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**WHERE HAVE ALL THE WOMEN GONE:
TRAFFICKING ON WOMEN, A GLOBAL PROBLEM**

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This study examines the problems related to the trafficking on women. Trafficking on women presents a variety of social, legal and moral problems. This study uses a global perspective to define the role of women in society and its implications for the study of trafficking. Secondary data analysis was performed with specific emphasis on the role of women in society, economic factors and documented governmental and non-governmental responses to the problem. Results indicate that trafficking of women is a multi-layered issue. Research on trafficking is further complicated by in availability of data, inconsistent responses to the issue and the global nature of the problem. Suggestions for further research are also given.

Introduction

When you hear the term trafficking, what is the first picture that forms in your mind? Do you think of drug trafficking? Firearms trafficking? The form of trafficking that will be discussed in this research is much different; it is the trafficking of persons, with a focus on the trafficking on women.

Women have been trafficked from their home countries to other countries for prostitution and other related sexual entertainment. This has been a very widespread issue, yet it has stayed behind a very elusive curtain, hidden from the eyes of the general public. Women from Bangladesh, Mexico, China, Thailand, Laos, Burma, Cambodia, Malaysia, Vietnam, etc., have been recruited, tricked, and even sold into the trafficking markets for many years.

What do we know about the history of why women are trafficked? What are the motivational reasons for trafficking to continue? How does the role of women throughout American history play into this? What part has economics played in trafficking? What types of people are involved with trafficking? Who is trafficked? What do we know about the routes used to traffic the victims? What is the global response to this issue? What is the United States' response to this issue? How can organizations work together to prevent, stop, and deter this situation? As I dive into the depths of this subject I hope to discover some insight into the history of trafficking on women and discover organizations that are working to end trafficking in women, and how they have become effective in preventing, educating and prosecuting those involved with these horrific crimes.

Facts and Findings

A trafficker recruited Nina, 19 year-old from southeastern Europe, to work as a waitress, but then raped, beat, and drugged her, forcing her into prostitution. After a daring escape, her trafficker hunted her down and kidnapped her. Taken into custody during a police raid, Nina agreed to be a witness against her trafficker. The police officer assigned to protect her gave away her location and her trafficker threatened her life. At the trial, she was forced to sit next to her traffickers and was insulted and humiliated by the judge and defense counsel. Her pimps were found guilty but released on appeal. For her own survival, Nina has fled to another country and assumed a new identity. (U.S Dept. of State TIP, 2003)

The United Nations (UN) estimates more than 4 million women have been trafficked from one country to another and within countries (United Nations, 2000). The exact numbers of how many women are trafficked each year either in and out of different countries or trafficked within a country, is hard to estimate due to the lack of ways to measure the number of women trafficked, as many countries have yet to develop a proper way of combating, preventing and prosecuting trafficking. We are dependent on sex worker groups; prostitution group, and NGOs to give us estimated numbers. (TIP Report, 2003). Trafficking on women is a crime that has been taking place for many years, hidden well behind a very elusive curtain. Hidden from the eyes of the general public, women from Bangladesh, Russia, Mexico, China, Thailand, Laos, Burma, Cambodia,

Malaysia, Vietnam, etc. have been recruited, tricked and even sold into the trafficking markets.

While reading about trafficking, thoughts kept running through my mind concerning how society views women: How is the role defined and how is it maintained? How has the role of women has changed over the years? Do media play a part in maintaining this role? Does it connect with the issue of trafficking?

Throughout this paper, I will use the definition of trafficking from the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime:

- (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 abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the given 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;
- (d) “Child” shall mean any person under eighteen years of age.

Theories and Approaches

Scholars have looked at trafficking of women primarily from many different approaches. These views do not necessarily agree with each other. One approach that has been taken is that of a sex worker, the other is the approach of sex trafficking. The sex worker and trafficking in women approaches were argumentative during the process of development of the UN Protocol 2000 (Raymond, 2002)

The sex workers approach views trafficking in women a form of international informal labor market these women willingly to sell sex as an alternative strategy of survival. In this view, trafficked women are migrant workers who willingly sell sex. These women are responding to a global labor demand. These women should not be seen as victims of crime. (Berman, 2003, p. 46) Sex workers willingly travel across borders and sell sex, making them criminals. This approach separates voluntary and forced prostitution, and argues that violence in prostitution happens randomly. Persons who follow this view of sex workers feel that trafficking in women empowers the modern independent, self-governing states in the global world. This approach supports individual nations in their justification of anti-immigration policies and helps them in their fight of illegal migrants and traffickers. This approach upholds the position of the state to keep their sovereign borders (Berman, 2003, p. 50).

