

Human Trafficking in the era of Globalization: The case of Trafficking in the Global Market Economy

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Introduction

Human trafficking is a human phenomenon that has been and continues to be practiced for centuries now (Ali et al 2001). Like the global economic crisis, human trafficking is a global crisis that is inextricably linked to the current move of globalization in the sex industries involving women and children (Hoque, 2010). Hoque examines the painful reality of female sex workers in Bangladesh and argues that the current rate of growth in sex trade in Bangladesh is fostered by social and economic vulnerabilities that impel young women to engage in commercial sex work. Consequently, what has emerged in Bangladesh and across the borders in India, Malaysia, Pakistan and other Middle Eastern countries is the culture of child trafficking both internally and across borders (Hoque 2010).

In this paper, I will explore the dimensions of human trafficking by distinguishing between different types of trafficking. The distinction is based on the interpretation of the trafficked victim as a commodity. Thereby, several markets according to consumer needs can be distinguished. I will explain these consumer needs and the supply chains aimed at satisfying these needs. These chains have become increasingly globalized, which means that we have to understand the issue in the framework of contemporary globalization and especially global capitalism.

Definition of Human Trafficking

Bales (2004) defines contemporary slavery as a "social and economic relationship in which a person is controlled through violence or paid nothing, and economically exploited." In the old form of slavery, Africans were specifically transported to the New World based on their race and specific capabilities. The new form of slavery goes beyond racial lines. As Bales argues, both the new and old forms are characterized by violence used to maintain the slave. Not only is violence used, but victims are subjugated and stripped of their free will. Slaves were often marginalized and exploited by their slave master. In other words, black slaves could not buy their freedom. Although a slave in this category could usually be enslaved for life, modern slavery however, is transient and occasionally temporary. Bales asserts that traffickers' minimum hold-up (period of captivity) is usually between

three to six months, or longer, depending on the situation and the circumstance.

Today, human trafficking involves the movement of victims, usually women and children, across borders legally or illegally. These victims may be either documented or without documentation as they head into an unknown destination, and in most cases the person being transported is unaware of the consequences thereof. And sometimes victims may be oblivious of unintended consequences such as arrests and deportation while in transit to the new destination. Many of the forms of human trafficking involve the movement of people from one place to another often unknown to the victim. In many cases, this involves victims being lured by better opportunities in the form of jobs elsewhere. Hoque (2010) argues that what clearly defines human trafficking today is still unknown despite various definitions by international governmental and nongovernmental organizations.

Although slavery has been abolished for a century now, the practice of slavery still exists albeit in different forms. In today's literature, modern day slavery is human trafficking. Although most of the discussions on human trafficking tend to focus on forcing and transporting women for labor and sexual exploitation, the majority of modern day trafficking cases can be found in fact everywhere in our communities and societies.

Until 2000 the definition of human trafficking was varied and reflected geographical and regional locale. In order to consolidate these regional definitions, the United Nation in 2000 promulgated the protocol to end human trafficking in the world. This protocol which came into force in December 2003 seeks among others to suppress, punish, and to prevent the trafficking of women and children world wide. At the same time, the United Nation for the first time defined human trafficking as

“the recruitment, transport, transfer, harboring, 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 a control over another person for the purposes of exploitation. Exploitation shall include at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs. The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth (above) shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth (above) have been used.”¹

This comprehensive definition of human trafficking not only sets off the goals and parameters upon which nations can fight human trafficking,

¹ United Nation Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (2000): Annex II, Section Article 3, p.42-43

but also has been ratified by up to 117 nations world wide. On the basis of these definitions, it can be discerned that human trafficking involves the transport of individuals usually children male and female alike under deceptive circumstances for the motive of profiting of their labor either internally or across borders. This definition is also consistent with Pennington et al. (2008) when they argue that human trafficking encompasses the transport of human beings across borders for the purpose of using them as slaves. They furthermore added that contemporary human trafficking can be found in sex trade, coerced labor, extraction of body parts, and other forms of exploited labor or debt bondage.

