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WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S TRAFFICKING IN THE ARAB WORLD

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Abstract: Trafficking in human beings is a very negative and a shameful phenomenon. It is not a new issue as it has a very long history and its roots are spread all over the world. Nowadays, human trafficking is a global issue. Trafficking of humans, especially women and children has become one of the main worst trades across the world. Over the years, trafficking of women and children in some regions of the Arab World has become a rising shocking issue for almost all governments in the Arab World. A big number of Arab women and children are trafficked in the Arabian Gulf countries as Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and United Arab Emirates (destination countries) and in other Arab countries like Syria, Iraq, Sudan, Somalia, Egypt, Yemen, Palestine, Lebanon, etc. (countries of origin). The present research paper is of great importance as it sheds light on women and children's trafficking which is one of the most controversial and thorny issues worldwide. It aims at exploring the factors leading to the phenomenon of trafficking of women and children in the Arab World. The research study ends with some important solutions and suggestions to fight the crime of trafficking in the Arab World. Women and children's trafficking is one among the most complex issues which take place in the World in general and in the Arab World in particular. The number of women and children who fall as victims of trafficking is increasing year after year on the row. The study is more authentic and more reliable since the researcher is from the Arab World. He describes more obviously the crime of women and children's trafficking in the Arab World by referring to real experiences, giving evidences from the real life. The study is very important because it explains the main factors that lead to woman and children's trafficking in the Arab region.

Keywords: Women's trafficking, Children's trafficking, Arab World, Human Rights, United Nations.

Introduction

Human trafficking is a universal issue targeting people of all ages, especially women and children. Almost there is no country or region in the world which is free of a woman and a child's trafficking. Trafficking is a crime which is present on all aspects of life and almost everywhere regionally, nationally, and internationally. Nowadays, the trafficking of humans, especially women and children is the fastest and worst growing international phenomenon over the world. Trafficking is considered to be the third criminal activity after drugs smuggling and arms trading. Women and children come to be a case of point as statistics state that the first class of a society who falls easily as victims of this criminal phenomenon are women and children. The percentage of woman and children's trafficking increases from poor regions to rich regions and from poor countries to richer ones.

Trafficking in persons, especially women and children, has been recognized by the international community as a human rights violation that is considered a contemporary form of slavery (Mattar721).

The purpose of human trafficking is exploitation. Exploitation is of numerous types, the most common of which are the financial and the physical exploitation. A large number of women and children around the world fall under the different forms of exploitation.

For instance, they are trapped into prostitution activity or they may face sexual harassments, forced services, slavery or the removal of organs, etc. which are the most common types of exploitation. It can be said that approximately one million of people are trafficked each year globally the majority of them are trafficked into the United States of America, especially the victims of sex-trafficking trade. Until recently human trafficking was mistakenly defined as smuggling, illegal migration, sex work, etc. Human trafficking can be defined in various ways:

Human trafficking, also called trafficking in persons, form of modern-day slavery involving the illegal transport of individuals by force or deception for the purpose of labour, sexual exploitation, or activities in which others benefit financially (Steverson and Wooditch 2019).

In the Arab World, women and children are targeted directly and indirectly as they represent the majority of the society that encounter such a horrible activity. Exploitation of women and children takes place either by the means of using power/ position or by giving payments to achieve the desire of the persons who are having control over other persons. The international community's efforts to prevent trafficking have failed. In fact, civil wars, tribal conflicts, political corruption, poverty, ignorance and illiteracy are the main causes behind women and children's trafficking in the Arab World, especially in the rural regions. Illegal migrants who leave their countries for a reason or another are the easiest to be captured and taken as slave trafficking. Thus, in the Arab World, as I have mentioned earlier, there are some of the most widespread categories of human trafficking such as, forced labor of migrant workers, sexual enslavement and forced prostitution, etc.

Literature Review

Trafficking in women and children is an early phenomenon that comes back practically to the initial stages of civilizations. Female slaves were often more wanted and highly valued in the ancient nations for exploiting them as prostitutes in prostitution houses and to use them as servants. The Trafficking of human beings involve the movements of men, women and children from one place which is the place of origin to another place which is the place of destination and placing them trapped in conditions of forced labor and duties. Boys who are trafficked in armed conflicts are usually used as compulsory recruiters, whereas girls are often enforced to be servants and they are usually exploited sexually by soldiers as well.

Authorities across the globe still stick to the outdated and traditional definition of trafficking thereby failing in their main objective of controlling the calamity. Similarly, it is found that very little attention is given to the reasons of trafficking, because of which trafficking process is getting more and more improvised and getting beyond the reach of law (Farrokhzad 132).