In comparison, other scholars who have developed the sex trafficking approach assert that trafficking in women for sex work is inherently wrong, and is a form of oppression of women. They view trafficking as poor women who are willing to work as prostitutes sanctions unemployed women to support their families, therefore trafficking in women should be seen as sex work. Scholars who take the trafficking in women approach argue that prostitution as sex work gives merit to the sex industry by viewing the buyers of sex as legitimate customers and pimps as a third party business agent in acceptable business operation (Raymond, 2002). They feel that the sex work approach leads to the objectification of women and promotes male sexual, social, economic and political dominance over women. The violence experienced by women in commercial sex would be minimized if prostitution and the trafficking in women in the name of sex work were to be legalized. Overwhelmingly, men of relatively wealthy countries purchase sex from poor women in poor countries; this supports the idea that trafficking in women for prostitution is based on class and gender. These scholars argue that based on Pateman's, (1988) sexual contract conception as a cultural diagram, trafficking in women for the sex industry creates a dominant/submissive relation in which a man commands a woman's body. It reinforces the patriarchal meanings of masculinity as sexual dominance and femininity as sexual subjection. Trafficking in women in the sex industry normalizes male sex-right. They also argue that those whose approach it is that prostitution and trafficking in women is sex work do not identify the demand from countries on the receiving end. There is a high demand from rich countries for women prostitutes from poor countries whose basic human rights are abused by organized crime networks. Hughes (2000) argues that the focus is mostly on the supply side of the sending countries, with the primary cause of trafficking being the economic factors. He feels that a more complete understanding of trafficking in women would be reached if the demand for trafficking women in sex industries in receiving countries and the predominant role of organized crime networks in committing serious crimes against women were factored in. Hughes (2000) argues, "It cannot be ignored that women are the sole victims in trafficking in women for prostitution and men are the sole players in creating the demands for women in prostitution."

Commodification of Women and Trafficking on Women

The idea of commodification of women is not a new phenomenon; it has been around since the beginning of class-divided society. With the development of capitalism, a system based on commodity production, the trade in women's flesh has flourished.

This trend has seen the unconstrained commodification of people and relationships carrying on beside each other. The ever-growing gap between the rich and poor leads the destitute to sell not only their labor-power but also their actual bodies for the sexual gratification of those who have money.

In the last 30 years the sex trade has rapidly grown; it has been extensively industrialized worldwide. This process of industrializing the sex trade generates profits, which add up to billions of dollars. Women and children have been converted into sexual commodities that are bought and sold. It has expanded from prostitution to internationally arranged marriages and an expansion and normalization of the pornography industry.

The industrialization of the sex trade and its globalization are primary factors that make contemporary prostitution qualitatively different from the prostitution of yesterday.

Consumers of the sex trade from North America now have access to "exotic" and very young bodies worldwide, notably from Brazil, Cuba, Russia, Kenya, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Vietnam and Nicaragua. The sex industry can now meet the needs of all types of demands; it is diversified, sophisticated, and specialized.

Another factor, which presents a qualitatively different character on the current sex trade, is the fact that prostitution has become a development strategy for some countries. Under obligations of debt repayment, numerous countries in Asian, Latin American, and African States were encouraged by international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) to develop their tourism and entertainment industries. In each case, the development of these sectors stimulated the development of the sex trade (Hechler, 1995)

Over the last 30 years, we have witnessed the industrialization of prostitution, of the traffic in women and children, of pornography, and of sexual tourism. This once small market is an increasingly central aspect of current capitalist globalization. Multinational sex has become independent economic forces (Barry, 1995) quoted on the stock exchange; sexual exploitation is increasingly considered to be an entertainment industry (Oppermann, 1998), and prostitution a legitimate job (Kempadoo; Dorais, 1998).

Many groups and agencies are taking the normalizing regulatory approach to address the issue of trafficking due to the increasing size and centrality of the global sex. However, this strategy is deeply flawed. The rapidly expanding international sex market exploits above all women and children, especially members of marginal and minority groups in the Third World and former "socialist" countries. This "leisure industry" is based on the methodical violation of human rights, for it requires a market in commodified human beings and the concurrence of pimps and clients who are prepared to buy and sell women and children. I argue that until we look into the deep face of the issue of commodification of human beings, we will not be able to address the harms of trafficking.