On the basis of these definitions we would like to ask who then are human traffickers? Why do they purchase, whom, and for what purpose? As I review the various literatures on the subject of human trafficking, I ask myself, why does human trafficking occur? And who pays for all this? On the basis of the Palermo protocol, a Human trafficker is someone who transports, harbors, exploits, and lures someone for either himself or to be transported to someone else for a profit. Generally the motives for these transactions are money. Money is the driving force that keeps the flames of this criminal offense burning like a wild fire. Since trafficking involves criminal gangs, they avoid arrest by constantly moving victims from place to place until he or she is completely worn off. Majority of victims are used in the sex tourism industry, pornography, and brothels, as cheap labor (Pennington et al. 2008: 4). Dunn (2007) argues that the problem of human trafficking is growing at a faster rate annually. About 12.3 million people are trafficked every moment of the time. In 2001 for instance, about 45,000-50,000 were trafficked in that year (ibid.). This suffices to underline that human trafficking is a lucrative business, in which women and children are most vulnerable. Jahic (2009) examines the economic and social factors that are associated with human trafficking generally when he argues that gender and demographic information plays a significant role in the recruitment process. His analysis also examines the gender roles vis-à-vis the socio-economic status of victims mostly trafficked.

This paper builds on the interpretation of the nature of human trafficking through the economic lens of "demand" and "supply" in order to understand the operation of human trafficking globally. Additionally, what I seek to do is to explicate and elucidate the rise of human trafficking in the global market economy through the combinations of structural and proximal factors as espoused by Cameron and Newman (2008). Cameron and Newman, departs from the traditional notions of "operational" issues of dealing with the human trafficking, when they argue on the intersectionality of the other factors they called "structural" and "proximal" within the context of ecological locale. Cameron et al. (2008) have focused on the economic aspect of human trafficking when they argued that structural factors such as social,

economic, political and cultural also fosters and sustains the business of human trafficking.

Global Dimensions of Human Trafficking

The forms of human trafficking are varied and to a large extent multifaceted in dimension calling for an integrated approach. In most cases, the structural factors of human trafficking are similar to one another such as the underlying economic and social context but in the larger context its patterns are varied and depend on geographical and regional locations (Cameron et al. 2008). Globally, an estimated 12.3 million people are enslaved (International Labour Organization (ILO) 2005). Out of this number, an estimated 2.5 million people are in forced labor (coerced prostitution and sexual exploitations). Out of the 2.5 million mentioned above, an estimated 1.4 million people constituting approximately 56% of victims in forced labor come from Asia and the Pacific. 250,000, constituting about 10%, come from Latin America and the Caribbean, 230,000 or 9.2% come from the Middle East and Northern Africa, 130,000 or about 5.2% come from Sub Saharan Africa, 270,000 or about 10.8% are from industrial countries such as the US and Western Europe. And 200,000 or about 8% come from countries in transitions or weakened states plunged by conflicts.² At least about 161 countries are engaged in human trafficking as source, transit and destination points.³ According to the UNICEF child trafficking information sheet 2003, an estimated 1.2 million children are trafficked each year. The majority are between the ages of 18-24, out of whom an estimated 95% of these victims have experience physical or sexual violence while being trafficked. Out of this percentage, about 43% of victims are used for forced commercial sexual exploitation, the majority of whom involves women and children.⁴ The US Department of State (2006) reports that the most common forms of slavery are prostitution in advanced countries, constituting about 46%. 27% in domestic servitude, 10% in agricultural and 5% in sweat shops.

Human trafficking today is a huge business generating huge profits annually. 2010, according to the International Labor Organization, an estimated \$31.6 billion in profits was accumulated through exploitation, either sexually or through coerced labor. Out of this number, about 15.5 billion, constituting about 49%, were generated in industrial countries. 9.7 billion or about 30.6% were generated in Asia Pacific. 1.3 billion or about 4.1% was for Latin America and the Caribbean. 1.6 billion or about 5% were generated in Sub Saharan Africa, and 1.5 billion or approximately 4.7% were generated in the Middle East (Besler 2005).

² International Labour Organization, Forced Labour Statistics Factsheet (2007)

³ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Trafficking in Persons: Global Patterns (Vienna, 2006)

⁴ International Organization for Migration, Counter-Trafficking Database, 78 Countries (1999-2006)

Pennington et al. (2008: 2) have indicated that in Israel an enslaved prostitute could earn between \$450-2,500 a day, if the victim is working between 15-17 hours a day per week.

Market Situations

Human trafficking generally is organized around five participants. First, it involves migrant victims who are trafficked and transported. Second, involves those who recruit victims for transport, and in most cases take charge of finances by paying for all transportation costs. Third, are buyers who claim ownership of possession of the victim. In most cases buyers do not have any pre-existing relationships with the victim; hence the buyer may use force and coercion to maintain compliance of the victim into submission. Fourth, are the enablers, those who work behind the scenes either knowingly or unknowingly by assisting in facilitating the movement of victims from one place to another. This is imminent in weakened developing countries of Africa, Asia and South America, where human traffickers can beat the system without getting caught. Fifth, consumers or buyers of sex prostitutes from pimps who offer clientele services on hourly bases at the expense of the victim. Finally, NGOs who play a significant role in rehabilitating victims (if they are ever recovered) from human trafficking menace.

