Causes and Effects of Human Trafficking: Analytical Essay

Introduction

Trafficking is one of the worst types of contemporary slavery that violates flagrantly human rights, wreck human dignity and directly affects the victim physically and mentally. Trafficking of women and children is an alarming issue prevalent in India. In 2016, 19,223 women and children were trafficked, compared to 15,448 in 2015, according to the Ministry of Women and Child Development.[footnoteRef:1] It is the highest number of recorded victims in West Bengal's eastern state. The patterns of trafficking in India indicate that about 90% of trafficking is domestic, with only 10% taking place across international borders.[footnoteRef:2] India maintains close border proximity to its immediate neighbours and, mostly from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar, and Cambodia, girls are trafficked into India. Given the size and diversity of India, there are different trends in trafficking across all 29 states. Victims of trafficking are exploited in different ways, including begging, domestic workers, forced prostitution, bonded or agricultural labour, entertainment, and donation of organs. This dissertation, however, will concentrate on India's women and girls trafficking. [1: Nita Bhalla, ‘Almost 20,000 women and children trafficked in India in 2016’, March 9, 2017, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-india-trafficking/almost-20000-women-and-children-trafficked-in-india-in-2016-idUSKBN16G29G] [2: Sadika Hammed, Sandile Hlatshwayo, Evan Tanner, Meltem Turker and Jungwon Yang, ‘Human Trafficking in India: Dynamics, Current Efforts, and Intervention Opportinities for The Asia Foundation, March 12, 2010, https://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/StanfordHumanTraffickingIndiaFinalReport.pdf]

Woefully, India has been placed on Tier 2 in the Trafficking in Persons Report 2018[footnoteRef:3]is classified as those where the Indian government does not fully comply with the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA) minimum standards to eliminate trafficking in several key areas. Overall victim protection stayed insufficient and inconsistent, and sometimes the state penalized victims by arresting them for offenses committed as a consequence of trafficking in human beings. The government’s conviction rate and the amount of inquiries, prosecutions, and convictions were disproportionately small compared to the trafficking scale in India. The government did not report investigating such allegations despite reports of some officials complicit in trafficking. [3: United States Department of State, 2018 Trafficking in Persons Report - India, 28 June 2018, available at: https://www.refworld.org/docid/5b3e0b1ea.html [accessed 15 September 2019]]

Approximately 80% of all trafficking globally is for sexual exploitation and India is considered as the hub of this crime in Asia.[footnoteRef:4] The traffickers still use India as a nation to receive, send and transit victims. Women and children are India's primary trafficking victims.[footnoteRef:5] According to a report published by the Government of India, there are about 10 million sex workers in India, of whom 1,000,000 belong to Mumbai alone, Asia's largest center of the sex industry. Sex trafficking involves about 300,000 to 500,000 children under the age of 18.[footnoteRef:6] [4: Victoria Watson, ‘Human Trafficking in India: Abuse from the Rural Elite and the Wider Implications’, 18 July 2018, https://foreignpolicyblogs.com/2018/07/18/human-trafficking-in-india-abuse-from-the-rural-elite-and-the-wider-implications/] [5: Graham Peebles, ‘Trafficking of Children and Women in India, 15 September 2013,

https://truthout.org/articles/trafficking-of-children-and-women-in-india/] [6: Carole Townsend, https://agapaomovement.net/the-plight-of-the-child-in-india/, 18 March 2019]

Article 23 of the Indian Constitution, under Part 3 (Fundamental Rights), prevents human trafficking in the land of India. The Indian Penal Code of 1860 also contains more than 20 clauses dealing with multiple elements of human trafficking. But despite all this, the approach of law enforcement agencies to deal with human trafficking has an inexplicable apathy. In the past, India's government has taken several steps to tackle this threat. The government made the Ministry of Women and Child Development the nodal agency for dealing with trafficking in human beings in India. In the Ministry of Home Affairs, a nodal cell against human trafficking was formed. The National Commission on Human Rights has developed an integrated action plan to avoid and combat trafficking in human beings with a particular focus on females and children. In government policies on human trafficking, however, there is still a lack of clarity. Existing laws have not been properly defined and there are several loopholes in them as a result of which human trafficking perpetrators escape punishment.

One thing we should not overlook is the population rate in India. One of the primary reasons that so many children are at risk in India it’s the burgeoning population. India is the second most populated country in the world, after China. Today estimated to be about 1.2 billion people.[footnoteRef:7] Despite measures are taken by the government, stabilization of this still-rising population will not take place until the year 2050. There are several reasons behind that: [7: Carole Townsend, https://agapaomovement.net/the-plight-of-the-child-in-india/, 18 March 2019]

How do traffickers choose their victims?