History and movements

Feminists have campaigned against "white slavery", the "sexual slavery" of prostitution and the trafficking of women across international boundaries for the purposes of prostitution as early as the nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth century (Sullivan, 2003). White slavery is a 19th Century term from a form of slavery involving the sexual abuse of women held as captives and forced into prostitution. Sexual slavery is forced prostitution: a single-owner sexual slavery and slavery for primarily non-sexual purposes where sex is common or permissible. (Wikipedia, 2003). Trafficking is not always for sexual exploitation. In 1949 the United Nations held a convention that adopted an international agreement for the suppression of the traffic in persons and the exploitation of the prostitution of others. Women and children are trafficked into debt-bondage, forced labor and other forms of slavery. Debt-bondage is when women and children are forced to work to pay off transportation fees into the destination countries. The victim's travel documents are taken from them; they are forced into social isolation.

The 1949 United Nations Convention declared that prostitution and trafficking was "incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person and endanger(ed) the welfare of the individual, the family and the community" (United Nations, 1949). This

convention did not define trafficking, but did require punishment for those who trafficked for the purpose of prostitution. The convention did not distinguish between forced or voluntary prostitution or between adults and children. The 1949 convention required that states work to prevent prostitution. This convention did not attract a large amount of support. Only 71 countries had signed by 1996 (Sullivan, 2003).

The Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW), with Kathleen Barry as the first director, was organizing in late 1980s and 1990s. The CATW became officially affiliated with the United Nations in 1989. The CATW is a non-governmental organization (NGOs). The CATW promotes women's human rights. It works to combat sexual exploitation in all its forms, in particular prostitution and trafficking in women and children, especially girls. CATW is made up of regional networks and of affiliated individuals and groups. It works as an umbrella that coordinates and also receives direction from its regional organizations and networks in its fight against sexual exploitation and the support of women's human rights (Sullivan, 2003).

Meanwhile, other organizations, such as The Global Alliance Against Trafficking in women (GAATW) is a NGO that advocates for the protection of the human rights of trafficked persons, they also advocate and support the movement of sex workers (GAATW, 2003).

The trafficking of persons has become a global business. It is suggested that mostly women and children are trafficked (Raymond, et al 2002). Trafficking affects almost all countries and reaps enormous profits for traffickers. The reasons women and young girls are trafficked are many. Women and young girls are recruited, forced, sold, abducted, deceived, and exploited into trafficking. Friends, neighbor, acquaintances, spouse/partner, family members, printed advertisements, business agencies, bar owners, older men/sugar daddies, pimp and strangers introduce these women and young girls to the world of trafficking (Raymond, et al 2002). There are also claims that organized crimes, such as the Russian mafia, are also involved with the trafficking of women and young girls (Williams, 1999). Another group who is taking advantage of illegal migration are those who exploit persons fleeing a country from war and crime. (Human Rights Watch – Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2002) Different situations led to trafficking. Political and economic changes have lead up to many women finding themselves in a world of lost hope (Williams, 1999).

For instance, in Russia, the unemployment rate for women is between 70 and 90 percent (Swedish Ministry, 1998). For the women who are lucky enough to find jobs it is common to experience sexual harassment. It is easy to understand why a woman would feel that there is little difference between being a secretary and working as a stripper or prostitute. It is common to see advertisements from women seeking secretarial jobs to include a statement indicating "no intimacy."

Two female university students from the Ukraine signed up as agricultural workers for a summer job in Greece only to find out that they were forced to work in a brothel. They tried to escape by jumping out a window. These two young women were picked up on the highway and placed in a jail for 3 weeks before being deported back to the Ukraine (The TIP Report 2003). This problem is not isolated to the homeless, the less educated and those with dysfunctional families. It is a problem that expands across all regions of the former Soviet Union and into different social groups and social classes.

With the fall of the Soviet Union, all social and public support programs were no longer provided to the people. The dismantlement of the social security structures is part of the economic problem created when the political liberty changes. Women became the victims of the negative effects of changes. Women who face almost impossible chances to find employment are also left the burden of being the sole breadwinner for the family. Public childcare centers were closed. Due to the reduction of pensions, women also found that they needed to care for elderly as well. These are just a few of the reasons women have been looking to richer countries to find employment (Swedish Ministry, 1998).

