

Ethics of human trafficking



The problem of trafficking of humans is widespread and it is estimated that annually, approximately 14, 500 and 17, 500 individuals are victims of trafficking into the United States. This is a hidden population involving factories, restaurant businesses, agriculture, the commercial sex industry, agriculture, domestic workers, some adoption firms and marriage brokers. 80% of individuals who are trafficked individuals are female; therefore, those who provide health care for women can best serve this diverse patient population with increased awareness to the problem. Exploiting persons of any sexual orientation, race, ethnicity or gender, is not acceptable at any place or time. After applying the utilitarian and deontological perspectives and the egoism and emotivism theories to the question of human trafficking, it is evident that the ethical response to this is that it is one the most unethical practices any person can engage in.

“ Human trafficking is a complex, multi-faceted crime with no single solution. Many countries are affected by it in some way, and Australia, as a destination country for trafficking victims, is no exception” (Healey, 2012). Human trafficking is one of the most heinous and degrading thing that can happen to anyone and for those unfortunate enough to be caught in this web, it is a life of living hell. Slavery exists today and it’s called Human Trafficking. Nothing stirs the emotions or drives the passions, specifically in the US, more than the bone chilling stories of modern day human slavery. Whether it is labor, domestic or sexual, the terror that human trafficking victims have endured is so horrendous that it leaves us gasping for breath. For people who work in human and health service fields, they have heard the firsthand accounts of survivors. We have heard of the dedicated law

enforcement officers and health care practitioners and who are involved in the apprehension and prosecution of traffickers, and are the advocates for victims in these complex cases. Realizing that this could be taking place in our neighborhoods and towns and, unseen as we go about our daily comfortable lives, is unimaginable. It is no surprise to anyone that when we hear these stories, there is a huge outcry by the citizens to our legislators to pass laws where none exists or for stricter laws and more enforcement. Since 1999 when this issue was first addressed by congress, the United States have spent over 150 million dollars to help in the fight against human trafficking. Human traffickers tend to look for vulnerability when searching for their victims. There is not one single type of person that they prey upon so victims tend to be from all walks of life and social status does not exclude someone from being potentially trafficked (McNamara, 2015).

Trafficking in persons is the illegal sale or trade of human beings for labor through abduction, the use or threat of force, deception and fraud or for sexual exploitation. Society's most vulnerable members such as those burdened by disabilities, discrimination and poverty, are preyed upon by traffickers. Human Trafficking doesn't only occur in the US, it is manifested globally in the form of organ trafficking, bonded labor, and sex trafficking. In sex trafficking, women and children is a commodity used purely for paid sexual gratification. With the globalization of human trafficking, forged documents, financial and legal assistance and transportation are services that are provided allowing it to become an organized billion dollar industry. Victims are lured with false promises of a better life and their broken, unsure environment is easily exploited. Sexual exploitation is the most common

form of human trafficking. Initially, they may travel with their traffickers of their own free will under the guise of a better life. Once they have been lured into a false sense of safety, these victims are then isolated, beaten, restrained, threatened, and coerced. In cases involving international human trafficking, the victims' identification papers or passports are often withheld or destroyed by traffickers and since they have been illegally brought into the host country, these victims are programmed to fear the country's law enforcement agencies. Imprisonment in extreme isolation is par for the course for these victims who then become dependent upon their captors for simple necessities as shelter and food. Violence against their family members at home is also another way traffickers control their victims.

Many are aware that this is widespread problem but most of them think it is happening somewhere else, not in our backyards, therefore out of our reach and not our problem. This type of rationalization causes major problems because it is happening everywhere; and yes sometimes in our very backyards, right under our noses. Victims are hiding in plain sight, seeking help by their furtive glances or skittish movements, yet we remain blind, content to live our lives without a care in the world. The trafficking of human beings is not easily detected and is both a national and international crisis that everyone should be aware of. It is a major world crisis that needs to have a spot light aimed directly at it, one that shines brightly give hope to these hopeless victims. Some tips that we can all benefit from knowing about are: where to look, what to look for, when to question and when to not to question. For example, law enforcement has seen a pattern in businesses such as restaurants employing workers to bus tables and wash dishes, strip

