

Should the  
government be  
blamed for the  
increase in human  
trafficking?



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What is human trafficking and where does it happen? Human trafficking is 'the business of helping people to enter a country illegally and forcing them to work there for very little money because they have no rights' (Macmillan Dictionary, 2010). Practically, it happens all over the world. Below is a true story of one of the human trafficking victims who survived.

I don't know who my parents are. As a child I remember being cold all the time. I was abandoned and raped when I was 12. Two years later I was sold off and forced to marry. My husband would get drunk, he beat me and raped me, he'd fire bullets which passed just by my head or my feet. I took the gun and shot him in the foot. I was 15. I didn't want to kill him, just hurt him as he had hurt me. I'm more of a Buddhist now, and I try to be reasonable. But when I see rapists I see red. I'm not perfect. My husband sold me to a brothel. I had to accept five or six clients a day. Once a client called me and another girl; he said he was with just one other man. In fact, there were 20 of them; they treated us so badly I wanted revenge. I wanted to kill the man who called us. Then I thought his family would suffer, so I left him alone (Follain, 2005).

In the TIP Reports of 2004 all the way through 2006, it was stated that about 600, 000 to 800, 000 victims are reported to be trafficked across international borders each year. According to International Labor Organization in year 2005, about 32 billion profits were made by the human trafficking industry (Polaris Project, 2009). Victims can be trafficked in many ways. Scam, force and enforcement are several ways how victims can be trafficked (U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, 2010). There are so many factors that can

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contribute to human trafficking. Among them are the ineffective anti-trafficking legislation, ineffective government enforcement, lack of education, poverty and many more (Caritas. org, n. d.). The list can go on and on but the main question is who should be blamed for the rise in human trafficking? Abraham Lincoln once said, ' If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong' (Better World Quotes, 2010).

Even though many people agree that many agents play a role in combating human trafficking, the government should be solely blamed for the rise in human trafficking as they play the biggest role in contributing to the rise of this issue.

Firstly, lack of government enforcement causes an increase in human trafficking. Government has weak implementation of anti-trafficking laws especially in countries like India. For example, the Nepal's 2008 Human Trafficking and Transportation (Control) Act has not successfully decreased the rate of human trafficking. According to Shyam Kumar Pokharel, the managing director of Samrakshak Samuha Nepal, this weak implementation of law has led the traffickers to operate without difficulty. There were many times traffickers were caught but only few of them were found guilty. This shows the weak implementation of law had not help to decrease the number of traffickers at all. Besides that, the government also practices non intervention in the immigration procedure and identification of traffickers. Most of the times the NGOs were the one who lend a helping hand instead of the government. There are many cases that were not reported. Up to the year 2010, only 123 cases were reported. These cases are only a portion of the actual number of cases of human trafficking (IRIN, 2010).  
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In addition, law enforcement is also often vulnerable by many like official indifferences. For example, in Thailand, the police do not want to acknowledge migrants who were mistreated by traffickers as trafficking victims. There was a case in April 2008 whereby 57 Burmese who were supposed to be trafficked into Thailand got suffocated in a container. The police denied the fact that they are trafficking victims instead stated that they are illegal immigrants. On the other hand, the United Nation classifies trafficking victims as “ anyone who is transported for purposes of exploitation” (Head, 2008). Furthermore, another reason for the increase in human trafficking is because criminals are gaining authority and law enforcement people are becoming more corrupt making it difficult to end human trafficking (Hughes, 2001). Law enforcement is vulnerable by conspiracy with traffickers, lacking regulatory devices and failure to prosecute public officials involved in trafficking. Law enforcement also tends to have excessive controls over victims as they put their needs first hence causing victims unwilling to be a witness. This just shifts the control from the traffickers to the law enforcement officials (Lin et. al, n. d.). Hence, it can be concluded that lack of government enforcement causes an increase in human trafficking.

Secondly, lack of suitable and successful legislation on trafficking also contributes to the increase in human trafficking. Most of the countries had legislation that cannot counter attack the rise in this issue. The legislation in most countries does not take legal action directly on people convicted for human trafficking crime. Most of the time, the legislators take this issue lightly. Even when trafficking cases are very apparent, the traffickers might

not be prosecuted for the crime of trafficking but for lighter punishment like prostitution or pimping. Besides that, existing trafficking laws are only confined to sexual exploitation and not other types of slavery. Next, governments focus too much on how to punish others but less on how to prevent this issue from rising (Lin et. al, n. d.). An example of an ineffective legislation is the Trafficking Victims Protection Act or TVPA. TVPA is the only national anti-trafficking law. One weakness about this law is that it only punishes those who can be verified guilty in the court that is those who are involved in force, coercion or scam. However, the traffickers can easily cover up this wrong doings and it would be a difficult task to prove these traffickers guilty. Besides that, this process might take months or even a few years. A trafficking victim does not have the capability to fight the case. With this, the TVPA seems meaningless as it could not really help the trafficking victims nor punish the traffickers (Brannon, 2010).