Pennington et al. (2008) mention that researching human trafficking can be very difficult because of the nature and organization of human trafficking (clandestine operation). For example, victims are usually hidden; as a result, identifying victims for assistance can be a daunting and extremely huge task, especially in determining sample population of victims. The 2005 US Department of State Report projected that human trafficking is one of the fastest growing organized crimes after arms and drug trade. Human trafficking is profited by pimps around the world and these numbers continue to increase in high proportions with demand for the sexual exploitation of women. Along the border between Laos and Thailand for example, many women have been sold into prostitution, and trafficked into Japan where they are held to work for brothel services and massage shops for a period of time, and are usually disposed of whenever a victim contracts a disease. Bales argues that a huge majority of women and children were rescued in Italy most of whom emigrated from Sub-Saharan Africa where they were recruited and promised better job opportunities. Like many of the brothels and strip clubs in most advanced countries the services of women are growing higher and higher. The need for exotic women in brothel places and massage shops makes the demand for women and children from Eastern Europe to US and Japan a very expensive commodity (Hughes 2004). Bales (2005) demonstrates that the sale of sex in Japan is of huge financial relevance. In 2001, the sex business in Japan generated a whopping \$20 billion in revenue, which is four times more than what Toyota will make. Furthermore, the price for sex in most massage shops, also known as soapy shops, is between \$300 and \$500.

However, it was common to find sex on the street for as low as \$8. The sex business in Japan is part of Japan's overall "entertainment industry" that employs a large number of young foreign women from developing countries like Thailand and Nepal.

Demand Side of Human Trafficking

In recent times there have been several types of demand for women for commercial sex work and prostitution in the brothels. What drives the demand for women and children for sexual labor in these sectors has come to be known as the pull and push factors fuelling the sexual exploitation of women from mainly developing countries to more advanced countries in Western Europe and North America. In most cases, many of these young girls are recruited from less developed countries in promise of better job opportunities overseas. Upon arrival abroad, victims' passports and other valuable forms of identification are taken away, and in most cases victims are abused into submission. In a conversation with a trafficked woman to Japan, Bales found out:

"Sri was approached by a woman she new from her province, who ...told her about a well paid job opportunity in Thai restaurant in Japan. Sri decides to take up the offer because her parents needed money for her younger brother's schooling. Sri applied for a passport herself, but was called to an office to meet a "boss" who had many passports at hand and chose one for her. She had silicon injections in her face to make her look more like the picture on the passport. However, she barely carried the passport herself, entering Japan with a man posing as her "Japanese boyfriend," who took her passport after passing through immigration officers. Sri believed the passport may have carried a visa for a Japanese spouse. At the airport in Japan, the "boyfriend" rang another man who came to pick her up by a car, and took her to a bar where she was told she had to repay a debt of 4.8 million Japanese Yen about \$40,000 to cover the cost involved in bringing her to Japan." (Bales 2007: 110)

This represents one of the many circumstances victims of human trafficking undergo any moment in time.

In India, due to the caste system that has been practiced for several centuries, the demand for people by higher social caste generates demand for services; hence, most rural Indians are often demanded to work in farm fields as slaves usually termed debt bondage. In this form of slavery the person is made to work for some time (many years in some cases) in order to repay loans to the master. This repayment can usually extend to several generations of the unborn, thereby making perpetual enslavement possible (Bales 2005). Bonded labor in India is widespread due to the enormous poverty in the peripheral and remote parts of the country. As a result, the need for agricultural labor in the

areas where coffee and cotton productions are concentrated generates demand for people to work under very painful conditions, and in some cases very little compensation.

These are the circumstances in India that victims of debt bondage have been going through for generations now. The question is what drives this business of bonded labor? The simple underlying answer is poverty. Poverty is the most single fire that ignites the flame of human trafficking globally. The demand for agricultural labor in the world is enormous especially the demand for cheap labor in certain areas of agricultural production makes the demand for human labor high. In Ivory Coast for example, Kielland (2008) argues how children were being recruited to the cocoa farms in the Ivory Coast. A child in Mali according to Kielland could be purchased for as low as \$55. In the same vein, children in Ghana are engaged in cocoa and palm oil production as well as in the mines.