A. Poverty

Being born as a woman in a poor home means that the hazards of exploitation are significantly intensified. Poor communities in India lack opportunities to provide for their families, especially for uneducated women. According to the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) program of the United Nation, 270 million people out of India's 1.2 billion population lived below the poverty line during 2011-2012, with a daily income of $1.25.[footnoteRef:8] Thirty percent of younger victims reported abuse on the part of non-spousal family members, along with alcoholism, abandonment and debt problems. [8: Puja Mehra, ‘8% GDP growth helped reduce poverty: UN report, The Hindu, 2 April 2016, https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/8-gdp-growth-helped-reduce-poverty-un-report/article6862101.ece]

A. Education

“If we are to teach real peace in this world, and if we are to carry on a real war against war, we shall have to begin with the children.” ~ Mahatma Gandhi

Illiteracy is another one of the most climacteric susceptibility factors behind sex trafficking, especially young girls. In India, “50.8% of the victims, were illiterate or barely literate. Of the literate victims, 12.3% had studied up to a maximum of the second standard, 16.7% up to the third or fourth standard, 9.4% up to the fifth standard and 10.8% above the fifth standard”.[footnoteRef:9] However, some young girls and females are obliged to work in the

field and learn to do household because of the absence of cash. Education also plays an important role in shaping women's attitudes, especially with how women acknowledge their victimization and the reactions of society to violence against females. [9: Rashmi Singh, ‘Trafficking of Women and Children in India with special reference of Commercial Sexual Exploitation: Apsycho-social study of rescued trafficked victims’, April 2015]

B. Cultural Factors

India is considered to be a patriarchal society predominantly. Due to various traditional gender norms, women are subjected to violence and abuse, stigmatization and marginalisation. In making females susceptible to sex trafficking, these cultural variables play an important part. Born as a girl, however, is seen as a burden if it is a boy that they celebrate with joy. India's society sees women as an object of sex and treats them as a slave. For example, after they achieve puberty, young girls will be married to an elderly person. Unfortunately, these girls go with high hope to begin a fresh life and are raped and abused every night. A young girl said she remembered weeping and yelling with pain, but he said, 'This is the primary reason I've married you and you are deserved as a spouse for that.'[footnoteRef:10] [10: Madhumita Pandeya, ‘Sex Slavery in India; Unpacking the Stories of Trafficking Victims’, October 2016, Vol.6, https://arro.anglia.ac.uk/701549/1/58af91e847a7c.pdf]

Also, caste is India's biggest issue. Lower caste women are the victims of sex trafficking. They are not respected or hired by a higher caste society. Born in a lower caste, the only way a female can feed the family is to be given away to a trafficker. A case in the West Midnapur District of Dantan 2 block, where the economic condition of the victim was an agricultural labourer and he support of a family of eight members, three of them daughters, was difficult.

The girl was illiterate, and her parents were concerned about her marriage A matchmaker from the same town told them about a man in Kharagpur. The prospective bridegroom not only agreed to marry the girl within a fortnight, but he also paid Rs. 2000 for the girl's marriage costs. At that time the girl was only 16. The bridegroom and his friend took her to a location close to Howrah after a week. They physically tortured her before they handed her over to a woman who operates a brothel. After 18 months, the girl managed to escape by a local train and came back home. Her parents and other relatives were shocked to hear her stories and chose not to arouse suspicions and cry to save the family's prestige because they had two other girls to marry.’[footnoteRef:11] [11: Biswajit Ghost, ‘Trafficking in women and children in India: nature, dimensions and strategies for prevention’, 5 December 2009, The International Journal of Huma Rights Vol.13§1]

How does it affect the victims?

Those sex-trafficked females and young girls have to bear the brunt of numerous adverse health results, both physical and psychological damage, through nightmares and post-traumatic stress disorder. For example, Kayla was abuse by her pimps and customers and she was forced to have unprotected sex. As a result, she had hepatitis C and stomach and back pain and a lot of psychological issues.[footnoteRef:12]Through hunger, beatings, rape and gang rape, traffickers use physical violence to dominate and regulate their victims. Broken bones, concussions, burns, and brain trauma are common injuries. Furthermore, because they have little or no access to reproductive health care, females and girls are particularly susceptible to

reproductive and other gender-specific health issues. For example, 'lack of birth control access, continuous rapes, compelled abortion and contraceptive use, absence of frequent mammograms and Pap smears, and other health problems." [footnoteRef:13] [12: Laura J. Lederer and Christopher A. Wetzel, 'The Health Consequences of Sex Trafficking and Their Implications for Implications for Identifying Victims in Healthcare Facilities', Vol 23, 2014, https://www.icmec.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Health-Consequences-of-Sex-Trafficking-and-Implications-for-Identifying-Victims-Lederer.pdf] [13: Seona Smiles, Anjani Abella and Erika Rosarion,"Breaking Through The Development SILOS: Sexual &Reproductive Health &Rights:Millennium Development Goals and Gender Equaliy 'Experiences from Mexico, India and Nigeria'", April 2012, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era, https://www.dawnnet.org/uploads/documents/SRHR.pdf]

Victimization may have a more serious psychological effect than physical violence. Victims rescued typically present with different psychological and mental illness symptoms, including depression, panic disorder, Stockholm syndrome, post-traumatic stress disorder, and others.

Conclusion

This research shows that how society in India treat women and young children. Gender equality in this country has been burned down and the society treating women and young children as a piece of meat. The victims were psychologically abused by the husband and in some instances, the victims ' family; social conditions such as poverty and cultural practices relating to illiteracy such as women's vulnerability and marginalization; and the risk factor in lifestyles have been noted throughout victims ' stories. It is the State and society's combined responsibility to combat and defend the vulnerable. Control of trafficking may be helpful through an awareness of such offences, an efficient criminal justice system, and vigilant citizens.