



HUMAN TRAFFICKING: THE PRICE OF FLESH

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ABSTRACT

This article attempts to bring out the true essence and sufferings of trafficked victims. It screams how victims seldom receive recruitment, redress, and sufficient help. Despite numerous acts, laws, and provisions being in place, acquiring justice and normal life for a repatriated victim of trafficking is far-fetched. Human trafficking is a huge industry, and most of the population is involved in this due to factors, such as poverty, cheap labour, economic inequality, and many more. The perpetrators view it as an opportunity to improve their standard of living, for the sake of someone else. In rural areas, parents having children above two or three often consider them a liability to the family, and this burdensome work is relieved either by selling them or moving them to a farther place on the pretext, of them living a healthy and better life. Unaware of the horror that is waiting to engulf them. Human trafficking demolishes the humanity cloth of a nation. Here's a brief understanding of human trafficking and the destitute condition of vulnerable victims and the fight against it.

Keywords: Human Trafficking, Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956, Section 370, Sexual Exploitation.

INTRODUCTION

Human trafficking has existed as long as humans have existed, the only difference is, in the 15th and 16th centuries it was legal, regulated, and frequent, occurring at a larger scale. Eventually, its eminence declined with slavery being penalized all around the world. In the present time, it is referred to as 'Modern-day Slavery'. There exists a thin line between slavery and human trafficking, that being, slavery - a person held forced for labour; and human. Trafficking is the deportation, abduction, transportation, or recruitment of individuals

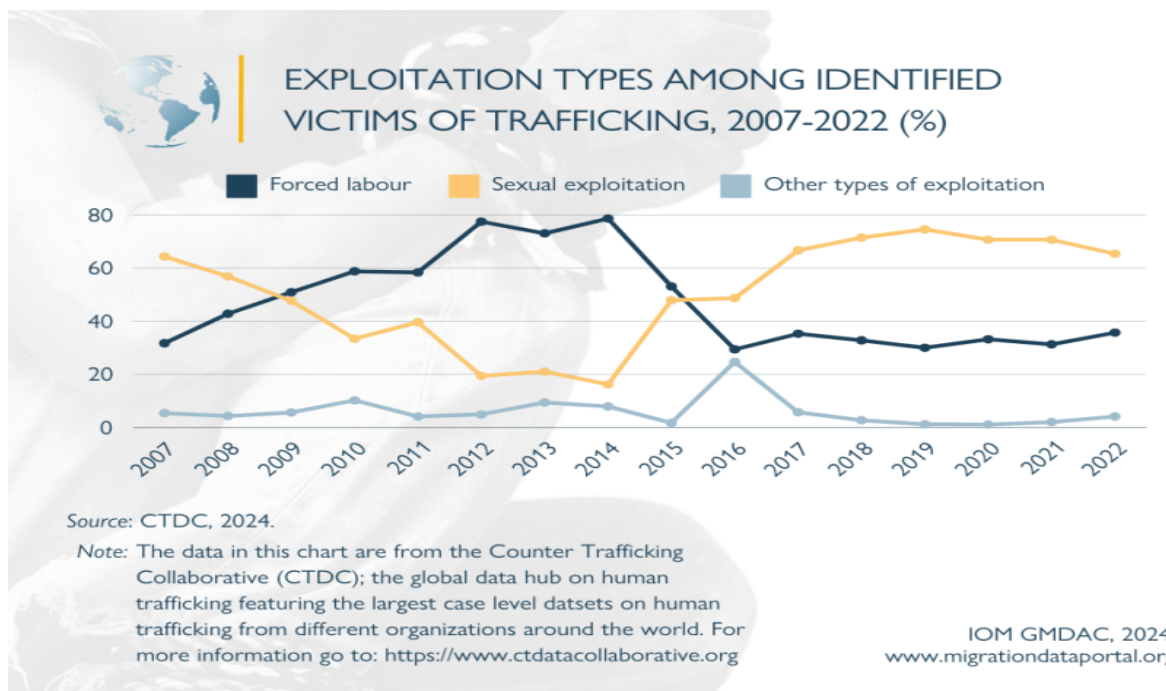
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explicitly for exploitative purposes, either by luring the victims, by deceit, by threat, or coercion.