The fishing industry in Ghana has also witnessed the recruitment of children for offshore fishing. Children due to their light weight were often tied up with heavy loads in order that they can sink to the bottom of the sea to pull and remove fishing nets and other gadgets. The International Labor Organization points out that about 12 million children world wide are engaged in all forms of forced labor. Most of these children in many instances are hidden in our societies to the benefit of criminals whose annual profits in 2009 were projected at \$32 billion, approximately \$13,000 per person annually (Bales 2005).

In recent times the globalization of economy has also impelled corporations to outsource business oversea in order to engage in the services for children and minors for the purpose of exploitation. The company Nike for example outsourced their major productions to Lebanon and Indonesia to engage the services of women for just a dollar a day for the production of Nike products that are being sold for exorbitant prices in the US. This form of exploitation is necessitated by money driven corporations who seek to make billions of dollars as quickly as possible. Knowing the background of these material goods may help in the long run in avoiding these corporations enslaving and exploiting the majority of the world impoverished women and children. In Mexico for instance, Victoria Secret has been named among the companies employing cheap Mexican labor for the production of cosmetics products. This form of labor exploitation is no different from earlier forms of slavery. Although modern forms of slavery at least earn some wages, these wages are exploitative. For example, companies who hire foreign workers take advantage of their situation by offering extremely low wages that will be unacceptable in any developed country.

The nature of globalization has also exacerbated the demand for human trafficking all over the world. Globalization with its inherent global technology has further contributed to the enslavement and total exploitation of people across the worlds. Most of these exploitations have usually gone unnoticed due to the subtle nature of their operation.

For example, the global technology has made it possible for technology based corporations in the US to outsource its production services to India and the Philippines for cheap labor. Notably, the customer service industry for instance has been outsourced to India where very low wages are paid. The overall result is exploitation of the people. One may argue that these corporations are offering jobs, but the point is that human trafficking involves exploitation if the purpose of engagement is to the benefit of the one who engages the other in the services.

Globalization technology has also increased the services of sex workers all over the world. The demand for client services in the sex industries in many developed countries in Western Europe and North America, have increased as a result of technology. Today Asian girls constitute the majority of women and children trafficked annually. According to the United Nations Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking an estimated 2.4 million people are forced in labor. Out of this number about 1.4 million people or about 56% come from Asia and the Pacific. The majority come from developing countries and are trafficked for sexual exploitation, especially with the emerging global technologies such as the internet and web resources. The wide spread of the internet and webcams has facilitated trafficking for sexual purposes.

Bales (2005) agrees that majority of sex workers in Japan come from Thailand and Laos as well as China and its surrounding. Clients for these women and children often back their demand by force in the destination countries. In the foreign country, these women and children are packaged (hair cuts, clothes) in order to attract clients who demand these girls for sex purposes. Bales also argues that like many consumer products, human beings trafficked for sexual exploitation are managed and branded to meet the expectations of their clients. Clients and pimps are the ones who buy and sell these girls for a period of time and then dispose of them when they are no longer productive or contract a disease. Women and children in most cases are the ones usually sold several times for prostitution by bouncing from one pimp to the other until they are being disposed of.

Supply Side Trafficking

On the supply side, Bales (1999) argues that social, economic as well as political realities in the source countries make the trafficking in person easy. Newman (2008) et al demonstrate that both "structural" and "proximal" factors in the home countries have contributed in fostering the movement of people from the source, to the destination countries. As already noted on the demand side, the supply side for example involves in most cases the movement of people from their countries or places of origin often plagued with several social, economic, political as well as cultural factors that make the victims to the advanced countries vulnerable.

In the social context, Newman (2008) et al. argue that most of the victims are driven into human trafficking because of the promise of better jobs and better social amenities in the intended destinations. The Ibos of Eastern Nigeria in Akwa Ibom State for example have become a source for traffickers to recruit women in search of better conditions of life to work as sex slaves in Europe. In this community, the promise of wealth by traffickers is used to entice the youth of the area to migrate to Italy where majority of Nigerians have been identified and rescued by anti-human trafficking groups (Foxcroft 2009). The social milieu in this context of creating a supply of human trafficking is quite different from the historical practice of slavery. Although the forms are similar such as the involvement of some form of social relationship between the exploiter and the exploited in the old form of slavery, this relationship is often marked by violence, the use of force or threat of the use of force in order to maintain and subjugate the victim. While the social context in most developing countries usually involves a high degree of ignorance, Killeand (2008) argues that social boredom impels Malian youth to travel to Ivory Coast in search of work on cocoa farms.

