

TRAFFICKING OF GIRLS AND WOMEN –THE GROWING MENACE

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Abstract

Trafficking of women and children has become a major cause of concern. The poverty-stricken zones have been known to be a hotbed for trafficker as this section of society who are fighting for their livelihood are easily being lured by the human traffickers. Young girls who are illiterate or with low level of education and minimal formal educations maybe up to primary school and runaway girls from homes are more prone to be trafficked. Now-a-day's trafficker not only targets the girls but also target the children and women from minority, hill tribes, illegal migrants, etc. Making education accessible and spreading awareness among the vulnerable sections is must. As many of them are unaware of their rights their exploited situations so they don't develop the courage to seek for redress. Poverty, illiteracy, lack of employment avenues etc. need to be addressed and strengthening vigil and surveillance on human trafficking with good governance need to be adopted for prevention. Various strategies can also be taken to combat trafficking such as awareness camp among young girls, children and women's to prevent themselves from being trafficked, rehabilitation for the victims who are being trafficked, teaching the parents of the girl child about long term advantages of girls education, creating alternative earning opportunities for the women and girls are some of the ways where they can see their lives in a better way.

Keywords: Trafficking, Women, Girls and Menace

INTRODUCTION

Trafficking of women is such a racket in which fraud, force, and coercion are used to transport women and children across international boundaries for economic gain. The children, women and girls are usually lured out of the state under the pretext of providing education and other facilities but were instead engaged for sexual and economic exploitation, particularly for prostitution and pornography, forced labor, and as commercial workers in agriculture and for domestic purpose. Force marriages or to be sold as brides to aged persons and for participation in hostilities and such related purposes is also seen. The United Nations Office On Drugs and Crime (UNODC) defines human trafficking as any form of recruiting, transporting, transferring, harboring, or receiving a person through threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, or deception. There are approximately 800,000 people trafficked across international borders annually and of these, 80% are women or girls and 50% are minors. The risk for women further may be more in areas where extreme gender discrimination exists. However, vulnerable populations who have little social and legal protection are the most at risk.

UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS OF TRAFFICKING

In trafficking victims is usually sold to the sex traders by parents, other family members,

husbands, and a few are forcibly kidnapped by traffickers. The most common illegal practice used among victims is debt bondage, where the victim has to deliver personal services to repay some form of debt. The victims are usually promised a lucrative job with a good profile, education, or citizenship in a foreign country or sometimes offered a good marriage proposal that is turned into bondage. Traffickers or pimps usually search for victims who are either economically or socially vulnerable. They may often find families who are poor and try to purchase girls or young women with the hope and assurance of a good life in a better place or may approach women who are already in prostitution. These include women and girls who are susceptible to poverty, societal isolation, drug addiction, violence in the family, having a history of sexual abuse, family dysfunction, school dropouts, or having a record of criminal background, orphans, women with physical disabilities, and those who are illiterate. Human traffickers get their victims through the use of physical force, threats, psychological manipulation, and various other tactics. Traffickers looking for a new victim may physically capture or restrain their target until they gain control over them. More commonly, traffickers induce their victims into employment relationships by making false promises about the nature of their future jobs. It also involves giving a small amount of cash, clothes, shelter, food, and drugs that make them feel obligated or indebted to the traffickers. The other form is using violence, threats, or aggression to recruit the victim and condemn to slavery. Once women and girls become involved in the sex trafficking industry, it becomes very difficult for them to get rid of. Language, fear, limited knowledge, and lack of money are other barriers that women and girls usually face to prevent themselves from sex trafficking. In many parts of the country, legacy prostitution or the involuntary subjugation of future generations of girls in the sex trafficking industry has become a kind of the expected societal norm.