Despite national and international legislations and regulations along with the efforts of international organizations, many girls and boys are still being kidnapped, trafficked, and raped under force and arm threat in some places of the Arab World. Girls are the victims of the early marriages. They are enforced by their families to get married early in their lives and finally their marriages are broken up because young girls can't take responsibility of their husbands and the other related duties.

Some Middle Eastern countries are destinations for the trafficking of women and children for the purpose of prostitution.

Women and children are brought to these countries under the guise of legitimate employment, only to later find themselves in situations of forced prostitution (Mattar733).

Many writers, critics and studies have discussed the issue of women and children's trafficking over the globe. All agreed that trafficking in humans is a very bad phenomenon. It is banned and punishable all over the world. Many international organizations fight the issue of human trafficking. The most widely accepted definition of child trafficking is that of the Trafficking Protocol of the Convention against Transitional Organized Crime which defines child trafficking as:

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of a child for the purposes of sexual or labor exploitation, forced labor, or slavery (Human Rights Watch 43).

Woman and child's trafficking is a violation of human rights as it carries a punishment of the most dangerous crimes in the society. All countries of the world are directly and indirectly influenced by this illegal violation of women and children's rights. The trafficking of women and children may take place within the national borders of a country and remains as a national issue. On the other hand, trafficking may cross borders and regions and remains as an international issue. The women and children who fall as victims of trafficking are separated from their families and societies. They are exploited in prostitution trades. Also, they find

themselves obliged to work as vehicles and streets cleaners, farmers, miners, fishers, goods bearers, beggars and other domestic services.

I believe the trafficking of persons, particularly women and children, for forced and exploitative labour, including for sexual exploitation, is one of the most egregious violations of human rights that the United Nations now confronts. It is widespread and growing. It is rooted in social and economic conditions in the countries from which the victims come, facilitated by practices that discriminate against women and driven by cruel indifference to human suffering on the part of those who exploit the services that the victims are forced to provide. (Annan 2000)

Trafficking is a grave violation of human rights. Internal trafficking of women and children can happen for numerous purposes including sexual exploitation, domestic services, and bonded labor which is highly widespread across the globe. Women are trafficked either because they are deserted by their husbands, or they may have broken their marriages and are not able to come back to their families who may kill them accusing them of honor crimes, like prostitution, adultery, etc.

Throughout the world, people cross international borders without proper legal authorization papers for a variety of reasons. Some flee political violence, ethnic conflict, famine or natural disasters. Others leave their homes as a result of economic crises or in search of improved opportunities (Bassiouni et al. 421).

There are many standardized international conventions which call for combating trafficking in women and children, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966, Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989, and the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography of 2000, etc.

Methodology of the Study

This research paper uses a case study method applied to the phenomenon of women and children's trafficking in the Arab World, and shows how Arab governments are fighting it. The study depends on the direct descriptive analysis of the dilemma of trafficking of women and children in the Arab World. The data of the study is collected from several secondary sources which are available in many websites.

Facts about Women and Children's Trafficking in the Arab World

Trafficking of women and children is very common in Africa, sub-Indian continent, Mexico, Philippines, Middle East, etc. Women and children's trafficking is the act of trapping women and children through the use of force, violence, deception or coercion and exploiting them for financial or personal purposes. Women and children in most parts of the Arab World are being displaced by violence under certain conditions. In the Arab World, women and children are the most targeted category in the societies, as they face all forms of oppression, marginalization and violence. Women are taken to work in private homes merely to be trapped, exploited and abused behind closed doors with no way out. Women, in some parts of the Arab World, are the victims of temporary marriages. The temporary marriage is a rising issue nowadays, where young girls in some Arab countries can be married for few days or limited hours through their landlords who ask the applicants to pay them a specific amount of dowry or money. This happens often in the backward societies where people are ignorant, suffering from poverty and subjugation.

Women and children are sometimes trafficked for labor exploitation. They move from their countries of origin which are of low economic situation to work in the rich countries like the Arab Gulf countries. The worst types of women and children's labor are as follows: Slavery, women and children's prostitution, the use of women and children in pornography industry, the use of women and children in practicing illegal activities, such as drug trades, smuggling and other activities that seriously affects women and children's health, safety, morals, reputation, etc.

