

HUMAN TRAFFICKING - A BURNING PROBLEM IN INDIA

By Rita Biswas

Asst. Professor

Swayam Siddhi College of Management & Research

Email: Rita.Kbiswas@Gmail.Com

Mob: 78758-69306 & 9967007249

Abstract

Human trafficking is the trade in humans, most commonly for the purpose of sexual slavery, forced labor or commercial sexual exploitation for the trafficker or others, or for the extraction of organs or tissues, including surrogacy. Human trafficking is the third largest organized crime after drugs and the arms trade across the globe. According to the definition of the United Nations – “trafficking is any activity leading to recruitment, transportation, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or a position of vulnerability”. Close to 80% of the human trafficking across the world is done for sexual exploitation and the rest is for bonded labor and India is considered as the hub of this crime in Asia. India is also a destination for women and girls from Nepal and Bangladesh trafficked for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation. Nepali children are also trafficked to India for forced labor in circus shows. Indian women are trafficked to the Middle East for commercial sexual exploitation. Human trafficking in India results in women suffering from both mental and physical issues. According to a video posted on Yahoo, New Delhi has become a hub in the illegal trade of young girls being sold into prostitution, forced marriage and domestic labour. Through this aarticle, a trial is made to address the nature of this problem, reasons for increase of such cases in India and certain steps to fight with this issue.

KEY WORDS:

Human trafficking, Sexual Slavery, Forced Labor, Commercial Sexual Exploitation, Surrogacy, Organized Crime, Victims, STD

Introduction:

Human trafficking is the trade in humans, most commonly for the purpose of sexual slavery, forced labor or commercial sexual exploitation for the trafficker or others, or for the extraction of organs or tissues, including surrogacy and etc. Human trafficking can occur within a country or trans-nationally. Human trafficking is a crime against the person because of the violation of the victim's rights of movement through coercion and because of their commercial exploitation. Human trafficking is the trade in people, and does not necessarily involve the movement of the person to another location. Human trafficking in India, whilst illegal under Indian law, remains a significant problem. People are frequently illegally trafficked through India for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation and forced/bonded labour.

Human trafficking is the third largest organized crime after drugs and the arms trade across the globe. According to the definition of the United Nations – “trafficking is any activity leading to recruitment, transportation, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or a position of vulnerability”. Close to 80% of the human trafficking across the world is done for sexual exploitation and the rest is for bonded labor and India is considered as the hub of this crime in Asia. As per the statistics of the government – in every eight minutes a child goes missing in our country. In 2011 about 35,000 children were reported missing and more than 11,000 out of these were from West Bengal. Further, it is assumed that only 30% of the total cases are reported, so the actual number is pretty high.

India is also a destination for women and girls from Nepal and Bangladesh trafficked for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation. Nepali children are also trafficked to India for forced labour in circus shows. Indian women are trafficked to the Middle East for commercial sexual exploitation. Indian migrants who migrate willingly every year to the Middle East and Europe for work as domestic servants and low-skilled labourers may also end up part of the human-trafficking industry. In such cases, workers may have been 'recruited' by way of fraudulent recruitment practices that lead them directly into situations of forced labour, including debt

bondage; in other cases, high debts incurred to pay recruitment fees leave them vulnerable to exploitation by unscrupulous employers in the destination countries, where some are subjected to conditions of involuntary servitude, including non-payment of wages, restrictions on movement, unlawful withholding of passports, and physical or sexual abuse.

Human trafficking in India results in women suffering from both mental and physical issues. Mental issues include disorders, depression and anxiety. The lack of control women have in trafficking increases the risk of a victim's likeness to suffer from mental disorders. Women who are forced into trafficking are at a higher risk for HIV, TB, and other STD's. Condoms are rarely used and therefore there is a higher risk for victims to suffer from an STD.