Women and young girls find themselves forced or coerced into prostitution, slavery, indentured servitude and domestic slavery. They find themselves at the mercy of strangers; they usually do not know the countries' languages. They don't know of any way out of this situation. They are alone, as they have no family around them. They are many miles from home and their paperwork is either nonexistent or has been taken by their captors. They are dependent on these strangers for the basics of life-shelter, food, and health care. The living conditions for these women and young girls are horrifying in many cases (Williams, 1999).

As reported in the Human Rights Watch (HRW, 2002) – Korea report: A woman in her twenties who had fled North Korea and went into China to find work so she could help her father and brother. She went to stay at a Korean-Chinese house in Kae San with an uncle. Thugs abducted them. The thugs then separated the woman from her uncle. The thugs got into a fight about if they should trade her or not. A man who was dressed as a security officer broke up the fight and took her to his home and let her spend the night. He released her the next day. She then continued on to Yanji and was hiding at a shelter with a church. She was urged to marry, they kept introducing her to men, and even the deacon urged her to marry. She then heard about an older couple that was looking for a housekeeper.

She was asked by the elderly couple to teach their grandchildren Korean. When she went to the house where the children were living, she was now forced to live with the elderly couple's son. She was then shown a note from the deacon of the church where she had been staying, that said she had been sold for the price of 5,000 renminbi, which converts to about \$600 US. Soon after she was forced to have sex with the son. When she became depressed, he started beating her. She would be beaten so badly she could not walk for a week. She was beaten on her face and body until she was covered with bruises.

She remembered one time had been raining and it reminded her of home, she started to cry. The son found her crying and beat her, he thought she did not like him and was planning on escaping. Since she did not speak Chinese and he did not speak Korean, she could not tell him why she was crying. He would tie her wrist and ankles and beat her. When she thought of leaving, the family told her she would have to pay them 5000 renminbi. She had no way of coming up with the money. When she called the church, she had learned that the reverend had reported her to the public security office, she could no longer return to the church that she had been before. She could not return home to her family, as her mother had died six months before. She had to help her father and brother so she was forced to stay with the son of the elderly couple. It was after four months filled with beatings, some of which were very serious, that she became determined to leave. When he had left for work that day, he had

hidden all of her clothing so she left wearing just her underwear and house slippers. She traveled to a church in Song Kang, where a church official took her to his home. He then referred her to another church where she met and married another North Korean refugee (HRW- North Korea, 2002).

This is but one of the many stories of women who have been affected by trafficking; each story is filled with pain and suffering for the women, the situation may differ on how exactly they are trafficked and the events that follow once they are taken from their homes, but they are all treated inhumanly, each person isolated from the security of every day life. There are usually language barriers, fear, and pain for the victims and no hope for them to find a way out. Many fear that if they do succeed, the traffickers would find them or hurt their family. This also plays a part on why they feel they do not have the choice to leave. (International Trafficking in Women and Children, 2000).

Complexity of Trafficking

It is without a doubt that trafficking of women and children is a complex issue; it is related to many different interests. Trafficking is related to the following areas: prostitution, human rights, migration, organized crime, violence against women, the feminization of poverty, the gender division of the international labor market, unequal international economic relationships, etc. Due to the complexity of the problem, the way trafficking is viewed by the states or by any nongovernmental organization may even cause more harm than good. I believe we will need to keep in mind, which are we trying to help, the women who are victims or the problems of the state? We also need to think whether our solution will help the victims or make matters worse for them. We need to keep in mind what the specific problem is to which we are trying to find resolution.

Trafficking can be looked at as a moral issue. This thought is rooted in our moral condemnation of prostitution. Trafficking is looked at as just a part of prostitution. The consideration of how a person got to the point of being a prostitute does not matter so much as trying to suppress prostitution. Policies and laws have been developed that punish all involved with prostitution, including the woman who is being prostituted. This leads to even more isolation and stigmatization of the woman. Women are put in two different classes: those who are non-prostitutes and those who are. The innocent versus the guilty women: this leaves the women who are guilty with yet more abuse, as if it is their own fault. Women who are not prostitutes are granted the right to protection. This has been the traditional view on dealing with trafficking and prostitution. In the last several years this view has been challenged, new approaches have begun to point to the view of the woman involved.

