

I. What is Trafficking

Trafficking in Women and Children

Presentation of the Issue: WHAT IS TRAFFICKING ?

(a) “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 labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs;

(b) The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used;

(c) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered “trafficking in persons” even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article;

- “Child” shall mean any person less than 18 years of age.

(An accepted international definition of Trafficking found in the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons)

Who are Trafficked?

- Women and children are the key target group, because of their marginalization, limited economic resources and predominance in the “invisible” informal sector
- People from impoverished and low income households in rural areas and urban slums, especially women engaged in small farming, petty trading, vending, as laborers, scavengers and in other low status work and services
- Ethnic minorities, indigenous people, hill tribes, refugees, and undocumented migrant
- People with low levels of education, a few years of formal schooling, some primary school education, or illiterate
- Young girls running away from home, or girls from families that expect their daughters to financially support them are easy targets for traffickers
- People who lack awareness of their legal rights, their exploited situation, and have no channel for seeking redress
- Women and children of varying ages, ranging from babies to women in their seventies

(taken from UNIFEM East and South Asia)

Causes of Trafficking

Supply side

Socio – Cultural

- Illiteracy, and inadequate educational and employment opportunities as well as a lack of gender perspective in education.
- Patriarchy, which is the main cause for the discrimination of women and girl-children
- Erosion of traditional family values, and the pursuit of consumerism encourages the sale of women and children.
- Racial discrimination, racism. And related intolerance which makes women from such communities more vulnerable to trafficking.

Demand side

Socio- cultural

- Male attitudes and perceptions of women in society , and women's unequal socio-economic status
- Pornography and the role in the growth in demand for sex. This is coupled with an ever increasing use of the internet as its vehicle and as a means for traffickers to market women and children.
- Patriarchy resulting in the unequal power relations between men and women and in the discrimination of women.
- The media and new technologies which through advertising and the commercialization of sex, present women's bodies as objects solely for pleasure.

Demand side

Economic

- Economic disparities within countries, and between countries and regions, which is the primary cause for the growth in trafficking of women.
- Feminization of poverty, because women constitute 70% of the world's poor and they support their families through precarious employment in the growing informal sector.
- Globalization and its different impact on women through economic restructuring and transition which cuts social spending which affect women.
- Economic liberalization which relaxes controls, opens borders between countries, facilitating population mobility and illegal migration.
- A lucrative business with high monetary returns because women are sold and resold a number of times. At the same time there are less dangers of being apprehended and this attracts crime.

Demand side

Economic ctd.

- Demand by employers for an unskilled and cheap labor market. Women's labor is usually in low status work in the domestic and entertainment spheres and in the informal sector.
- Consumerist behavior with the commodification and commercialization of sex leading to the consideration of women's bodies as commodities and objects of sexual pleasure.
- Downfall of communist regimes in Eastern and Central Europe and the difficulties in relation to an economy transition.
- An expanding commercial sex industry and increased demand for sex. The variety of ways it merchandises women and children are: prostitution, sex, trafficking, sex tourism, mail order bride, strip clubs, topless bars, and so on. The growth in the child sexual exploitation is due to younger women and girls because of the fear of HIV.
- Development policies promoting tourism, and patterns of development that depend on temporary migrant workers.

Demand side

Political

- Feminization of International Migration as Women enter the labor market, together with the Syndicates
lack of regulation for labor migration which provides increased opportunities and channels for trafficking.
- Civil and military conflicts push people to flee their countries. Of the 25 million refugees in the world, 80% are women and children. They become an easy prey in the hands of traffickers.
- The growth of international crime and the expansion of drug trafficking networks act as mechanisms for other forms of exploitation.
- Military bases both past and present have created an enormous prostitution infrastructure.
- Unequal and exploitative political and economic relations dictated by the North which results in the deterioration of conditions of life in the South.
- Restrictive migration policies which have decreased possibilities for regular migration.
- Sales of arms and the increase of armed conflict within and between countries with the consequent increase of displaced people and refugees who fall victim to traffickers.
- Weak law enforcement mechanisms and measures to penalize offenders.

THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Lamentations 5: 1,11, 13, 15

O God, remember what has happened to us; consider and see our degradation.
The women in Zion have been raped, the young girls in the town of Judah.
Youths have been put to the mill, boys stagger under loads of wood.
Joy has vanished from our hearts; our dancing has turned to mourning.

Luke 13: 10-13

One Sabbath day Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, and there before him was a woman who for eighteen years had been possessed by a spirit that crippled her; she was bent double and quite unable to stand upright. When Jesus saw her he called her over and said, "Woman, you are freed from your disability, and he laid his hands on her. And at once she straightened up, and she glorified God."

*What "spirits" (i.e. forces) contribute to crippling women who are trafficked? What "spirits" cripple you? What would contribute to freeing these women? What would contribute to freeing you to respond?**

Genesis 1:27

God created humankind in God's image.
In the image of God, God created them;
male and female God created them.

*What are the forces in your life that cause you to forget your inherent dignity?
If you can imagine yourself as a woman who has been trafficked for sex trade, what forces contribute to your loss of dignity?**

Galatians 3:28

There does not exist among you Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female. All are one in Christ Jesus.

John 10:10 I came that you may have life and have it abundantly. *The reflection questions come from the School Sisters of Notre-Dame's Theological Reflection Packet on the Trafficking Issue.*

Trafficking in Women and Children Theological Consideration

CHURCH DOCUMENTS

SLAVERY, SELLING OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN...

Gaudium et Spes, Vatican II no. 27

Whatever is opposed to life itself, such as any type of murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia, or willful self-destruction, whatever violates the integrity of the human person, such as mutilation, torments inflicted on body or mind, attempts to coerce the will itself; whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children; as well as disgraceful working conditions, where people are treated as mere instruments of gain rather than as free and responsible persons; all these things and others like

them are infamies indeed. They poison human society, and they do more harm to those who practice them than to those who suffer from the injury. Moreover, they are a supreme dishonor to the Creator.
(quoted in *The Gospel of Life*, John Paul II)

Catechism of the Catholic Church, number 2414

The seventh commandment forbids acts or enterprises that for any reason — selfish or ideological, commercial or totalitarian — lead to the *enslavement of human beings*, to their being bought, sold and exchanged like merchandise, in disregard for their personal dignity. It is a sin against the dignity of persons and their fundamental rights to reduce them by violence to their productive value or to a source of profit. St. Paul directed a Christian master to treat his Christian slave ‘no longer as a slave but more than a slave, as a beloved brother... both in the flesh and in the Lord’.

ON HUMAN DIGNITY

With respect to the fundamental rights of the person, every type of discrimination, whether social or cultural, whether based on sex, race, color, social condition, language or religion, is to be overcome and eradicated as contrary to God’s intent. **Gaudium et Spes no. 29**
In creating the human race “male and female”, God gives man and woman an equal personal dignity, endowing them with inalienable rights and responsibilities proper to the human person.
(See Genesis 1:27) **John Paul II, Familiaris Consortio, 1981 no. 22**

ON HUMAN WORK*

... each sort (of work) is judged above all by the measure of the dignity of the subject of work, that is to say the person, the individual who carries it out.

Laborem Exercens no. 6

... the danger of treating work as a special kind of “merchandise”, or as an impersonal “force” needed for production always exists, especially when the whole way of looking at the question of economics is marked by the premises of materialistic economism.

Laborem Exercens, no 7

*Although we have included these passages on work, it is our view that trafficking and prostitution are never to be considered as “work,” but rather as violation of human rights and forms of violence against women and children.