Economic factors are the most relevant factor that fosters human trafficking generally. In fact the economic drive of human trafficking is double edged and plays out in both the demand and supply side of the human trafficking problem. From the supply side in which victims are uprooted to participate in human trafficking are usually from countries where poverty is wide-spread. Poverty in most developing countries of Africa and South East Asia as well as Eastern Europe exacerbates living conditions of people thereby making victims vulnerable to traffickers.

Another factor that is linked to the poverty of these countries is unemployment. One cannot rule out the fact that unemployment to a large extent contributes to poverty of developing countries. Since the disintegration of the former Soviet Union, many east European countries have not been able to recover economically. This is evident in the recent upsurge of unemployment rates in Poland, Latvia, and Bulgaria and Romanian economies. With the global economic crisis of the day, many nations have rolled back their economies due to the global economic crunch, and the result is massive unemployment among the youth. In Ghana and Nigeria, where the youth constitute about 50% of the populations, it is not uncommon to find that these men and women will seek avenues for potential employment elsewhere (ILO 2005 Report). As a result, human traffickers will use any means necessary to lure and entice people into trafficking. The biggest problem driving the supply side of the human trafficking problem is the vulnerability. If people are not vulnerable to be lured, then trafficking is not possible. In buttressing this point Bales (2000) argues on the places where recruitment usually occurs and concludes that poverty and unemployment not only cause human trafficking in essence, but foster it.

Conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa and in some parts of Asia have been exploited by human trafficking gangs. Liberia and Sierra Leone for

example, where conflicts have hit in the last decades, have impelled their population to move away from the conflict zones while others have been smuggled by human traffickers to other areas where they can work as prostitutes. Conflicts for that matter create conditions possible for traffickers to recruit and transport people usually with the false intentions of disembarking in a safe location with promises of job opportunities.

In the case of Ghana, for instance, most prostitution arrests have been young women from trouble and conflict countries, who due to lack of job skills are unable to secure jobs in the labor market, but informally working as prostitutes in the slums of Accra for pimps and criminal organizations. Organized crime such as prostitution in Ghana is on the rise with police cracking down pimps on a daily basis, especially cases involving transportation of women in children across states and regions.⁵

Children from destitute families have also been the most vulnerable to the supply of the human trafficking problem. Bales points to the case in Mauritania where children are recruited to beg on principal streets with containers for coins they make and send to their masters. These beggars barely make any three square meals a day, but their masters ensure their welfare and upkeep so long as they go out to beg daily. Destitute families are found almost everywhere in developing countries such as India and Africa as well as South America.

Hughes (2004) points out that the inability of government to beef up security measures to detect, suppress and control the activities of human trafficking escalates the problem. As an organized crime, it is common that many of these traffickers will hide under the cover of the law to engage in their nefarious activities. In the countries where human trafficking cases are increasing, national governments are often broken loose making it possible to recruit and transport victims, hence the supply and sale of human beings for labor exploitations. The legal evasion by traffickers also makes the smuggling of people to develop and advance countries easy and less difficult to detect. The Mexican and the US border for example comprises several illegal border crossings into the US. Organized criminals smuggle people illegally to their clients in the major cities in the US for sexual exploitation in the brothels.

Corrupt governments in developing countries have also broken loose making it easy for traffickers to be able to supply their pimps with trafficking victims. In Africa, especially sub-Saharan Africa where corrupt political leaders can be easily manipulated it is difficult if not impossible to prosecute traffickers engaged in human trafficking. In some cases because of this loose legal attitude, traffickers have concentrated in some developing countries to supply women and children abroad for traffickers in Western Europe and the US.

Weakening of states and the collapse of the Soviet Bloc into independent nations in the 1990s led to a period of economic stagnation

⁵ <http://news.myjoyonline.com>

in Eastern Europe. The United States Department of State categorizes these Eastern European countries as some of the biggest suppliers of victims of human trafficking to Western Europe for prostitution and sexual exploitation. This classification by the Department of State is no doubt linked to the stalled and weakened economic growth in these countries in the 1990s (Freeman 2008).