Sex workers rights groups and anti-trafficking organizations move the focus of the debate from moral positions to working conditions and workers' rights. The women involved are concerned with the violence, exploitation and abuse. Prostitution as informal employment sector is unregulated and unprotected by laws. The fact that these women also are dealing with illegal status and lack of legal migration opportunities forces them into a place that offers them no protection from violence and exploitation. As long as the women have no right to protection, the brothel keepers and employers are in a position of power. This same type of condition was addressed in the 1920s when

violence and abuse were rid in the work place through labor regulations and civil law. If we include sex workers as legal workers they would have the protection of improved working conditions. Violence and abuse would not be tolerated. Isolation of trafficking in women as a separate issue keeps them from these protections.

Trafficking can also be viewed as a human rights problem; this is the approach most NGOs employ. Trafficking in women and slavery-like practices are a violation of human rights which states are accountable for. The key guidelines include designs to protect human rights. The 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna marked an important milestone in this approach. It was the first time that violence against women was recognized as violation of human rights. Within this approach there are two different ideas. The first sees prostitution as a violation of women's human rights, equal to slavery. The other does not see prostitution itself as a violation but the working conditions of deceit, abuse, violence, debt-bondages, blackmail, deprivation of freedom of movement, etc. that are a part of prostitution, domestic labor or in commercial marriage market.

When trafficking is defined by criminal law and the criminal justice system the measures enabling more effective prosecution of offenders introduced are more stringent criminal legislation. The choice for a criminal approach is also not without limitations. This carries a substantial risk to the women victims. The criminal proceedings may expose the women and their families to secondary victimization. They may even be subject to stigmatizing exposure from her home community; the rights of the victims are not automatically included when the offenders are prosecuted. The future of the victim has no relevance for the law. Currently the European Commission offers no rights of safety to the trafficking victims. If a victim refuses to testify or is deemed no longer useful she can be detained, arrested, deported without taking into consideration of the consequences of these actions. This approach fails to recognize the international human rights law and their obligation to protect the victims.

Trafficking of women is becoming identified as an issue with illegal migration, especially in the Western European states. This view moves away from looking at human rights, violence and abuse to look at illegal entry and residence. This approach uses the tightening of visa policies, stricter boarder control, closer supervision of mixed marriages, and criminalization of third parties to try to decrease the number of persons trafficked. When looking at the approach of illegal entry or stay; smuggling of persons is frequently confused with human trafficking. It is crucial to see the difference between these two. Smuggling of a person involves facilitation of illegal immigration. Trafficking in women uses deceit, violence and abuse for the purpose of exploiting their labor, which is internationally recognized as a violation of human rights (Wijers & Doorninck, 2002).

Combating Trafficking

In combating trafficking the United Nations, governments, and NGOs need to work together to deal with this complex and horrific problem. Along with the CATW, another NGO that is instrumental in the fight against trafficking is the Human Rights Watch. This organization was first started in 1978 as Helsinki Watch, and its primary concern was to monitor the compliance of Soviet bloc countries. In 1980 Americas Watch was set up; its primary purpose was to monitor the human rights abuses involved in the war in Central America. In 1988, the organization grew to cover other regions around the world; the "Watch" committees united to form Human Rights Watch (HRW). HRW believes in

international standards of human rights applied to all people equally. They also believe that sharp vigilance and timely protest can prevent the tragedies of the twentieth century from recurring (About HRW, 2003).

Other NGOs that have a United States base are the following: American Center for International Labor and Solidarity (ACILS), The Asia Foundation, Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (CAST), Global Survival Network, Institute for Policy Studies Campaign for Migrant Domestic Worker Rights, International Human Rights Law Group, MiaMed Institute, Project Hope International, and Protection Project. (The) International Organizations include: Academy for Educational Development, Amnesty International, Anti-Slavery International, Crossing Borders Against Trafficking in Women and Girls, Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)-Trafficking in Human Beings and Vital Voice (United States NGOs and International Organizations, 2003).

The United States also has agencies listed as being involved in the battle against trafficking: the Department of Justice - Civil Rights Division - Trafficking in Persons and Worker Exploitation Task Force (TPWETF), and Department of State - Office to Monitor and Combat - Trafficking in Persons (G/TIP) (United States Governmental Agencies, 2003).