Reports on Human Trafficking in India

According to a video posted on Yahoo, New Delhi has become a hub in the illegal trade of young girls being sold into prostitution, forced marriage and domestic labour. This is not the first time that the capital has come under the radar for human trafficking. In August 2013, a report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), titled 'Current Status of Victim Service Providers and Criminal Justice Actors in India 2013' documented how Delhi is one of the emerging hubs and transit points for trafficking. The report highlighted how girls are often kept in remote locations in the NCR, especially by people from tribes like Bedia, Nat and Kanjar, who sell them once they attain puberty. "The demand for children for domestic work is very high in Delhi. Delhi is emerging as a destination and transit point and it also has a sizeable number of missing children," said Ravi Kant, Supreme Court advocate and a principal author of the report, to the Times of India. Reports of October, 2013 had stated how almost half the number of the world's enslaved are in India, where slavery ranges from bonded labour in quarries and kilns to commercial sex exploitation. Rural Development Minister Jairam Ramesh said that initially 10 critically vulnerable districts have been taken up to rehabilitate bonded labourers through the Centre's ambitious National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM). The ten districts are:

- Gaya in Bihar,

- Bastar and Kondagaon in Chattisgarh,
- Prakasam and Chittoor in Andhra Pradesh,
- Kanchipuram and
- Vellore in Tamil Nadu
- Bolangir and Bargarh in Odisha and
- Gumla in Jharkhand.

On 7th February, 2014, Delhi Police arrested a Ugandan woman for allegedly pushing women from her country into prostitution. A court here Friday remanded her in one day's police custody. Police arrested Nabakula alias Irene Thursday for forcing Ugandan women into the flesh trade. She was booked under various charges dealing with extortion and immoral trafficking. Police also accused her of forcibly taking away the passports of three women. Irene was presented before Metropolitan Magistrate Chetna Singh Friday and remanded in one day's police custody.

Police said her custodial interrogation is required to bust the syndicate that is allegedly forcing women into prostitution. Police are also looking for others who are involved. Meanwhile, the arrested Ugandan woman's counsel R.K. Yadav told IANS that statements of two women were recorded but the third woman's could not be recorded as a translator was not available and the woman was not well versed with either Hindi or English. The three women earlier this week (First week of February, 2014) approached the Delhi government for help and said they were victims of the alleged sex racket.

Karnataka is turning out to be a hotspot of human trafficking, reporting the third highest number of cases in the country during 2009-12. Home ministry data says 1,379 human trafficking cases were reported from Karnataka in the four-year period. Tamil Nadu leads the table with 2,244 cases and Andhra Pradesh snapping at its neighbour's heels at 2,157.

Human traffickers find a fitting breeding ground in the fast-growing southern metros, luring victims with huge salaries and better lifestyles. A sizeable chunk of trafficking victims, migrant labourers in particular, are often forced into sex work. Recent raids led to the rescue of over 300 bonded labourers in Bangalore. NGO and government officials say this is only the tip of the iceberg.

Meena Jain, chairperson, Child Welfare Committee, said Bangalore has become a human trafficking hub over the years, and many of the victims are children. "Many rescued children brought to our care centers were made to work under inhuman conditions in factories and sweatshops across the city," she said.

Causes of Human Trafficking 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 fulfill 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.

It is followed by the economic injustice and poverty. If you are born to a poor family in Northeastern 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.

So, in a nut shell these are the reasons behind Human Trafficking:

- The main targets are the people who lack job opportunities.
- People who have been victim to regional imbalances or social discrimination.
- People who are mentally disturbed.
- Forced Marriage.
- Actions against Guilty.
- People who have growing deprivation and are from the marginalized.
- People caught in debt bondages.
- People whose parents think that their children are burden and sell them off.

So, in simple words- the poor, helpless people are the ones who are exploited the most through Human Trafficking.

Ways to fight the problem:

- We can take help of the media-spread awareness.
- The government, in association with the NGO can also help to create awareness.
- The Indian government has laid down laws in the Constitution like the Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act, 1956, The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act.
- In 2007, three state governments established anti-trafficking police units, the first of this kind in the India.

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