

Human trafficking and slavery

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



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Human rights are the basic freedoms and protections that people are entitled to simply because they are human beings. Human trafficking and slavery is a contemporary issue that violates the standards of human rights. Human trafficking and slavery is a growing issue that is happening right around the world. There have been legal and non-legal responses in order to prevent this worldwide problem. Human trafficking and slavery occurs across all over the world. It has also successfully reached developed countries including Australia. (Refer to appendix 1.)

Australia and many other developed countries such as America are seen to be a main reported destination of human trafficking. The main origin of slave trafficking is the Mekong Delta region. The Mekong Delta region in the Southeast Asia and it includes countries such as Thailand, Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia and Vietnam. Here, and at many other countries, men, women and children are obtained by force, coercion or deceptive means to be transported or recruited into a form of forced or bonded labor, under the threat of violence. Slavery has been occurring back since the ancient civilizations.

It was only until the 18th century when a worldwide movement began to stop slavery. The abolishment of slavery was then only officially recognized under Article 4 which was included in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, stating: “ no one shall be held in slavery or servitude: slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms”. Unfortunately human trafficking and slavery is a growing phenomenon that is far from being solved. Research suggests that globally, between 500, 000 and 4

million people are trafficked internally and across state borders (UNIFEM, 2007).

There have also been predictions suggesting that there are about 27 million people across the globe that are victims of slavery. That means that there are more slaves today than there has ever been at any point in human history. Within human trafficking and slavery, there can be a violation of numerous human rights. There have been victim stories such as Keni binti Carda's story (refer to appendix 1. 2), that show the defilement of human rights including: Article 3- everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4-“ no one shall be held in slavery or servitude: slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms”. Article 5- no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment. Article 24- everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitations of working hours. Article 25- The right to standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of the person, including food, clothing, housing, medical care, and necessary social services.

In response to this human trafficking and slavery there has been a large reaction from both the international and domestic community to abolish trafficking and slavery. Slavery Convention of 1926 was the first legal response, which by 1956 was extended to the Supplementary Convention on the Abolishment of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Practices Similar to Slavery. This expansion further clarified the definition of slavery. In 2003 the United Nations Assembly founded the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish

Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (Also known as The Protocol).

The Protocol has created greater global awareness of the issue, greater conformity in national laws in tackling the various issues of human trafficking, and better cross-border cooperation in investigating and prosecution violations. Today there are 137 state parties to the Protocol. Domestically Australia has established various ways to eradicate trafficking and slavery. In 2003 Australia put 60 million dollars towards a human trafficking strategy. Australia also ratified the Protocol in 2004. The Criminal Code Amendment act 2005 was the first legislation on sexual slavery.

This legislation includes severe penalties for human trafficking and slavery offences. In 2004 Australia introduced the Commonwealth Action Plan to Eradicate Trafficking in Persons. This aimed to help those who needed support and rehabilitation. Non-legal responses have also contributed to the prevention of human trafficking and Slavery. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) established a Special Action Programme on Forced Labour. This aimed to raise global awareness of forced labour in its different forms.

Non-Government Organisations also play a major role in combating this problem. Not For Sale is a non-government organisation and through education, sports, and music, Not For Sale creates new futures for children who have been rescued from exploitation and slavery. So far this organisation has given services to rehabilitate more than one and a half

thousand survivors. The Media is another effective non-legal response. Medias such as films, books, newspapers and TV are very effective in creating awareness. An Australian example is the documentary “ Trafficked” aired by SBS.

This was viewed by 500 000 Australians and it showed how real human trafficking and slavery is and how it is happening in out backyard. At the international level, slavery and human trafficking is still far from being abolished. : There are a large amount of vulnerable people that are still being recruited into human trafficking and slavery through deceitful or coercive techniques. This is manly due to accessibility of the international laws that are not reaching to those who are living in developed countries.

The susceptibility of victims is also due to their lack of education and the restriction of the rule of law in where they may live. Fortunately non-government organisations and the media are very effective in creating awareness as their information appeals to the greater audience. The responsiveness to the international laws has been quite large. This is shown by the 137 states that have ratified to the Protocol. Also every country has passed a law against slavery, many, however, fail to enforce them. State sovereignty is the biggest hurdle when it comes to promoting and enforcing human rights.

This is because state sovereignty allows individual nation states determine which acts are punishable as crimes, and how those crimes are dealt with and punished in the local criminal system. Therefore international mechanisms are unable to force states to follow their laws in abolishing

human trafficking and slavery. Justice has hardly been achieved, as there are still millions of victims of human trafficking around the world. According to the head of the U. N Office on Drugs and Crime, only 1 out of 100 of these victims are ever rescued. Though there may be millions of slaves worldwide, a mere 4, 000 traffickers were prosecuted for their crimes in 2009.

The effectiveness of international law in protecting the human rights on human trafficking and slavery is good to an extent. On the international scale, there needs to be much more work to be done. Modern day slavery and human trafficking is only occurring because people chose to ignore it. Slaver traffickers around the world have rediscovered how profitable it is to buy and sell people. Legal responses are incapable to combat this issue by themselves; it needs help from everyone. Businesses should look deeper into their supply chains and discard any forms of slavery.

Consumers need to understand that some products they buy come from the hard work of slaves. In order for human trafficking to stop, the vulnerable need to be informed of the deceptive and manipulative tricks in which offenders use. Since human trafficking is a transnational crime, border lines restrictions should be further tightened so that they are able to prevent it. Dag Hammarskjöld, a Swedish diplomat, once said, “ Freedom means the supremacy of human rights everywhere. Our support goes to those who struggle to gain those rights or keep them. ” The victims must be supported and their human rights must be regained.

Bibliography

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