In addition, trafficked victims and not the traffickers were given cruel punishment. This happens because of the ineffective judicial system. Instead of helping those victims, the authorities mistreat the victims by locking them up in jail. Thus the authorities do not treat them as victims but as criminals. Da's family is a good proof of this case. Da's father had become one of the trafficking victims who were tricked to work in Bangkok. Da's mother had to pay a large amount of money to get him back. Da and her mother went and beg. However, not long after that police picked them up and sent them to jail pending for their transfer back to Cambodia (Bjork and Chalk, 2009). On the other hand, the traffickers are well protected and are not punished for their wrongs. Occasionally, sex trafficking victims were sent back to their country

of origin after being arrested in brothel raids. Then, they will have to face embarrassment as many people will look down on them (Tiefenbrun, 2002). Hence, the government should be blamed for ineffective anti-trafficking legislation.

Thirdly, the situation in the country of origin also leads to human trafficking. One of the main causes of human trafficking is poverty. More than half of the citizens survive only on US\$ 1 per day in places where victims stayed (Getu, 2006). Many victims of human trafficking came from poor country where they live in poverty. Then, the next question asked is who is responsible for causing poverty. Governments are the ones to be blamed as they refuse to acknowledge poverty (Huckstep, 2009-2010). Although these trafficking victims knew that they are going to be underpaid by private enterprise, these victims who live in poverty are still attracted to the pay. This is because they know that this pay is better than continuing to live in poverty in their own country. Besides that, there are some governments that persuade their citizens to work abroad. In order to pay back the international debts, countries like Philippine had developed a program called the Philippine Labor Export Program to persuade their citizens to work abroad for the in-flow of overseas income even though the work is hazardous (Oxman-Martinez et. al, 2000).

Furthermore, government's poor ruling politically, socially and economically also contributes to the increase of human trafficking. This causes countries to be prone to become a source of trafficking victims even if laws are carried out properly (Ghosh, 2008). Besides that, many children, even those as young as two years old are trafficked and exploited from Bangladesh, <https://assignbuster.com/should-the-government-be-blamed-for-the-increase-in-human-trafficking/>

Pakistan, in South Asia and Africa and countries in the East Africa as camel jockeys in the Gulf states. These children have no bright future because they do not have useful skills or teachings and they are physically and psychologically traumatized for a very long time (U. S. Department of State, 2005). Some of the victims of trafficking want to find for a better education but they were tricked and became victims of human trafficking. Thus, in terms of education, government is also responsible for the lack of education as some governments do not do much to improve the education in their countries. Governments should be more engaged in and come out with positive ways to tackle the lack of education as it can cause human trafficking, eventually. Thus, governments are to be blamed for causing the country to be in a poor state and more citizens become victims of human trafficking.

Fourthly, the lack of unity between governments and other institutions is also one of the causes for the rise in this issue. Since there is a lack of national anti-trafficking plans, most of these plans are developed within the perspective of each individual agency's mission. Eventually, plans are poorly developed as they are not based on a higher level supervision (Langberg, 2010). National structures were established by South Eastern Europe and there is a noticeable progress made. However, the national structures that are established did not mean human trafficking was combated successfully. Combating human trafficking is initiated by the local NGO's then only it was supported by international and intergovernmental organizations. The purpose of this structure is to shift the duty to governments but instead

governments take over the NGO's that was administrating the programs (Trafficking in Human Beings in South Eastern Europe, 2004).

In addition, there is also a lack of government programs and funding with other institutions. For example, in Romania, the government does not give much assistance with anti-trafficking NGOs and did not assigned funding for NGOs to provide services and carry out programs for human trafficking victims after National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (NAATIP) became an assistant agency of the National Police under the Ministry of Interior (Embassy of the United States Bucharest Romania, 2010). There are different definitions by the government and NGO that causes a gap between them. Government defines human trafficking according to United Nation but the NGO defines trafficking based on the result only. In order to prove this, we can look at the different statistics of human trafficking by NGO's and governments (Piper, 2005). According to International Justice Mission, an NGO who claim to cooperate with the government to combat human trafficking, almost 2 million children are exploited in the commercial sex trade (International Justice Mission, n. d.). However, this contradicts with the statistics given by the U. S. Department of State in 2005 that stated 1 million children are exploited in the commercial sex trade (Polaris Project, 2009). Based on the difference in statistic, we can say that NGO and governments have different definition of human trafficking. Hence, it can be concluded that lack of government's cooperation with other institutions also increases the number of human trafficking cases.