clubs, sweatshops where garments are manufactured , massage parlors, and brothels to name a few. Legitimate businesses such as nail shops may also offer commercial sex. Trafficking victims are guarded by other employees or family members of the traffickers, receive very little to no pay, work long, grueling hours, restricted movement and scared of their employers. Signs that are visible are bruises, malnutrition, and fatigue, withdrawn workers who are afraid of unsolicited contact with others, or who are not allowed to speak for themselves. Forms of domestic slavery can be found in recreational areas or parks where babysitters or nannies take the children and pets. Look for the signs stated above with an extra precaution, are the women older, if they are younger do they look healthy or scared? All things that we never give a second thought to, while the victims suffer in silence. If you suspect Human Trafficking, don't confront the suspected trafficker, take pictures of those who you suspect if possible and pictures of the location where you suspect criminal activities are taking place then contact the police or FBI. Give any and all information you have gathered and let them decide if the case meets the requirements of human trafficking. We all need to be aware and know what we can do to prevent this cancer from spreading and prevent the global destruction families. If the problem of Human Trafficking was widely understood and the consequences to those who are trafficked, it would no longer be the second fastest and largest growing crime in the world. A drug can only be sold once, but a human being can be sold multiple times until they are no longer useful and if they are lucky, they get to die in peace.

I will discuss human trafficking from an ethical point of view starting with the utilitarianism perspective. A natural way to see whether an act is the right thing to do (or the wrong thing to do) is to look at its results, or consequences. Utilitarianism argues that, given a set of choices, the act we should choose is that which produces the best results for the greatest number affected by that choice (Mosser, 2013). According to this perspective, promotion of happiness for the greatest number is ideal, but however looking at human traffic from this standpoint is very easy.

Utilitarianism is the natural way to look at something to decide if it is wrong or right. It argues that we should choose the result which best serves the needs of the greatest number affected by the choice (Mosser, 2013). Looking at human trafficking from this point of view is rather easy. The only people who benefit from human trafficking are the traffickers who will stop at nothing to get their victims. Due to the fact that many are looking for a better way of life, they become easy prey for those who are up to no good. According to (Smith, 2014), human trafficking is a multi-billion dollar industry which is estimated to bring in about \$32 billion worldwide, however the people who are in charge are the ones who benefit the most from the misery of those who are trapped in this trade (Smith, 2014). Corrupt public officials, unscrupulous recruiters and investors are principal participants and are the very core of this horrible practice. There are more victims than there are traffickers, so this perspective doesn't fill the goal of happiness for the greatest number.

The other perspective I will discuss is deontology. The deontology perspective places focus on the reasons why an act is done rather than

focusing on the consequences (Mosser, 2013). When it comes to human trafficking, those involved do so purely greed for monetary gain. The definition of human trafficking is when someone consents or agrees to pay someone to take an individual somewhere else, either across state lines, another country or simply smuggling them away from their general living area. These individuals are now caught in the web of trafficking whether its labor, domestic or sexual, the terror that human trafficking victims have endured is so horrendous that it leaves us gasping for breath. Deontologists argue that we have a duty, or some would call it an obligation to treat others with respect, and we must take that dignity into consideration when dealing with them (Mosser, 2013). Human trafficking goes against every basic human right and in that aspect can be viewed as immoral and wrong. When a victim is taken, often against their will they lose the basic freedoms we take for granted. . “ The law enforcement framework “ is excessively prosecution focused,” with little focus on prevention and is dependent on the “ innocent victim.” (Bravo, 2008)

Ethical egoism argues that moral evaluations should be made based on our desires and goals. Quite simply put if it benefits me its right, if it hinders me it's wrong (Mosser, 2013). The offenders in human trafficking fall under this perspective. They are in the business solely for their own personal gain and do not care who is hurt and destroyed in the process.

Emotivism is a view that quite simply is based upon if we do or do not like something. It is often referred to as the “ Boo Hurrah” theory of ethics (Mosser, 2013). They have a fast way to make often quite a substantial

amount of money at little to no cost for them. They sniff out and prey upon a victim's vulnerability regardless of where they find their victims.

CONCLUSION

To exploit a race, gender, sexual orientation, or ethnicity is not acceptable in respectable society. The cost on both the citizens and the nation is untold. It is going to take the collective efforts of law enforcement, government agencies, and the public to defeat a problem of this magnitude. Things that stand in the way to getting a grip of Human Trafficking is fear, lack of public awareness, secretive nature of trafficking, limited resources for training those working in that field for what signs to look for when there is a suspicion of human trafficking, and limited legal assistance. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the primary care givers of female Human Trafficking should strive to assist anyone has been identified as a victim or at the very least recognize females who may have fallen prey to trafficking. This may not be the only option available; however, as those with first contact, they may be able to develop tools that can help in the fight of Human Trafficking. Human trafficking from a Utilitarianism standpoint isn't moral or prudent; and from a Deontology perspective the fiscal additions for the traffickers for offering their victims into servitude is not a righteous or moral act. A victim losing their opportunities and personality just so the guilty parties can profit is not virtuous or ethical on any level we have discussed.

References

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