Economic contractions due to capital and credit crunch in the last couple of years has affected the financial market in the United States and has trickled down to other powerful economies like Japan and China leading to a global economic crisis. The crisis has affected economic progress in developing countries and forced government and local state agencies to lay off workers in the industrial sector leading to unemployment (Whitney 2010). While the unemployment numbers are soaring globally, its relationship with human trafficking cannot be ruled out. As organized criminals, traffickers are able to assess countries' economic profiles and where people can be vulnerable due to the lack of jobs caused by economic crisis of the twenty-first century. Whitney (2010) furthermore argues that the financial market has stripped off up to \$13 trillion in equities from hard working families and the working poor. Furthermore, disposable income plummeted for the first time since the 1990s with little or no money to purchase essential commodities. Why is this important to traffickers? Traffickers thrive on vulnerable economic conditions. This point is also consistent with de-industrializations and the adoption of structural adjustments policies by countries attempting to reverse their economies, e.g. African countries' structural adjustment policies in the 1980s, and their concomitant repercussions on economic growth (Whitney 2010).

Modes of Production

The modes of production of human labor or human trafficking are varied and unique to every geographic location or region. In the world system, Wallerstein argues on various forces of interactions that occur within the core and the semi-periphery. Wallerstein indicates that the periphery's dynamic of change in the geopolitical political system culminates in the organized interrelationship between the core and the periphery. In his debate with Wallerstein, the Latin American historian Steve Stern rejects Wallerstein's world system theory using a critical to accuse Wallerstein as overstating the historical importance of Latin American feudalism and its progression to capitalism through coerced labor recruitment by *Mita*⁶ from the period before 1500 to voluntary wage labor accompanied with skilled and unskilled labor forces in the silver mining as well as sugar production in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Wallerstein 1988). Wallerstein generalizes the European

⁶ Mita refers to public services in Latin America and the Caribbean. The argument here is whether the labor of the Mita used by the government circa 1500 constituted forced labor or exploitation of the Mita

experience and neglects the regional circumstances. This rejection points to labor recruitment in the Caribbean sugar plantations whether this recruitment is either voluntary or involuntary.

Similarly, in the case of Bangladesh, Hoque (2008) enumerates the key modes of production of human labor and sexual exploitation both internally or externally. Human traffickers are usually from the communities in which they recruit their victims (ILO2005 Report). Traffickers in many countries often use force to capture victims and coerce them in to submission with little resistance. This sort of kidnappings has been documented in many scholarly literatures in various areas and regions (Hoque 2010). Hoque further argues that false pretense such as the promise of marriage and love in most places of Bangladesh are among the things traffickers use to entice desperate women who are eager to get married. This assertion by Hoque (2008) is also consistent with certain cultural practices in sub-Saharan Africa where women under certain circumstances are betrothed to men upon payment of a small fee to their parents.

Domestic Trafficking

After arms and drug trade, human trafficking is the third largest organized crime on an a global scale, mostly working from developing to developed countries (ILO Report 2005). However, there also is a considerable degree of trafficking that is neither global nor international. Domestic human trafficking refers to the internal forms of human trafficking in a society or country. While countries differ from one another in terms of size and development, the problems associated with human trafficking in these regions remain the same. The most common problems are: cultural trafficking, religious trafficking, child soldiers, pawning and debt bondage, agricultural and forced labor, cultism and forced marriages (Bales 2004).

Cultural Trafficking

If culture is a way of life and a way of doing things as traditional anthropologists such as Malinowski and Evans-Pritchard believe, then surely the victims of human trafficking have their way of life. Victims of human trafficking are striped off their beliefs, traditions and cultural practices and forced to adopt the life of the oppressor. The lost of one's freedom and sense of judgment are taken away reducing victims to a "hewer of wood and a drawer of water." If a victim is taken away to a foreign country he or she has to adapt to new ways of life such as new food, language, cloths etc in certain cases victims from certain regions of the world are given haircuts or hair styles in order to blend in the host country, Bales (2005) called these adaptations the unique selling point (USP). The main point here is that some cultures condone and connive with cultural practices of the people to enslave its own. The *Trokosi's* in Ghana for example, is a case in point, where parents send their young daughters to fetish priests to atone for their evils in the

society. These girls ranging between 10 and 30 years old live and serve the priest. And in some cases these young women have been raped by priests resulting in unwanted children (Foxcroft 2009). This kind of practice in the name of culture has no moral basis in our society, and therefore violates the fundamental human rights and freedom. Under forced marriages or betrothals, many sub Saharan societies in northern Ghana allow women to be forced in to unwanted marriages. Among the Komkombas in Ghana for example, men tend to bid for unborn babies should that baby turn out to be a girl. This cultural practice not only deprives human dignity, but also undermines the human rights of innocent babies in the hands of traffickers of young children in the society. In the case of marriages, a woman is given out for marriage, if she is deemed ready and has reached puberty. Women under this practice usually cannot resist, but simply comply with any decisions that arrive until the final marriage rites are concluded. The question one ought to ask is if trafficking is defined in some cases as the use of force and coercion, what then are forced or arranged marriages? Other areas in sub Saharan Africa, where coerced marriages were practiced include Benin and Togo, where it is often shrouded under the Voodoo practice. Like the cultural cases of the *Trokosi's* of Ghana, the Voodoo of Benin and Togo are often quite similar, except that women live under different cultures and entirely separate societies. The Voodoo priests are also known to be very influential members in the society and are often consulted for various reasons, including issues of barrenness and infertility.

