



ISSN NO. 2320-5407

Journal homepage: <http://www.journalijar.com>
Journal DOI: [10.21474/IJAR01](https://doi.org/10.21474/IJAR01)

**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL
OF ADVANCED RESEARCH**

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Women Trafficking: A Blot on Human Rights in Society.

DEEPIKA CHAUHAN¹ and YOGITA VERMA².

1. Assistant Professor (Sociology), Department of Sociology & Political Science, Dayalbagh Educational Institute, Agra.
2. B.A (Hons.) Economics degree from the Institute.

Manuscript Info

Manuscript History:

Received: 25 April 2016
 Final Accepted: 19 May 2016
 Published Online: June 2016

Key words:

Human trafficking, human rights, gender-violence, women trafficking, exploitation, women rights.

***Corresponding Author**

DEEPIKA CHAUHAN.

Abstract

The paper aims to highlight the problem of human-trafficking in the society. Human-trafficking is a serious crime and the gravest violation of human rights as it primarily concerns with the devaluation and disrespect of women. This blatant issue and a social crime should be of great concern because of the sole reason that 'women' as a human being deserves to live and lead life in their own way and not subjected to others will and force. Noteworthy of the facts, Gender-ratio is shrinking at an alarming pace in many countries of world so it is necessary to protect and keep safe the women and girls in our society. The status of the problem, its severity and the recommended measures to decline this problem to a greater extent is the ultimate task at present. Trafficking of women is one of the worst and heinous act representing abuses of human rights. It is a shame on the collective consciousness of the social masses supporting this act of social crime whereby ruining one's life by suppressing the freedom and personal will of women which is even more shameless. Women, significant in numbers constituting the world's population are routinely subjected to torture, starvation, mutilation and terrorism on the basis of gender-discrimination existed in the society. All human –beings great or small, men or women should be respected and cared for simply by virtue of the fact that they are human beings. The discrimination and violence against women is based on ignorance, illiteracy and tradition. Women real experiences of life across the world and facts and writings on women are testimony to the reality that violence against women is the gravest and most pervasive form of violation of human rights.

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Introduction:-

Human trafficking is the third largest organized crime after drugs and the arms trade across the globe. From the deepest and narrowest of areas of countries like Bangladesh, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand large number of women and young girls are trafficked every day. In India, approximately 25,000 young girls of younger ages are engaged in prostitution. On the parallel note, the politics regarding human rights of women is facilitated by the benign aspects of globalization, especially the diffusion of new communications technology, but it is also necessitated by the asymmetrical aspects of globalization, that leaves many women with no recourse to citizenship rights, and in a position whereby their access to rights is mediated by men.

Definition of Human Trafficking:-

"Trafficking in persons" shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of

a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labourers services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs. (United nations, 2000)

The New York Times has reported on the widespread problem of human trafficking in India especially in the states of Bihar, Jharkhand and Chattisgarh. A huge number of young girls are trafficked from neighbouring Nepal to India. In another article published in **The Times of India** – Karnataka is the third state in India for human trafficking among many south Indian states which are most sought after destinations for human trafficking. As per the data, West Bengal and Bihar, reports on an average about 100 such cases each year contributing more than half of the human trafficking cases nationwide.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reveals that Tamil Nadu has 528 & West Bengal 549 cases of human trafficking were reported in the year 2012. As per the data from Home Ministry, 1379 cases of human trafficking were reported from Karnataka in the period of four years, in Tamil Nadu the number is 2,244 whereas Andhra Pradesh has 2,157 cases of human trafficking.

According to an article in **Firstpost**, Delhi the capital city is the hub of human trafficking trade in India and shockingly half of the world's slaves live in India. Delhi is the hotspot for illegal trade of young girls for domestic labour, forced marriage, begging and prostitution. Delhi is also the major transit point for human trafficking in India.

Mostly children especially girl and young women, from Northeast parts are taken from their homes and sold in faraway states of India for sexual exploitation or as bonded labour by the agents who lure their parents to provide better education, money, job and better life to their children. Agents sell boys to work in brick kilns, carpentry units, as domestic servants, beggars etc. Whereas young and minor girls are trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation, forced marriage in certain regions where female to male sex ratio is highly disturbed.

A harsh reality is children from tribal areas are at greater risk of human trafficking. The main reason behind is the tribal clashes that let human trafficking to prosper. Conflict between the Kukis and Nagas tribe in Northeast region between 1992 and 1997 left many kids homeless in which most of the children were from the Kuki tribe in Manipur's Tamenglong district who were taken by agents to get sell in other parts of the country.