THE IMMENSITY OF THE PROBLEM

Human trafficking is a global problem and is regarded as one of the world's most shameful and offensive crimes, affecting the lives of millions of people around the world and swindles them of their dignity. It is the fastest-growing area of crime and the third-largest income-generating revenue for organized crime. Many traffickers have experienced the same trauma and have been victimized at some point in their lives and repeat the same to others. Here the women and girls are sold into sex trafficking and they earn profits for their traffickers for many years. Traffickers hoodwink women, men, and children from all corners of the world and force them into ruthless situations every day. According to data, 95% of trafficked persons in India are forced into prostitution (Divya, 2020). According to the recent NCRB lists a total of 6,616 human trafficking cases are registered in India, out of which trafficking for the sex trade are the highest in numbers (Munshi, 2020). According to a report by the National Human Rights Commission of India, 40,000 children are abducted each year, leaving 11,000 untraced. In 2019, over one thousand human trafficking cases were reported with over three thousand victims across India. Our country has emerged as a happy hunting ground for human traffickers and is borne out of by official figure every year. The state of Maharashtra had the highest number of human trafficking cases in the country. While some fortunate ones are rescued and large majority are never seen again.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TOWARDS TRAFFICKING

In many societies and cultures girls and women are abused, exploited, and considered burdens creating a risky and unsafe living environment for them to stay. Lack of economic opportunities and hurdles in their places of dwelling, the crisis in education, and children who are maltreated

and not taken care of usually run away from home to migrating to other places by choice. As there are no opportunities for them for upgrading and improving their status, they are easily identified and trapped by the traffickers. Domestic violence is also one of the contributing factors where the victims go to other places to get rid of the abusive environment and get trapped in the hands of the traffickers. Due to globalization and the rise of internet technology and the use and demand of various pornography sites, the trafficking of females is high to use them to sell, recruit and exploit them in various sex-related businesses.

CONSEQUENCES OF TRAFFICKING

Human trafficking and victims of sex trafficking are likely to expose to adverse conditions that can negatively affect the physical, mental, and emotional health of the girls and women. It can affect anyone who is involved and can impair one's life forever. Sex-trafficked women are found to be less stable; more isolated, and had higher levels of fear, more severe trauma, and greater mental health needs than victims of other crimes. Victims of human trafficking can experience catastrophic psychological effects during and after their trafficking experience. Many end up experiencing depression, memory loss, anxiety, fear, guilt, shame post-traumatic stress, difficulty in relationships, and other severe forms of mental trauma. The intensity of trauma of the victims may be moderate to severe associated with mental, emotional, and psychological abuse and torture. Furthermore, victims may be forced by the traffickers to develop substance abuse or other addictions from substances to cope or escape their desperate situations. Some individuals who return home or escape a trafficking situation may be excluded from the society of their origin due to a stigma they face; they may be evaded by their family and friends and feel unwanted. Unfortunately, this isolation can make them vulnerable to be trafficked again or lead them to return to abusive lifestyle ones again. Many victims who escape lack education since they are been trafficked at a young age and were unable to attend school or college so they find it hard to live independently. After being confined to the same service for a long period and not being allowed to learn new skills the victims can become dependent and may have a hard time living on their own.

WAY FORWARD TOWARDS PREVENTION OF TRAFFICKING OF GIRLS AND WOMEN

Awareness and educational initiatives may be implemented toward the general public, in the form of raising awareness and information campaigns, or toward women and girls who are the most vulnerable population to be trafficked. There are several ways that information can be disseminated such as in the school for the awareness of the students and also to the general public such as through press conferences, media campaigns, announcements, distribution of folders and leaflets, documentary films, through rally and street play and via social media platform. An effective anti-trafficking campaign is a must within a short duration for the people to eradicate the offense from the root. It is very important to note that if every woman is provided equal privileged and empowerment then each one will have a similar capacity to shine bright and then we can celebrate the success of women empowerment around the globe.

CONCLUSION

Human trafficking is the fastest-growing criminal offense and a big problem in today's society and the victims have tremendous mental and physical scars. The majority of the human trafficking cases are sexual exploitation of girls and women. The individuals are forced to work hard every single day with no pay under the threat of violence. It is an appalling human right violation that

will not promptly take one's leave. To end the menace and ensure that all leave as they should the Government needs to adopt a multi pronged approach. Increased awareness and resources are crucial to eradicate the entire process of trafficking from the ground. Many people still do not know what trafficking is or do not care and this is just due to a lack of concern and awareness. More needs to be done and we all should stand against human trafficking before it is too late. By becoming more aware and responsive of the indicators of human trafficking, we will be in a better position to advocate for those who cannot do so for themselves and be the voice to the voiceless. People need to talk about this crucial issue and communities need to be raised. The law enforcing mechanism need to be strengthen and governments need to be responsive to the unified message that human trafficking can be overcome only with good governance.

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