Human Trafficking – An International Crime, is a pervasive crime in the system. Simply put, human trafficking is coercive or forceful transportation, abduction, recruitment, or transfer of individuals through not only national borders but also internationally. Observing the history and emergence, the first slave voyage was sent from Africa to America in the 15th century to enslave a group of people. Approximately 12.5 million slaves were shipped in over 350 years. An enormous number of Chinese women were trafficked to America for slavery. It was not until the 18th century, that the movements erupted everywhere around the globe and human trafficking was abolished and criminalized in all continents. These movements led to the birth of international organizations condemning human trafficking, around the 19th century such as The International Labor Organization (1919), the International Convention for the Suppression of Traffic in Women and Children and the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking of Women and Children.

EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

This condoned practice is rising at an alarming rate in the international system. The statistics of the International Justice Mission, by the Indian Government show, that 6,693 trafficked victims were rescued across the country. The digits are a shame, the difference between the reported and rescued is gigantic and the cases that go unreported have no mention of their existence anywhere, as if they had no existence. Each year, around 40.3 million victims are trafficked all over the globe. The largest portion contributing to this number consists of sex trafficking. Reports and studies show that a victim trapped in this maze is likely to live for only 7 years. Their life is exposed to the gravest peril.



SEX EXPLOITATION

Sex exploitation is more prevalent among women than in men. The statistics show that 75% of cases belong to females whereas 25% of the cases are of males. Besides this, there are many cases which are unreported and have no account of it. Approximately, 80% of the victims are never rescued. Victims of the sex industry are susceptible to inhumane and fatal conditions. On average a child is sold 20 to 30 times per day for sex exploitation. It is a heart-wrenching incident that fails to defrost the hearts of perpetrators. Women are subjected to extremely hazardous violence. They are often diagnosed with complex PTSD, emotional and behavioural dysregulation, negative self-perception, mental health disorders, and psychological distress.

5% of international victims have crossed borders illegally, and have been barely living a life. Human traffickers fabricate transnational routes to transport groups of individuals. It usually starts in the origin country, where the recruiters find themselves an easy target who is desperate to improve their impoverished conditions.

The recruiters and targets have some common background which makes the latter rely on them. These conditions create a blockade for them to acquire legitimate legal documents and hence, they fall prey to such hazardous industry. Hoax documents such as visas and passports, are made to avoid detection by border control Agents. After successful migration, the traffickers seize the documents, be they fraudulent or legitimate, and then the victims are trapped in a city unknown to them. The only condition to receive the documents back is to repay a hefty amount.

Their deplorable condition does not allow them to do so. This chain eventually takes them into the swamp of slavery and exploitation.

LEGISLATIVE ACTS

¹*The Immoral Trafficking Act (ITPA), 1956* and ²*Section 370 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC)*, give out the provision to address human trafficking for exploitation using inducement, threat, force, abuse of power, coercion, abduction, and fraud. Exploitation includes organ transplantation, servitude, slavery, prostitution, forced labour, and other forms of exploitation. The punishment for trafficking of persons ranges from 7 to 10 years of imprisonment with a fine. The provision seeks to slacken the number of cases that are accelerating rapidly.

CONTEMPORARY SITUATION IN INDIA

In India, West Bengal has the highest number of cases registered, hence - the hub of human trafficking, followed by Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Delhi as transit points. On 27th December 2024, ³Moktar Alam, arrested from Jagulia in West Bengal, allegedly ran a human trafficking racket. He was accused of transporting almost 500 Bangladeshis to European countries in exchange for money and connivance of foreign nationals. The Kolkata Police stated, that the racket was masterminded by Samaresh Biswas, he ran an illegal passport scam and procured fake passports and visas in Indian names with foreign national's photo.

CONCLUSION

Human Trafficking is a grave violation of human rights that demands comprehensive and dire action. This crime affects millions worldwide. Despite international condemnation and efforts to combat it, human trafficking persists as one of the fastest-growing activities of transnational criminal organizations, ranking as the third-largest crime industry globally. Addressing the root cause is crucial in reducing the vulnerability to trafficking. Swift and prompt action from international organizations and civil society is needed to curb the demand that fuels trafficking and to dismantle the criminal chain that perpetrates it.

¹ Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956, § 5 (India).

² Indian Penal Code, 1860, § 370(1) (India).

³ Aman Sharma, Man in Passport Scam Ran Human Trafficking Racket, TIMES OF INDIA.