Religious Trafficking

In Northern Nigeria, for example, the *Tijaniya*, branch of the *Shia* Muslim sect in sub-Saharan Africa, recruits young children for religious and training purpose. The child exploitation and protection center working in northern Nigeria argue that children between the ages of six and ten are recruited to serve particular *Imams* or noble *sheikhs* for the purpose of religious and moral guidance and counseling.⁷ These children are usually prevailed upon to go and beg with empty cans and bottles on principal streets for several hours a day and send the proceeds to their *Sheikhs* or *Imams*. This incidence of forced labor is no doubt an astonishing one, making these children vulnerable on the streets where they are often taken advantage of by traffickers who promise to offer them more money. Again, while these children are said to be undergoing moral and religious training, their *Imam* also make them read the Quran as well as perform other menial labor for the *Imam*, who is said to be the guardian and religious leader in the community.

⁷ Child Exploitation and Online Protection Center (CEOP) and Home Office, A Scoping Project of Child Trafficking into and within the UK, 2007

Pawning/Debt Bondage

Pawning or debt bondage, a common practice among indigenous cultures in Africa and India forms part of the heinous human trafficking problem in contemporary slavery (Bales 2004). This practice violates the most basic human rights of victims. For instance, the practice involves the use of children as instruments of legal tender in order to pay off debt. In this case, the victim is made to pay off debt by working for a debtor in various forms, until such a time that the debt was paid off. The most common areas where pawning and debt bondage were still being practiced include Northern Nigeria, the Volta region of Ghana and the Wolof in Senegal. In Ghana for example, the practice of pawning and debt bondage is common in the societies, especially in the Northern parts of Ghana among the Tallensi communities and parts of the sub Saharan societies (Bales 2004). Therefore, the practice of pawning or debt bondage of human beings violates their natural and human rights.

Labor Trafficking

Agriculture is one of the main sources of livelihoods for many African states, consequently, as the demand for agricultural labor goes up in the farming seasons, the need for people to labor on the plantation rises.⁸ The need for labor in the agricultural sectors also fuels the trafficking of human beings. In Ghana's middle belt for example, where cocoa was widely cultivated and grown in large scale for both domestic and for export, intensive labor mining and cultivation meant high labor demands and the need to recruit labor whenever possible. For example, abandoned children on Akwa Ibom streets in Nigeria are often targets for recruitment in the agricultural labor. In Akwa Ibom State, whenever a child was perceived to be a witch or a wizard, he or she was abandoned on the streets, and becomes vulnerable to traffickers who recruit these children to work in the agricultural and mining industry.⁹ The Gambaga districts harbors an estimated 1000 alleged witches who have been held and placed in refugee camps condemned as witches without any opportunity of redress.¹⁰ This is also consistent with the case of Obuasi, a district in Ghana where gold mining is in abundance, and children were recruited to galamsey in the gold reserves under extremely dangerous conditions.

Cultism and Trafficking

The albinos in sub-Saharan Africa are often under attack, as a result, of the demand for albino body parts. Criminal gangs in Tanzania for example, seek albinos for ritual purposes. Albino body parts in Tanzania are used as the main source of ritual wealth for people who want to be wealthy (Carling 2008). This practice is rampant in Tanzania and

⁸ USAID Anti-Trafficking in Persons Programs in Africa, a Review, April 2007

⁹ Child Rights Information Network, Akwa Ibom Leads in Child Trafficking

¹⁰ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/video/2010/nov/25/witches-gambaga-ghana>

Burundi, where Albinos find it difficult to come to terms with their predators as they fall under the mercy of their killers. In Burundi, also in many parts of Eastern Africa, there is a belief that an HIV patient can be cured by having sex with an albino woman (Chang et al. 2009). The blatant denial of civil and religious rights of albinos has been condemned by many groups as barbaric and primitive. In Tanzania, for instance, many albinos are living in fear without hope on who could easily attack them for ritual purposes (ibid.). Another reason for the high demand in albino body parts in eastern Africa is attributed to the use by witchdoctors who often used these body parts for various purposes and for trafficking among their cohorts (witchdoctors). The trafficking in albinos has also been traced to Nigeria among the Ibos for example, who uses the body parts of albino for rituals (Carling 2008). These rituals again serve various purposes such as for wealth, infertility, madness, luck, and drunkenness. These incident of and violent killing of albinos are no doubt organized crime of trafficking in person for ritual and religious purposes (Chang et al. 2009). Their human rights are violated and legislation is needed to curtail this practice.

