. Today, more and younger women need incomes of their own to support themselves and their families. As income-generating opportunities are often limited locally, they move to other areas in search of employment.

Ensuring Free Movement

While capital can move unhindered and rapidly from place to place in today's globalized world, labor migration, especially from poorer countries is more restricted. The freedom of people to migrate for work, within and across national frontiers, has a direct bearing on smuggling of human beings and human trafficking.

Education for children at special risk

It is essential to continue to focus on education, particularly for girls. In addition to primary schooling, comprehensive education leading to employment and regular income is urgently needed. Education must also be made accessible and relevant to the needs and experiences of poor and socially marginalised children and young people at risk of becoming victims of trafficking. Projects must focus more closely on the knowledge children require in order to deal with the reality they live in.

Promoting gender equality

Gender equality is a key issue and measures to reduce male oppression of females are fundamental. Unequal power relations and sexual stereotypes must be counteracted. Respect for and protection of women's rights must be strengthened by – among other means – amending discriminatory legislation and working to change traditional discriminatory norms and attitudes.

Discouraging the demand for sexual services

We should seek ways of reducing the demand for sexual services through awareness raising measures or by discouraging potential perpetrators and buyers of sexual services.

Informing people at risk

Measures to inform and make potential victims, their families and their local community aware of the risks and consequences of human trafficking can be a more immediate way to prevent trafficking in human beings. Schools are important fora for this type of awareness raising and information. It is also important to provide opportunities for organisations to monitor social trends and follow up students who have stopped attending school.

CURATIVE MEASURES

Facilitating reporting of violations

Efforts should be made to facilitate the reporting of crimes against women and children. Victims of human trafficking and similar violations need secure and accessible procedures for reporting offenders and alerting the authorities to their situation, either through the police or via special telephone helplines. NGOs are particularly experienced in setting up reporting or advisory hotlines or women's shelters for victims and possible witnesses.

Immediate assistance and support for victims

Victims of human trafficking must receive immediate assistance and support from the authorities when a case of human trafficking has been reported. They must be protected from the perpetrators and receive such legal, economic, medical and psycho-social assistance as they may need. Special requirements apply in cases involving children. The victim must

not be prosecuted under existing migration or prostitution laws.

Reforming the police and judiciary

There is a need for support to reform and train police services and the judicial system. Knowledge of the victims' legal rights is often inadequate and the treatment of women and children unsatisfactory. Victims of trafficking are frequently in real danger of further sexual assaults or abusive treatment, sometimes from the authorities whose duty it is to protect them.

Development of social services

Psychosocial treatment and counselling is not always available in developing countries, particularly in the least developed countries. Further improvement of specialised rehabilitation and counselling services for women and children is predicated on the general development of social policy and the expansion of organised social services.

Repatriation and rehabilitation

The return of victims of trafficking to their countries of origin and their rehabilitation call for a range of curative measures; in the destination country as well as in the country of origin. Returnees are often left, without money, at their country's borders, where they may face exactly the same problems that left them vulnerable to traffickers in the first place. The return of a victim can raise legal and administrative issues as around citizenship and the need for residence and work permits. Before the repatriation process is set in motion, efforts must be made to determine whether the victim can be assisted in finding work, accommodation and a meaningful social context. It is also important to ensure that she or he will be guaranteed protection and be free to lead a regular life. The journey to the country of origin must also be secure. The development of cooperation agreements and practical procedures between adjoining countries will be of assistance.

CONCLUSION

Human Trafficking is third-largest criminal activity in the world after drug and arms trafficking. Human trafficking can be caused by a wide array of factors depending on various factors. Poverty is the main

reason contributing to Human Trafficking. Poor economic structure and lack of employment opportunities are some of the main reasons which is making it difficult to control or keep a check on Human Trafficking. In India, Poorer states are generally the source and richer states are the destination for Human Traffickers. Various Preventive and Curative measures were mentioned in the paper which if not use to eradicate Human Trafficking, but will surely help in keeping a check on it.

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