For the last three years, the U.S. State Department has prepared the Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP Report) that it submits each year to Congress as required by the Trafficking Victims Protection Act. The Trafficking Victims Protection Act was enacted in October 2000 to fight human trafficking, protect victims and create mandates for the Department of State, Justice, Labor, Health, and Human Services, and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

The TIP report 2003 is used as a diplomatic tool for the State Department. The report is an encouragement for the current work being done to combat trafficking. It can be used as a guide to help focus the resources on prosecution, protection and prevention programs. The State Department has developed a two-step process in which they assess other countries involvement in the battle against trafficking. The State Department uses information from the email address (tipreport@state.gov) and NGOs, international organizations, published reports, research trips, and information submitted to update the TIP report each year. This year's report assessing process involved two steps. Step one was to determine which countries were either a country of "significant number" of origin, transit, or a destination for trafficking. (Significant number meaning at least one hundred or more victims). Only countries that had significant numbers were included in this report. In step two each country listed on this report was rated into three tiers. The government's effort to combat trafficking was the determining factor on which tier the country was placed. The countries that were evaluated to be in full compliance were placed in tier one. Those countries that only partially met compliance were placed in tier two. The countries that only met minimal standards were placed in tier three. No countries placement is permanent. Each country must maintain and increase its efforts to combat trafficking (The TIP Report, 2003).

In a letter to Colin Powell, June 27, 2003, the Human Rights Watch found the following areas of concern with the U.S. State Department's TIP Report 2003:

They have found the report not to meaningfully evaluate anti-trafficking efforts. The report does not evaluate the content or effectiveness measures taken the countries mentioned in the report. Task forces to combat trafficking have been formed, but there is no formal way to evaluate the work of the task forces. There must be an evaluation of the work done. The reports statistics are spotty. The absence of such data should be explained. The report also fails to condemn harmful immigration policies that further victimize the victim.

The report cites countries that have not specifically developed trafficking legislation or when they have failed to develop protocol to prevent, suppress, and punish trafficking in persons. This should be a minimal requirement for a country to be listed in tier one. They should also have set up legislation for the protection of victims.

The trafficking report is vague and lacks specificity. A country should provide the structure details of prosecutions, if these prosecutions were completed, and the results of the prosecution. If a country is failing to successfully prosecute, the reason for this should be listed.

The report does not explain the criteria for tier movement adequately. A description of the justification of tier movement should be included. This failure to do so jeopardizes the credibility of the trafficking report's tier system.

Conclusions

In conclusion, trafficking in women is complex problem whose solution is not easily identified, as there are many views and perspectives that need to be taken into consideration. The silence and the curtain of illusion must be stopped. We need to address root causes of the issue, not only the surface or side issues.

We need to not only acknowledge the link between the role of women in today's society and the issue of trafficking, but we also need to take action so we can make steps forward in protection, prevention, and prosecution on the issue of trafficking. There have been a growing number of persons trafficked over the last several years due to the political and economic changes in countries. The involvement of organized crime has also led to a growth of trafficking. The exact number of persons affected by trafficking is hard to determine, as methods of measuring have not been set up. We need action taken by more countries to combat, prevent and assist victims. Strict and effective punishments for traffickers need to be implemented and enforced. I suggest that we not only address the issue on a global and national level, but I suggest we also deal with this on a local level. Facing issues here at home is something we can do. We can move the issue from an uncontrollable complex issue with micro-manageable steps toward protection, prevention and prosecution.

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Author biography:

I am a non-traditional student; I had taken many years off to raise my family and then returned to academia 3 years ago so I could finish my degree. I received my Bachelor's of Science degree in Sociology and I have been accepted into the Masters of Arts Program in Sociology at Minnesota State University. Over the course of the last several years I have been working with my mentor Dr. Afroza Anwary, who does research on globalization, South Asia, and women in the developing world. Dr. Anwary, a native of Bangladesh, has researched and published on the subject of trafficking on women and is involved in an ongoing research project on global activism in relation to trafficking.

My research has included research on teen media exposure in relation to decline in physical activity, trafficking on women, the relationship between Merton's strain theory and the deviant act of prostitution and peacekeeping circles. My research regarding trafficking on women has shown a pressing need for the consciousness and commitment of Americans to do something about the widespread commercial sexual exploitation of women and girls. Something needs to be done about the widespread commercial sexual exploitation of women.