Trafficking in Child Soldiers

Trafficking in child soldiers is another means in which sub-Saharan societies are vulnerable to human trafficking. The conflicts in Rwanda, and Burundi, between the Hutus and the Tutsis have had a devastating effect on the continent. In Liberia and sierra Leon, for example, young men and women becomes target for recruitment by trafficking. This is done by luring victims of a promise land of safety and peace and sometimes a promise of jobs for a potential restart of life.¹¹ An example of this type of recruitment is the earthquake disaster in Haiti, where a number of children between ages of 5 and 15 were smuggled out Haiti to Dominican Republic. Again, in the Liberian civil wars in the early 1990s, many children were recruited by militia men usually against their will to engage in armed battle with Para-militia men in combat cases. In the case of Sierra Leone, children were recruited against their will participate in combat zones to commit brutal acts of war led by militant forces, to resist government controlled areas in Free Town (Beah 2008). Many of these children butchered their captives of war and asked whether they wanted short or long sleeves. This meant whether or not one wanted either the wrist or the arm cut off. In this trafficking form, children engage in combat against their will, often without any knowledge of understanding why they fight.

Conclusion

The paper tried to show that human trafficking is a global issue today that needs the attention of everyone in order to eradicate it. In order to

¹¹ Child Exploitation and Online Protection Center CEOP and Home Office, A Scoping Project of Child Trafficking into and within the UK, 2007

stop the human trafficking problem, governments including non-governmental organizations need to collaborate and work together to identify victims and punish criminals. The Ghana Anti-Human Trafficking Act passed in 2005 is a step in the right direction. Also, the United Nations protocol of 2000 strengthened the anti human trafficking measures by instituting units under the police criminal division to rescue victims of human trafficking. Other anti-human trafficking organizations can now be found practically in every regional bloc with an oversight responsibility to detect and punish human traffickers. Again while all these are laudable, not all countries in Africa and elsewhere have these policies put in place. Even countries that boast of anti-human trafficking rules are sometimes underfunded making it difficult to combat human traffickers. As we embark on the crusade to combat human trafficking, the international community urges countries to realize and implement the protocol that deal with human trafficking for labor exploitation, especially, in multiple economic sectors, including and among others agriculture, construction, hospitality and domestic service. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), about 40% of trafficking takes place in forced commercial sexual exploitation, and about one third in other forms of coerced economic exploitation and a quarter for a mixture of the above.¹⁴ Human trafficking involves transporting victims either internally or externally to usually unknown destinations. In this case victims are uprooted and transported to a different state or within the same state. Consequently, as we continue to enjoy the global economic system, human traffickers have been practically ignored culminating in enormous chunk of wealth accrued through illegal business practices. The intensity of the problem of human trafficking has become a global pandemic that is rooted in every community organized by human traffickers who by overt and covert activities use several means possible including among others coercion and wealth to sustain the continues enslavement of vulnerable people across the globe. Again, this phenomena permeate every nation state and involves the recruitment, transportation, and to a large extent the enslavement of the economically vulnerable.

Glossary

Trokosi: a cultural practice in Volta region of Ghana where women and children are sent to shrines for atonement of sins committed by their parents. Fetish priests are priest in charge of monitoring shrines and offer sacrifices to the ancestral gods.

Kayayoo refers to women porters in Ghana.

Sheikh is an Arabic word meaning a scholar in Arabic literature equivalent of a professor.

Tijaniya: a group of followers of Islam in Ghana. Imam is a religious scholar who leads congregation in prayers. Shia is the sect in Islam.

Hanbariaya is also a sect or branch in Islam in Ghana.

Wolof is the language widely spoken in Senegal.

Tallensi is a tribe in North Western Ghana.

Galamsey is a term that refers to the illegal mining around the mines in Obuasi and Tarkwa in Ghana.

Witchdoctors are predominantly found in Tanzania they are known to possess witch powers and are capable of transferring their powers to other persons.

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