



## 10. Human Trafficking : Motives, Causes and Consequences

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### **Abstract**

*Human Trafficking is a serious crime with various motives and varieties of causes that lead to major social, psychological and psycho-social consequences. Worldwide, trafficking is a most frequently argued and highly focused social issue among researchers from various disciplines. Human trafficking is a major social issue inducing threats to citizens of any country and its government. Though trafficking is a severely punishable offence, strict laws are in force and practice, innovating methodologies being implemented, completely uprooting the crime is still an uncontrollable issue in most of the countries. The present paper reviews the motives, causes and consequences of Human trafficking in detail.*

**Key Words:** trafficking, illicit drug trafficking, perpetrators, forced labour, girl child, economical, psycho –social causes

### **Introduction**

Human trafficking is a major social issue inducing threats to citizens of any country and its government. Though trafficking is a severely punishable offence, strict laws are in force and practice, innovating methodologies being implemented, completely uprooting the crime is still an uncontrollable issue in most of the countries. Vulnerable to such acts are young girls, economically weaker sections, socially backward, women between the age of 30-40 years and children of poor parents. Particularly, trafficking young females, under thirty years of age is a serious problem that threatens all most all nations in the world. Women and girls are trafficked for various motives such as forced marriage, commercial sex, compelled labour for factory works, servant maid in residences, begging, and agricultural works as laborers, and also victims have been employed as child soldiers by insurgents or in terrorist groups. Women and girls are

trafficked within the country for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation and forced marriage, especially in those areas where the sex ratio is highly skewed in favour of men groups.

Surprisingly, the survey reveals India is also a destination for women and girls who are trafficked from neighbouring countries for sexual exploitation. Women from India are trafficked to the middle east and European countries to work in houses as domestic servants and semi-skilled or low-skilled workers. Due to poverty, poor education and family circumstances, young girls are forced to send for domestic work in other countries.

According to laws, human trafficking is a criminal offence in many countries, whereas it is a high profit-earning business without investments for perpetrators who are involved in such acts. Human trafficking is a worldwide industry, incorporating millions of people annually, and generating an annual turnover of billions of dollars (Belser, 2005). According to Vidushy (2016) trafficking is identified as one of the fastest growing, money-flowing criminal industry in the world. Humans are not only trafficked for money earning but also for other reasons such as organ theft, illicit drug trafficking, sexual abuse, and prostitution. It is an attractive business for criminal groups as it has low start-up costs, minimal risks, high profits and large demand (Shelley, 2010).

Juvenile sex trafficking victims are often arrested for criminal acts such as criminal trespass, disorderly conduct, loitering, obstructing public passages, presenting false identification, and possession of a controlled substance, which are fundamentally related to trafficking victimization and are sometimes referred to as “masking crimes” (Martell Brunsink, 2016). Young children are often trafficked for sexual abuses, labourers in industry and begging caused to enact laws to protect children from sexual abuse. The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012 prohibits a range of sexual offences against children under the age of 18.

According to the Walk Free Foundation Global Slavery Index 2014, India is home to an estimated 14 million victims of human trafficking, including victims of sex trafficking, bonded labour, child labour, domestic servitude and forced marriage.

Several factors contribute to trade in human beings particularly in women and children. The factors of trafficking can be classified into 1) push and 2) pull factors. Poor socio-economic



conditions, poverty, the destitution of some people due to natural disasters, lack of education, skill and income opportunities for women in rural areas, unawareness of trafficker's inner motive, money for dowries of daughters, dysfunctional family life, female-related domestic violence, low status of girl children are the push factors. Sending children for work overseas, selling their children due to poverty, earning more money, and living luxurious life by relatives are the underlying motives for trafficking women and children. Traffickers often identify and use vulnerable populations in their business and enjoy financial benefits.

Employment propositions in big cities, easy money earning, the promise of better pay and a luxurious safe life made by the perpetrators, the demand of young girls for marriage in other regions, growing demand of young kids for adoption, rise in demand for women are the factors contributing for rapidly expanding sex industry. Demand for young girls for sexual exploitation is the result of the belief system in some communities that physical intimacy or sexual intercourse with young girls reduces men's chances of getting infected with HIV/AIDS, or of the myth that sexual intercourse with a virgin is the remedy from impotence and HIV/AIDS.

In the northern states of Haryana and Punjab, the practice of female foeticide fuelled internal trafficking that caused for shortage of women and reduced the female ratio compared to males. And these places are better platforms for trafficking by the perpetrators. Generally, traffickers engage in this criminal business by procuring young girls from remote states/ villages like Assam and Odissa with attractive fake promises or tricky words. They also promised their parents that the girls were procured for marrying but later they were forced to push into prostitution.

Victims may be vulnerable due to political and economic instability in their countries of origin, membership in single-parent households, unemployment, homelessness, low social status, physical impairment, mental impairment, or substance dependence. Gender discrimination and violence, forced marriage, and bonded labour are among the many practices that make people vulnerable and potential targets of both transnational and internal trafficking (Danailova-Trainor and Laczko, 2010).

Human trafficking is the only transnational crime where women are significantly represented (importantly, not only as victims but also as perpetrators and activists) (Shelley, 2010). Young girls and women from Bangladesh and Nepal walking into India is common. This is treated as illegal migration from these neighboring countries and sometimes that ends up in trafficking. It also depends on the supply and demand ratio of sending and receiving countries, the associated factors of the supply side are poverty, illiteracy, structural inequality, poor opportunity for livelihood. In the demand side is the need of labour with lowest cost in the place of employment. The causes of human trafficking are primarily towards earning more money since victims are considered commodities and they are smuggled illegally for payment across borders because trafficking is a high profit business for smugglers. Trafficked people are often in demand in the recipient country, primarily to fill gaps in the employment structure that needs cheap, irregular labour (Vayrynen, 2003).

