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Human trafficking is the third largest organized crime after drugs and the arms trade across the globe. According to the definition of the United Nations – “trafficking is any activity leading to recruitment, transportation, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or a position of vulnerability”. Close to 80% of the human trafficking across the world is done for sexual exploitation and the rest is for bonded labor and India is considered as the hub of this crime in Asia. As per the statistics of the government – in every eight minutes a child goes missing in our country. In 2011 about 35,000 children were reported missing and more than 11,000 out of these were from West Bengal. Further, it is assumed that only 30% of the total cases are reported, so the actual number is pretty high.

Human trafficking is one of the major problems in India. Till date no concrete study has been conducted so far to know the exact number of trafficked kids in India. The New York Times has reported on the widespread problem of human trafficking in India especially in the state of Jharkhand. Also in the report it is stated that young girls are trafficked from neighboring Nepal to India. In another article published in The Times of India – Karnataka is the third state in India for human trafficking. Other South Indian states are also the most sought after



destinations for human trafficking. Every year more than 300 such cases are reported in each of the four south Indian states. Whereas West Bengal and Bihar, on an average have 100 such cases each year. As per the data, more than half of the human trafficking cases are from these states. According to the latest report on human trafficking by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime reveals that Tamil Nadu has 528 such cases of human trafficking in 2012. The number is really high and more than any other state except for West Bengal (549). 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. Recently 300 bonded labourers in Bangalore have been rescued. According to an article in Firstpost, Delhi is the hub of human trafficking trade in India and half of the world's slaves live in India. Delhi is the hotspot for illegal trade of young girls for domestic labour, forced marriage and prostitution. Delhi is also the transit point for human trafficking.

Kids especially girl and young women, mostly from Northeast are taken from their homes and sold in faraway states of India for sexual exploitation and to work as bonded labour by the agents who lure their parents with education, better life, and money for these kids. Agents do not send these kids to school but sell them to work in brick kilns, carpentry units, as domestic servants, beggars etc. Whereas girls are trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Even these girls are forced to marry in certain regions where female to male sex ratio is highly disturbed. Children from tribal areas are at greater risk of human trafficking. Recently there were cases of human trafficking in which most of the children were from the Kuki tribe in Manipur's Tamenglong district. Reason for this was the tribal clashes that let the human trafficking to prosper. Conflict between the Kukis and Nagas tribe in Northeast region between 1992 and 1997 left many kids homeless. These kids were taken by agents to the other parts of the country.

Why Human Trafficking increasing in India?

Fundamental theory of demand and supply is applicable to this situation as well. Men for work generally migrate to major commercial cities and from here the demand for commercial sex is created. To fulfill the supply all sorts of efforts are made by the suppliers like abduction etc. Young girls and women belonging to poor families are at higher risk.

Then comes the economic injustice and poverty. If you are born to a poor family in Northeastern state of India then you are at a higher risk of being sold. If you are born to a poor family and a girl then these chances further increases. Sometimes parents are also desperate to sell their daughters to earn money.



Social inequality, regional gender preference, imbalance and corruption are the other leading causes of human trafficking in India.

Parents in tribal areas think that sending their kids means a better life in terms of education and safety. Parents also pay about Rs 6000-7000 to these agents for food and shelter.

Forced marriage

Girls and women are not only trafficked for prostitution but also bought and sold like commodity in many regions of India where female ratio is less as compared to male due to female infanticide. These are then forced to marry.

Bonded labour

Though debt labour is not known much but it is illegal in India and prevalent in our society. According to the International Labour Organization there are more than 11.7 million people working as a forced labour in the Asia-Pacific region. People running out of cash generally sell their kids as debt labour in exchange for cash. Both boys and girls are sold for this purpose and generally not paid for years.

Victims of human trafficking have great chances of suffering from issues like mental disorders, depression and anxiety. Women forced into sexual trafficking have at higher risk of getting affected from HIV and other STDs.

Action against guilty

Under the Immoral Trafficking Prevention Act (ITPA) trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation is penalized. The punishment ranges from seven years' to life imprisonment. The Bonded Labor Abolition Act, the Child Labor Act, and the Juvenile Justice Act prohibit the bonded and forced labor in India.

Because of the brutal gang rape of December 2012, government has passed a bill in which laws related to sexual violence and making sex trafficking have been amended. But still there is a huge gap between enactment and enforcement of these laws. Because of widespread corruption and bribe, it is easy for agents to bring these young boys and girls for their profit. But there should be strict disciplinary action against everybody involved in such a crime then only this problem can be addressed.

Also better education and other facilities should be provided at native places so that parents do not opt these ways for their kids. Above all attitude towards women and young girls must change.