However, there are some people who think that the media should be blamed for the increase in human trafficking as well. Newspapers, television and <https://assignbuster.com/should-the-government-be-blamed-for-the-increase-in-human-trafficking/>



radio are examples of media that play a vital role in educating the public on human trafficking. Gradually, the Internet also can play a role in tackling this issue. The media can highlight the rise of this issue and how it affects everybody. Conversely, 'media coverage is weak in many parts of the world' (UN. Gift, 2006). There is no wide media's exposure on human trafficking issue on an international level and the coverage is somewhat inadequate (Bruckert and Parent, 2002). The media should give a report that is reliable and fair. They should also help to inform and increase the understanding of the public on the advantages, disadvantages and the perils of human trafficking (Lin et. al, n. d.). In America, the media was also one of the mediums for human trafficking. Newspapers, radios and especially the Internet gave false advertisements and false job opportunities in order to tricked American citizens to become victims of human trafficking. The media was also used to support and promote demand for marketable sexual services (International Human Rights Law Institute DePaul University College of Law, 2005).

At the same time, private enterprise should also be blamed for the increase in human trafficking. Private enterprise should take part of the blame because 2.5 million out of 9.8 million abused by private sectors, are victims of human trafficking. Private sectors had made a lot of profits from trafficked victims and majority of the profit comes from industrialized countries (Belser et. al, 2005). Besides that, there are times when the employers fail to work in the same mind with organizations to combat human trafficking. For example, an employer's organization had started a program in Kunming City, China to motivate employers to go against exploitation of workers and

human trafficking. This program also motivates employers to monitor themselves through anti-trafficking network especially in sectors where human trafficking is more obvious. However, employers seem to be neglecting this use or fail to see the importance of this issue to their work. There are some employers who refuse to join in trainings. Furthermore, employer's demand contradicts with this program organized by the employer's organization (International Labour Organization, n. d.). Thus, private enterprise should also be blamed and not just solely the government.

Many people blame the media for the increase in human trafficking. One thing that many people are unaware of is that many media are possessed by governments. A study was done in 97 countries and it was found that most of the media firms are possessed by the governments especially in broadcasting. Government's ownership is supposed to bring exposure of information like traditions which might not be provided by private enterprise (Djankov et. al, 2001). However, if the media is one of the mediums for human trafficking, this shows that the governments have weak ownership over the media. This all goes back to square one that is governments are the one to be blamed. Eventually governments are causing an increase in human trafficking.

Besides that, many people also blame the private enterprise for the increase in human trafficking but people should consider the responsibilities of the government in controlling the private enterprise. In actual fact, government should be blamed for they have not set strict rules and regulations. This is especially true in Japan where criminal organizations, like Yakusa, control the victims, more so sex trafficking victims, as law enforcers care less about <https://assignbuster.com/should-the-government-be-blamed-for-the-increase-in-human-trafficking/>

them. This shows that governments are not paying attention to human trafficking and at the same time denying it. ' Thus, trafficked women and children who are part of the Japanese sex trade are outside the reach of the law and anyone else who can save them from a fate that is dependent exclusively upon the whims of organized criminal elements' (The International Human Rights Law Institute DePaul University College of Law, 2001). Thus, the government should be blamed for not implementing strict rules and regulations to prevent human trafficking.

In addition, it was also said that labor inspection is government's responsibility. One of the main obstacles in labor inspection is the government's support in terms of financial. The budget allocation for labor inspection is very minimal and it is so little that there is nothing that can be done with that amount of money. Thus, it is said that weak labor inspection is directly affected by the government. When labor inspection is inefficient, it will also be hard to tackle human trafficking as well (Richthofen, 2002).

On the whole, the lack of government enforcement in human trafficking, the lack of suitable and successful legislation on human trafficking, the situation in the country of origin and also the lack of cooperation between governments with other institutions causes an increase in human trafficking. Thus, the misconception of people about why the media and private enterprise should be blamed for human trafficking should be cleared.

In conclusion, governments should solely be blamed for the increase in human trafficking as governments are one of the main contributors to the rise in this issue. Human trafficking can be combated if the government has

proper governance. In order to solve this issue, governments, non-governmental organizations, private enterprise, media and local communities should work hand in hand as one-side approach would not be effective. Martin Luther King Jr., an American black leader and a Nobel Prize winner in 1964, stated that ' Freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed' (Proverbia. net, 2009).

(2, 506 words)