In general terms the word 'trafficking' refers to the illicit and inhuman movements of persons across national and international borders largely from developing and underdeveloped countries with the main aim of forcing women and girls into sexually and economically into trade and commercial use. The oppressive and exploitative treatment to women is done to force them in other illegal activities related to trafficking such as: forced domestic labour, false marriage, clandestine employment and false adoption. (U.N Assembly, 1994).

Sylvia Walby, a pioneering contributor to the Sociology of Gender and Human rights recognize that there was a call for a transformation of the existing human rights agenda and for a new interpretation that interpret women's issues at the heart of the mainstream.

Charlotte Bunch, Director of the Centre for Women's Global Leadership at Rutgers University argued that it is not enough that women rights were understood to be human rights by governments, NGOs and by U.N Commission on Human Rights. In spite she suggested that: The Human Rights Commission has more power to hear and investigate cases than the Commission on status of women, and better mechanisms for implementing its findings. Thus, it shows a difference of what can be done if a case is deemed a violation of women rights and not of human rights. (Bunch, 1990:492)

Statistics profile of women-trafficking in Indian context-

Human trafficking is one of the major problems in developing country like India. Where women are important part of our society in ancient Indian culture women held the place of God (Devi, but such these dangerous activities decreases the value of women in the society.

State-Wise Cases of Conviction of Human Trafficking

STATE/UT	2010	2011	2012
Andhra Pradesh	79	138	221
Tamil Nadu	316	315	153
Kerala	217	124	105
Karnataka	264	120	100
Delhi UT	32	25	32
ALL INDIA TOTAL	1159	982	786

Source: NCRB

Women trafficking is one of the fastest growing criminal enterprises because it holds relatively low risk with high profit potential. Criminal organizations are increasingly attracted to human trafficking because, humans can be sold repeatedly. In recent statistics it is found that in India, on an estimation there are about 27 million adults and 13 million children around the world who are victims of human trafficking. And this becomes a very serious problem in our society because previous researchers estimate that more than 80% of trafficking victims are women. Over 50% of human trafficking victims are children. The women and children who are labour or belongs to the poor families are misguided through better jobs and opportunities, and better quality of life etc. which did not happen in reality rather they are being sold at higher prices in other states & countries for their own profit.

India is also a destination for trafficking of women and girls from Nepal and Bangladesh for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation. Nepali children are also trafficked to India for forced labour in circus shows and illegal non-registered private companies providing domestic servants. 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.

State-wise & Category-wise Cases Of Human Trafficking In 2012

State/UT	2012					
	Buying of Girls for Prostitution	Selling of Girls for Prostitution	Procurement of Minor Girls	Importation of girls	Immoral Trafficking (Prevention) Act	Total
West Bengal	3	56	369	12	109	549
Tamil Nadu	0	0	28	0	500	528
Andhra Pradesh	0	4	30	0	472	506
Karnataka	5	0	45	32	335	412
Maharashtra	0	2	31	0	366	403
Kerala	0	0	10	0	210	220
Total (All India)	15	108	809	59	2,563	3,554

Source: NCRB

Main factors responsible for accelerating women trafficking:-

Women trafficking is a serious, inhumane, immoral social crime which is rapidly growing through major factors like - lack of economic opportunities, gender discrimination, tolerance of domestic gender-based violence, racial discrimination, lethargy law and order situation. The other risk factors which also directly affects an increase in women trafficking are- poverty, gender inequality, age differentiation, lack of awareness about kidnapping and trafficking, social exclusion, stratification in society; social and economic factors like power, hierarchy, political wars and conflicts, natural calamities (drought, earthquake, floods etc.), marginalization on the basis of discriminating factors (viz. ethnicity, disability, colour, religion, work, race); more use of alcohol consumption, drug addiction, and mental disability. And the other common causes like- issues of porous borders, corrupt government officials and bureaucrats, the involvement of international organized criminal groups or networks and limited capacity of or commitment by immigration and law enforcement officers to control borders.

All these factors are highly responsible for incessant increase in the cases of women trafficking over the years. According to **CNN (2009) World report**, around 2 lakh people in Eastern Europe, 1.5 lakh Non-Japanese women, 200,000 in Bangladesh, 142,000 peoples in Malaysia, 2.3 million peoples in India are being trafficked every year. Out of this, about 80% human trafficking cases involve the sex industry, 20% human trafficking cases involve the labour industry or domestic servants.

The Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) declared over sixty years ago that all humans were born free and equal with rights common to all and exclusive to none. And all women possess equal and dignified status same as men in the society. According to the **UN Convention on Human rights**, all rights are similar for males and females as in the UN constitution. So, it is our moral responsibility to take initiative to stop this criminal activity in the society, which impose negative effect on human rights and devalue the social status and respect of women in our society.

Need for redressal of women's rights, Paves way to human rights:-

Sex trafficking not only results in a severe violation of human rights but also causes adverse physical, psychological and moral consequences upon the victims. All hopes and dreams of a better life got shattered and over time the girls become penniless, mentally broken and gets affected with serious or life-threatening illnesses such as HIV/AIDS. The journey of sex trafficking destroys the body, mind and soul of a victim, and fundamentally takes away her capacity to trust herself or anyone around her. The damage done is deep rooted and often irreversible, as the sense of rejection, betrayal and numbness that a trafficked women or girl goes through makes her lose faith in humanity. Skewed identity, poor self-worth and learn helplessness also make her believe there is no hope for her in the outside world and her destiny is to sell her body.

Today, sex trafficking in women and children is one of the fastest growing areas of national and international criminal activity. It is a multi-billion dollar industry, and has created complex criminal networks - at times, with the patronage of those in power. Lack of suitable laws and law enforcement machinery add to the problem.

➤ **Combating gender-violence and exploitation:-**

Bunch envisages women's rights to be viewed from human rights glasses because rights are envisioned on a wide platform and in universal aspect as it signifies the dynamic and open-ended idea, and an expanded meaning that people re-conceived of their needs and hopes. Women's rights are human rights, asserts that women are claimed to constitute half of a universal humanity and that this humanity is differentiated into women and men, who ought to suffer different abuses of their human rights. Violence against women is argued to be systemic, not random or individual or personal but it's central in maintaining male power. Women resist everywhere, despite their vulnerability at a maximum note.

➤ **Prevention through Education:-**

In every city, town or village there are women and young girls who due to economic compulsions and socio-cultural factors are rendered option-less, making them vulnerable to deception or fraudulent means of traffickers. Lack of education makes them more vulnerable than others. For those unfortunate victims who are already prey to flesh trade, the lives of their children is a matter of immense concern. These children stigmatized by the society are vulnerable to be subjected to exploitative conditions without any hope for reintegration. Social inequality, regional gender preference, imbalance and corruption are the other leading causes of human trafficking in India.

People trafficked through various methods or ways like- Tempting offer in some lucrative jobs in cities, coercion of parents in selling their daughters due to poor economic condition or due to heavy loans, family pressures on individuals who sanction prostitution by tradition, custom and religion, arrange false exploitative marriages, trafficked children, misguided girls and parents are offered by jobs, gifts, roles in movies, huge sum of money etc. many such false promises after they got cheated and indulged in this wide spread crime.

In order to prevent sex trafficking and inter-generational prostitution through education, transition centers have been started for vulnerable children who live in poor localities. These centers function as educational environments which not only foster the overall development of the children, but also equip them with the necessary psycho-social and scholastic skills to ensure a bright future that breaks the cycles of poverty and social exclusion. The centers are also bridging gaps to mainstream children into education in regular schools. After completing 7th class from the Prajwala schools, children subsequently enroll in local private or government schools to complete their 10th standard and beyond. Student committees as well as mothers groups are actively involved in the centre's functioning in order to promote a sense of community ownership and responsibility for the education of their children.

➤ **Re-visioning of human rights from a feminist perspective:-**

What is required is something more radical nullifying the liberal aspect without waiting for the permission from some authority determining what is or what is not a human right issue. The core requirement of re-visioning the human rights is to break down barriers between public and private, state and non-governmental responsibilities. Only then, abuses in the society that arises due to gender-disparity or discrimination such as reproductive rights, female sexual slavery, rape, violence against women, family crimes and mental and sexual harassment like forced marriages, compulsory heterosexuality and female mutilation etc. could be addressed and justice may sought.

Although human trafficking is often a hidden crime and accurate statistics are difficult to obtain, researchers estimate that more than 80% of trafficked victims are female and more than 50% of them are children.

Human trafficking is the only area of transnational crime in which women are significantly represented—as victims, as perpetrators, and as activists fighting this crime. Moreover, global warming, earthquakes, flood, drought etc., severe natural disasters have left millions of needy and miserable people, homeless and impoverished leading to exploitation at the hands of human traffickers.

