

The underworld of human trafficking

[Sociology](#), [Slavery](#)



Human trafficking is the transportation, harboring or receipt of people for the purposes of slavery, forced labor, and prostitution. Most victims unknowingly enter the market after being lured by promises of work and opportunities by individuals and organizations. Others are children that are literally sold into slavery by parents as a means to pay a debt or to reduce the number of children they must feed. Some estimate that there are 27 million in slavery worldwide; that approximately 800, 000 people are trafficked across national borders. This does not include the millions trafficked within their own country. Child trafficking is said to be on the increase. It cites trafficking in persons as the second most lucrative crime around the world next to the drug trade and that 30% of trafficking victims are below the age of 18. Trafficking is estimated to be one of the biggest crime issues in the world and is steadily getting out of control. Human trafficking occurs all over the world, especially in the United States. Human trafficking occurs in urban, suburban, and rural areas in every state. According to the U. S. Department of Justice, human trafficking occurs more frequently in New York State than in any other state, after California, Florida, and Texas. Human trafficking affects men, women, children, and people of all races and ethnicities. Human trafficking victims are from nearly every country in the world. The majority of victims are from impoverished regions with little economic opportunity, political corruption and pronounced social inequality. High demand for victims and low prosecution of traffickers allows human trafficking to persist. Most victims are from poor countries and Asia and Eastern Europe are two primary source points. Victims are usually trafficked from these regions into more developed countries, mainly the USA, Western Europe, and Japan.

Internal trafficking within these countries, particularly the USA, also occurs. The usual targets are teenage runaways and young people from poorer sections of society who get mixed up with criminals. People from affluent backgrounds rarely become victims of human trafficking. Victims are usually lured with the promise of jobs in more developed countries, only to be forced into harsh conditions when they arrive. The most victims work in sex trade (usually as forced prostitutes) and domestic/manual labor. Contrary to popular belief, although the threat of violence is common, victims are rarely physically abducted or kidnapped. When they do arrive in their target country, they are usually controlled by threats, occasional physical coercion, and their lack of education and unfamiliar surroundings. Most victims do not fully know their legal rights and do not fully understand their immigration situation. Many think that they are legally at fault and will be prosecuted if they contact authorities, and for that reason they are cautious to get police assistance. A lot are also from countries where police forces are less reliable than in the west, and as a deduction they are less willing to contact them. Many victims even have access to a phone but are too frightened to call for help. Australian police have previously observed that even when victims are rescued, many are initially unwilling to cooperate with police until they have been reassured that they will be protected. The psychological consequences of being a victim of human trafficking are closely associated with the consequences of being a victim of child sexual abuse, or domestic violence. There are fairly predictable things that happen in a women or youth's mind in an effort to adapt to these extreme and horrid situations. Each situation gives a person “ a history of subjection to totalitarian control over a prolong

period (month and years)" as described by Judith Herman. It is important to note the connection exists between physical consequences and emotional reactions. While anxiety, for example, can clearly be called an emotional response, the physical changes within the brain from chronic abuse can create a "resting state" of anxiousness which then manifests itself emotionally (Rothschild, 2000). Physical reactions reported by Breire (1988) included dissociation, PTSD, difficulty sleeping, and nightmares. Findings also indicate other chronic physical and medical issues, such as enuresis, addictions, eating disorders and those conditions connected with chronic stress. Other health issues seen in trafficking victims include the following: Sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, pelvic pain, urinary difficulties from working in the sex industry, pregnancy resulting from rape or prostitution; infertility from chronic untreated sexually transmitted infections or unsafe abortions; infections caused by unsanitary and dangerous medical procedures performed by the trafficker's so-called 'doctor'; hearing, cardiovascular or respiratory problems from endless days toiling in dangerous agriculture, sweatshop or construction conditions; weak eyes and other eye problems from working in dimly lit sweatshops; serious dental problems. These are particularly acute with child trafficking victims who often suffer from retarded growth and infectious diseases like tuberculosis; undetected or untreated diseases, such as diabetes or cancer. Substance abuse problems or addictions either from being pressurized into drug use by their traffickers or by turning to substance abuse to help cope with or mentally escape their desperate situations. The number of victims involved in human trafficking to date is an estimated 2.4 million people; the

percentage of those that are exploited for sexual slavery is 80 percent. (Connolly, 2012) It is hard to imagine a crime more hideous and shocking than human trafficking yet, it is the second of the fastest growing crime of today. At \$32 billion per year it's easy to understand why. (Figure 1) 14, 500 to 17, 500 is the number of foreign nationals trafficked into the United States every year. (Figure 2) The numbers of trafficking cases opened from 2004 through June 5th, 2007 were 327. The number of cases opened has increased every year: from 67 in 2004 to 103 in 2006. The numbers of convictions were 182. The number of convictions has also increased: from 22 in 2004 to 43 in 2006. (GAO, 2007) There is a total of 1 million children exploited by the global commercial sex trade, every year. As many as 2. 8 million children run away each year in the US. Within 48 hours of hitting the streets, one-third of these children are lured or recruited into the underground world of prostitution and pornography. The East Asia and the Pacific are the regions most affected by human trafficking. Of those who come to work in the U. S., 46% are forced to become prostitutes while the other 54% work in unsafe places such as factories. (Figure 2) (Figure 1) (Figure 2) Figure 3 There are several organizations to combat human trafficking such as the Human Trafficking Awareness Partnership dedicated to bring the issue of human trafficking to the forefront of public consciousness through local community action and the sharing of resources among communities. By empowering individual communities to take action through education and the coordination of resources they hope to extend their efforts. By creating partnerships of informed communities to share information, experiences and best practices they will reach more people and

hopefully impact the incidence and prosecution human trafficking offenses significantly. (HTAP) Project to End Human Trafficking (PEHT) is a non-profit organization that was founded in 2004 as part of the anti-slavery movement. The initial goal of the founders was not to begin an organization, but simply to offer educational lectures about human trafficking. This program includes lectures about human trafficking and services for its victims with the purpose of eliminate trafficking, especially women and children being forced in sexual exploitation. It's easy to feel overwhelmed by the statistics, the issues, and politics of human trafficking it is harder than anyone can imagine. Each organization has a different strategy, but all of them, little by little, are making major movement in ending human trafficking. As we have seen, human trafficking is becoming one of the most terrifying crimes worldwide. Human trafficking is not a new problem. It is a global problem which will require a comprehensive solution with cooperation and commitment from the global community on many levels. Governments need to take a more active role in protecting their most vulnerable citizens from grasp of human trafficking. The best plan is to educate all people about the dangers of human trafficking and have governments that punish the offenders and protect the victims. Work Cited Breire, J. Therapy for Adults Molested as Children: Beyond Survival, New York: Springer Publishing Company. (1998) Connolly, Marshall. " Shocking- Share These Human Trafficking Statistics with Your Friends- If You Can Handle Them. " Catholic Online. (April 2012) Government Accountability Office (GAO), Human Trafficking: A Strategic Framework Could Help Enhance the Interagency Collaboration Needed to Effectively Combat Trafficking Crimes: (2007) Herman, Judith. Trauma and

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