In most parts of the Arab World, the society does not recognize that a girl can be a victim in many cases. For instance, if a woman escapes home for any reason and then returns back home after sometime, she will face an unusual insult from her family and be condemned and judged by committing a wrong act. The society thinks that this girl has brought disgrace and shame with her to the family and she may receive a hanging sentence or a certain death punishment. Thus, such women prefer not to come back home, and thus most of them are exploited by criminals for being an easy target for human traffickers. They are taken into illegal bars and are forced to practice bad activities, such as prostitution and pornography industry. Women and children who are trafficked usually

lose contact with their families and relatives. They are often smuggled to another country, to a destination where they know nothing and no one. Those victims face various forms of violence, exploitation and abuse, including hard work and sexual abuse. They find it so difficult to seek help from anyone for many reasons. The victims are often either helpless poor women or young children. Also, they are illegal immigrants and their documents maybe fabricated. However, most of them don't have documents at all. Exploitation of women and children take place in different parts of the world, as it can be found nationally and internationally. In the Arab World, Women and Children are trafficked for a number of purposes and causes which are mentioned as follows:

1. Poverty, lack of food, insufficient household income.
2. Lack of education, ignorance and the spread of illiteracy.
3. Unemployment.
4. Gender Inequality.
5. Inadequate legislation and poor law enforcement.
6. Demand for sex and sex exploitation.
7. Lack of human rights for marginalized groups.
8. Lack of appropriate legal economic opportunities.
9. Social factors and cultural practices.
10. Lack of the religious education in some of the Arab societies.
11. The families are sometimes indifference as they pay no enough attention to their daughters and children.
12. Internal conflicts and natural disasters.
13. Trafficking provides high benefit and much income to criminals.
14. Lack of safe migration options.
15. Traffickers themselves are the main part of the crime.
16. Adoption.
17. Children are exploited in in armed conflicts.
18. Forced Marriages.
19. Children are taken into camel racing and camel care in the Arab Gulf countries.
20. Organ removal.
21. Weak law enforcement.
22. Ill-treatment and physical abuse of women and children at home, in the community and in the workplaces.
23. Parental addiction to drugs and alcoholism.

It can be said that a number of women and children can't defend themselves from traffickers properly and hence they fall as easy victims. They are usually controlled by their emotions more than minds. Most women and children fall as victims of traffickers because of their financial conditions. In fact, many women and children have lost their landlords in the civil wars which take place in some regions of the Arab World. Women and children escape poverty and wars, however they fall in the hands of traffickers who often use them in slave industry, prostitution purposes, etc.

There was a strong indication from the available information that women and children were becoming vulnerable to trafficking as they were unable to survive with dignity because of lack of livelihood options. In the absence of awareness of human rights, the economically and socially deprived people at the grassroots have become easy prey to the trafficking trade. Migrating populations have become most vulnerable to exploitation by traffickers. (Sen and Nai 1)

Some women and children sometimes escape from domestic violence. Child girls are enforced to get married to older people who aggressively ill-treat them. Some divorced and widowed women prefer not to stay oppressed at their families' houses. They prefer escaping from patriarchy, violence and hard work. Traffickers seize the opportunity of taking such hopeless women.

Child marriage is one of the serious issues that take place in some regions of the Arab World, particularly in Somalia, Sudan, Egypt, and Yemen. Early child marriage increases the possibility of child trafficking. After a short time of child marriage, many problems appear between the young couple. The child bride doesn't have the enough experience to bear and manage the marital life in this early age. Therefore, a child bride becomes a victim who is placed between two fires. She stands between the anvil of her husband and the hammer of her family. She is neither able to continue her live with her husband who is often in his old age and

who treats her severely, nor she can come back to her parents' house expecting that she may receive a death penalty because her parents consider such issue as an honor issue. In the Arab World, a girl/woman who can't live in her husbands' house and who leaves it early after marriage is considered to be bad in the eyes of the society. People will think that her virginity was lost before marriage and her behavior is ugly.

On the other hand, many children are kidnapped by rebels or militias to be used as fighters in the conflict regions. Besides, they can be exploited for labor or sexual utilization. They are enforced to work on the streets, as cooks, house guards, servants, porters, messengers or spies. Young girls are sometimes kidnapped and forced to have sex with male soldiers. Furthermore, male and female child recruiters are often sexually abused and are at high risk of contracting sexually conveyed diseases which are very dangerous nowadays. Trafficking of children in most countries of the Arab World is a rising issue nowadays. Egypt is a case of point. Trafficking of children in Egypt is a very serious issue. Suzi Mohamed Rashad speaks out:

Egypt is categorized as an origin country and a transit one. It is also a scorched area of focus in the UN reports, in addition to the annual reports of the US Department of State. This pillar focuses on the increased rate of trafficking in persons in Egypt, and then moves onto the forms of trafficking in children in particular (Rashad 2019).

Trafficking of women and children has a negative impact on the development wheel in the Arab World. It is one of the main reasons which lead to corruption, crime and economic collapse. If there is a crime in a society, there will be no stability, security chaotic and economic collapse will absolutely increase to its large extent. It has been stated that:

As a form of organized crime, trafficking can also threaten sustainable development and the rule of law, as illicit profits are used for corruption, other criminal activities and in some cases, terrorism. The assistance, support and rehabilitation of victims is also a significant problem, particularly in source countries where resources are often limited and in the case of trafficked children, where the need is most acute. (Abdulraheem and Oladipo 36)

The victims of trafficking are forced to lead illegal lives and to seduce many more victims as well. However, there will be no entire solutions to such a crime unless the Arab governments find proper strategic plans to fight the problem and uproot it from its base. This will never happen if there are no economic, educational, political and social amendments in the Arab countries.