Strategies to stop this global menace:-

Human trafficking is a serious inhumane crime and to restrict it completely is a tough task. Therefore, to stop human trafficking we should adopt some strategies at every step regional, state, national and international level and in every aspect viz. academic, institutional, communal, societal and personal etc. thereby strengthening the rights of women and human rights.

- Encourage the schools, colleges and local regional committees to participate along with students to make them aware about how traffickers target and misguide teenagers and school-aged children and how they should retaliate and protect themselves.
- **Sharing information and videos through social networking sites:** Today, we are living in a technologically enhanced world. With one click and in few seconds we can share information with everyone, so share a change-inspiring incident or a YouTube documentary which is informative, thought-provoking and increases awareness among the masses about the issue of trafficking.
- **Encouraging gender sensitization and education** among males and females, thus preventing violence against women ensuring that policies may promote equal and justifiable access and control of women over economic and financial resources in every walks of life.
- **Awareness of rights of women** by the state, civil society organizations, as well as public at large through media, internet, stage shows and other sources of communication.
- **Gender-budgeting and gender mainstreaming** within state agencies and civil society organizations is quintessential.

Top anti- human trafficking organizations & their efforts in combating human trafficking globally:-

- **Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW)** - It is a non- governmental organisation that promotes human rights of women worldwide. It is located in the Los Angeles.
- **Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW)**-It is a network of more than 100 non- governmental organizations from all regions of the world. They share a deep concern for providing justice to all women and men whose human rights have been violated by human trafficking.
- **ABC NEPAL**-A governmental organisation founded by Durga Ghimire in Nepal that deals with anti-trafficking of girls and minors across Indian subcontinent and Arabian countries.
- **Anti- slavery International Organisation**-It is actively functioning at local, national and the international level to eliminate all forms of slavery and trafficking around the world.
- **Awareness Against Human Trafficking (HAART)**-It is a non- governmental organisation fighting against trafficking of women & children in Kenya.
- **Children's Organization of South-east Asia (COSA)**-It is an international organisation that works towards the prevention of child human trafficking and sexual exploitation within the Asia region.
- **International Justice Mission (USA)**-It is a US based non- profit human rights organisation which opposed human trafficking by means of advocacy, education and awareness.
- **Prerana** : is a non – governmental India based organization (NGO) that works in the red light districts of Mumbai (India) to protect children vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking. It provides shelter homes and residential training for girls rescued from the trafficking area.
- **Vital Voices** : is a non – governmental organization (NGO) that works with women leaders on various aspects such as economic empowerment, and political participation on human rights.
- **ZOE INTERNATIONAL** - is a non-profit organization that fights against human trafficking in Thailand with a three tier structure viz. prevention, rescue, and restoration.

Conclusion:-

Human trafficking is one of the fastest growing unethical and heinous crime as it involves low risk with high profit potential. Human trafficking is estimated to surpass the drug trade in less than five years because unlike drugs, humans can be sold repeatedly. **Journalist Victor Malarek** reports that it is primarily men who are driving human-trafficking trade, specifically trafficking for sex. According to the **U.S. State Department (2011)**, Human-trafficking is one of the major human rights challenges of this century, both in the United States and across the world. In approximately 54% of human trafficking cases, the recruiter is a stranger, and in 46% of the cases, the recruiters know the victim. Fifty-two percent of human trafficking recruiters are men, 42% are women, and 6% are both men and women. Nearly 7,000 Nepali girls as young as nine years old are sold every year into India's red-light district and about 200,000 during the last decade. Ten thousand children between the ages of 6 and 14 in Sri Lanka brothels. (**Louise, 2010**)

The victims of human trafficking suffer both physically and psychologically. However, due to language barriers, lack of knowledge about available services, and the frequency with which traffickers buy and sell victims, human trafficking victims and their perpetrators are difficult to catch. Human trafficking victims face physical risks such as drug and alcohol addiction, STDs, sterility, miscarriages, forced abortions, vaginal and anal trauma etc. whereas the psychological effects include developing clinical depression, personality and dissociative disorders, suicidal tendencies, Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome (PTSS), and Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome (CPTSS) etc. (**Bhattacharya, 2013**). Their life becomes apathy and miserable; meager to say a human being as their human rights were downtrodden and exploited to such an extent that not only the body but their soul is dead.

Yet on a positive note, it is our responsibility to discourage such type of social crime to perpetuate in our society. We should provide support, safety and equal respect to the women in our society as they remark the future of every generation. They can be the pioneers of change, rather than being slaves in chain. It is the fundamental and indispensable human right of every human being to live with dignity, equality and independently.

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