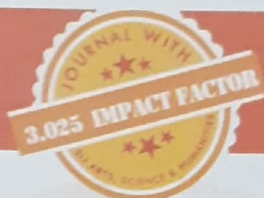




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WOMEN AND CHILDREN TRAFFICKING IN INDIA

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Trafficking of human beings, especially of women and children, is an organized crime that violates fundamental human rights. Human trafficking has been identified as the third largest source of profit for organized crime, following arms and drug trafficking, generating billions of dollars annually at the global level. It is the social and economic constraints of the victims that make them most vulnerable. With growing globalization and liberalization, the possibilities and potential for trafficking have developed. People tend to migrate in search of better opportunities. Though this is a positive trend, it has also led to the emergence of other complex issues such as smuggling of people across borders and unsafe migration by unscrupulous touts and agents. While trafficking has severe implications on the psycho-social and economic well-being of the victim, highly adverse ramifications are also seen in the society and the nation. By denying the victims the right to good health, nutrition, education and economic independence, the country loses a large number of women and children as victims of this crime, who otherwise would have contributed productively to its growth.

Trafficking - Situation in India

India is a Republic comprising 28 States and seven Union Territories. The Constitution of India envisages a parliamentary form of government with unitary features. Over the years, India has emerged as a source, of destination, and transit country for trafficking for varied purposes such as for commercial sexual exploitation and labor. Women and children are trafficked to the Middle Eastern countries and other parts of the world for purposes of cheap labor and commercial sexual exploitation. The number of trafficked persons is difficult to determine due to the secrecy and clandestine nature of the crime. The Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) estimate that there are about three million prostitutes in the country, of which an estimated 40 percent are children, as there is a growing demand for very young girls to be inducted into prostitution on account of customer preferences. The recent trends show an increase in sex tourism, child sex tourism, pedophilia, prostitution in pilgrim towns and other tourist destinations, cross-border trafficking especially from Nepal and Bangladesh.

A total of 63,251 victims were detected in 106 countries and territories between 2012 and 2014. Majority was female - adult women and girls. Trafficking for sexual exploitation has been reported by international organizations and non-governmental organizations throughout the region. The lack of information also affects the analysis of the profile of the offenders. The only data available refer to the gender profiles of persons arrested in India under the previous

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