Prevention and eradication of human trafficking requires the legal, political, and social will to dedicate resources to addressing the root causes of exploitation. This involves law, policies, and programs that help strengthen families, reduce violence, especially gender-based violence, secure economic and social rights, especially health and education rights, increase the capacity of communities to provide for their residents, and build economies that foster individual self-sufficiency and success. (Greenbaum et al. 162-163)

It can be said that trafficking of women and children is a disastrous crime. That's to say, trafficking destroys the lives of women and children. A large number of women and children is being kidnapped and trafficked to unknown places where they find themselves as victims of rape, prostitution and other illegal activities. Such victims are controlled by traffickers who sometimes train them and enforce them to execute terrorist attacks either inside the country or on borders with neighboring countries in order to disrupt security and stability. Thus, traffickers are considered just as remote control tools in the hands of external destinations that financially support them. The women and children who fall as victims of trafficking face many problems for the rest of their lives. Even after escaping and being rescued from the hands of traffickers, they become psychologically disordered and socially discarded. The trafficked children are often not welcomed by their families and they turn to end their lives in orphanage houses. Likewise, the trafficked women prefer to commit a suicide better than returning back to a community that disrespects them and describes them disgracefully.

The effects of trafficking and sexual slavery are profound, especially for young girls. Torn from their families, women and girls are brutalized by their kidnapers and then often rejected by their families. In some cases young girls who had been abducted by soldiers or rebels spent months searching for family members after escaping from their captors, only to be turned away in disgrace when they did find a relative. In some places orphanages set up for children separated from their families and communities have themselves facilitated trafficking in children, particularly girls. (Heyzer 8)

The issue of trafficking cannot be easily controlled without cooperation and gathering hands between all people and parties of the same country as well as the cooperation between all countries of the world. Trafficking is a global phenomenon as it is a full-corner crime that exceeds the most dangerous crimes in the world. Trafficking leads to the violation of human rights.

Conclusion

To conclude, woman and children's trafficking is one of the most catastrophic issues that take place in some regions of the Arab World. It is one among the worst phenomena that violate the principles of Human Rights in some areas of the Arab World, particularly the rural ones. Woman and children's trafficking stems from several social, economic, political and cultural causes. Trafficking of women and children causes critical health risks to the general public, especially in terms of sexually transmitted diseases. Even though most of the Arab governments exert nonstop efforts to fight trafficking of women and children, all attempts have failed and proved to be inadequate due to the lack of enough awareness among people in the rural societies as well as the rising of poverty and unemployment. Also, the official support to woman and children in the Arab World is not enough and rather it could be absent.

The present study suggests that there should be enough awareness about the negative effects of women and children's trafficking and such awareness should be raised in all parts of the Arab World. Violence against women and children should be stopped. The Arab governments should break the silence towards violations against women and children's rights in the Arab regions. Child marriage should be stopped immediately and strict rules concerning this issue should be passed by the law. Also, the researcher recommends that hands should be gathered in the Arab regions to combat women and children's trafficking, starting from the family which is the nucleus of the society and up to the official authorities which are the main responsible for fighting violations of human rights. The governments should raise awareness among societies by conducting regular campaigns, providing specialized educational channels on the social media to combat trafficking of women and children. The victims of human trafficking should be protected by the governments. They should receive enough sympathetic support from the United Nations organizations and the International Community. Efforts should be enhanced and increased to fight woman and a children's trafficking in the Arab World. The Arab governments should investigate, prosecute, and punish trafficking offenses and the traffickers should be punished strictly.

To summarize, women and children's trafficking is a very critical phenomenon which takes place in most parts of the Arab World. Poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, civil wars, political issues, lack of awareness and the inadequate education are significantly the contributing factors to women and children's trafficking. To prevent trafficking in women and children, Arab countries should legislate specific strict laws that prevent and criminalize women and children's trafficking. Also, they should offer the necessary support to the trafficked victims, such as Protection, assistance and care. Regular plans and meetings should be conducted to deal with women and children's trafficking. Cooperation is required between states of origins, i.e., Syria, Palestine, Morocco, Egypt, Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen, Somalia, Sudan, etc. and states of destinations, i.e., Arabian Gulf Countries. To prevent women and children's trafficking, the Arab governments should enhance the economic empowerment for women and children. Also, gender equality in the family and society should be taken into consideration.

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