Human trafficking generates large illegal profits which, combined with the perceived low risk of arrest and prosecution for traffickers, help to fuel trafficking (Dank, et al. 2014). Women and girls from neighboring countries like Bangladesh and Nepal are prone to be exploited and trafficked to India that involves physical, sexual, and psychological abuse, violence, forced for substance abuse, manipulation, economic exploitation, deprivation, torture, and abusive working and living conditions. Trucking routes served by prostitution rings along trucking routes can cause HIV/AIDS and other STIs to be spread even more widely, including across international borders (Todres, 2011).

Trafficked victims encounter prolonged and repeated trauma like other violent crimes. Research reports documented the details of men, women and children abused in specific exploitative conditions that resulted in short- and long-term physical injuries, disabilities, and deaths.

Individuals trafficked for the sex industry also experience an increased risk of contracting HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Frequently denied the choice to use condoms, sex trafficking victims can introduce HIV to the broader population. Thus, trafficked persons are at greater risk of HIV infection since most of the women are forced to be involved in prostitution, sexually abused and sold to red light areas. This cruel acts resulted in trauma

encountered by victims such as post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression, alienation, disorientation, aggression, and difficulty concentrating.

Todres (2011) cited that trafficked persons experience physical, sexual, and emotional violence at the hands of traffickers, pimps, employers, and others. They are also exposed to various workplace, health, and environmental hazards. Studies indicate that trauma worsens during the trafficking process and may persist for a long duration even after the end of such exploitation.

Health effects are not limited only to those trafficked for sexual exploitation. Trafficked workers live and work in overcrowded, unsanitary conditions, with no consideration of safety (Todres, 2011). Ottisova, et al. (2016) revealed common physical health problems of victims of trafficking often include physical complaints such as headache, stomach pain and back pain. Psychological complaints such as depression, anxiety, post traumatic stress disorder, and other psychiatric conditions. Many victims also struggle with alcohol and drug addiction, either as a result of traffickers' control or as a coping mechanism, and need treatment programs to recover (Office for Victims of Crime and Bureau of Justice Assistance, 2017).

### **Consequences of Trafficking**

Trafficking is not only a social or economic threat in every nation and it severely affects victim's physical, mental, social, and occupational health for life long. The act of trafficking and human rights violations can have very serious consequences for the victim. Trafficked women may suffer from serious health problems, including physical health, reproductive health and mental health. Field workers and service agencies need to be trained in dealing with victim's social consequences and the interrelated health issues that occur due to trafficking.

Trafficked victims often suffer from serious physical abuse ,physical exhaustion and starvation. Further, they encounter typical injuries i.e broken bones, concussion, bruising or burns and other physical injuries consistent with an assault. Some of these serious injuries can cause lasting health problems and may require long-term treatment. Women who are trafficked abused and tortured for an extensive period of time suffer from health issues due to prolonged torture.



Trafficked women often assaulted sexually is cited as a traumatic event that produces physical and emotional consequences among victims. Such sexual assaults can produce many different experiences for the victims. The assaults may be an unwanted touch, grab, oral sex, anal sex, sexual penetration with an object, and/or sexual intercourse.

Trafficking victims are often forced to engage in sexual acts which are physical or non-physical force, force from someone with authority, bribe or manipulation, or forced consumption of alcohol or drugs. This sexual assault, makes a woman experience a range of physical consequences and emotional reactions including severe stress and depression.

Those women involved in the commercial sex trade are vulnerable to sexual and reproductive health complications that include sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and other gynecological problems. Trafficked women are forced to be involved in commercial sex work with restricted access to contraceptive methods for birth control, and also irregular gynecological examinations. Such women face the risk of unwanted pregnancies and miscarriages. Women who are involved in prostitution experience high rates of abortion, sterilization and infertility and also they encounter the high risk of unwanted pregnancies and miscarriages.

Severe guilty feelings, post-traumatic stress disorder (PSTD), depression, anxiety, substance abuse and eating disorders are the major physical/emotional consequences of health occur due to sexual and physical abuse. Hence, trafficked women often need psychological care as part of standard medical treatment because mental anguish can lead to self-mutilation and suicide in extreme cases.

Victims of human trafficking can experience devastating psychological effects during and after their trafficking experience. Many survivors may end up experiencing post-traumatic stress, difficulty in relationships, depression, memory loss, anxiety, fear, guilt, shame, and other severe forms of mental trauma. Women victims of trafficking may also face legal consequences that depend on the country where the crime occurred. Victims are charged with violating the local law when trafficked victims come to the attention of local authorities.

Many countries were affected due to COVID -19 Pandemic Lockdown that caused poverty and vulnerabilities. Loss of livelihood and movement restrictions motivated perpetrators to recruit

victims in their local areas. The pandemic lockdown severely caused many people to become vulnerable due to their economic crises which caused for contract labor and sexual exploitations in their local area itself. The most vulnerable group in this situation for recruitment and exploitation were women, children, and migrant workers.

High Profits and low risks due to weak law enforcement and poor prosecution motivate the perpetrators to traffick people. To eradicate or manage this issue, legal punishments for such crimes must be severe. To conclude, combating human trafficking requires a multi-pronged approach involving prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnerships including strengthening of law enforcement and legal framework, raising public awareness, and addressing root causes.

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