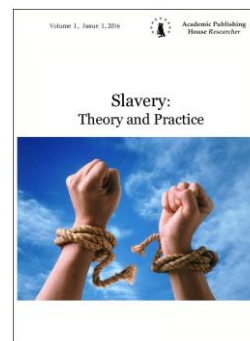


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Modern Slavery in India: the Essence, Forms, Distribution

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Abstract

The article gives an overview of the state of modern slavery in India. It presents its essence, describes the forms, including trafficking of women and children, child labor, organ trafficking. The article discusses the spread and consequences of this phenomenon, describes the use of modern slavery in the production/import of goods. The authors analyze in detail the statistics of crimes committed against registered cases of human trafficking. Separately, the cases of crimes registered under the article "crimes against women" are presented.

It is specified that girls and women are the main targets of immoral trafficking in India. The authors of the article note that in terms of modernization, the commercial sexual exploitation of women and children for prostitution has changed.

The features of intermediary interactions in the process of smuggling people are revealed.

In conclusion, the authors state that the continuing crimes against people in the form of modern slavery have confirmed the need of operating regulation of government agencies, and employment agencies that are involved in the financial exploitation and emotional trauma of victims.

Keywords: modern slavery, slave trade, India, smuggling, industry, sexual exploitation, Labour, exploitation of women and children.

1. Introduction

According to findings in the Global Slavery Index, published by the Australia-based Walk Free Foundation, there are about 18.3 million people living in modern slavery in India. India was ranked 53rd among the 167 countries that were surveyed in the study. With a population of 1.3 billion people, India has the largest number of slaves in absolute terms, followed by China, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Uzbekistan. However, the Index has found out that India ranks fourth in terms of prevalence of slavery as a percentage of the total population – at 1.4 % – after North Korea, Uzbekistan and Cambodia ([Global Slavery Index, 2018](#)).

The prevalence of slavery in India, as it is the case in other countries located in Asia-Pacific, is largely linked with the economy's dependence on low skilled and cheap labor.

This paper places the spotlight on the issue of modern slavery and human trafficking in India, the nature, forms, methods that feed the spread of the phenomenon. The term "modern slavery" refers to trafficking in people (including child slavery), forced labor, debt bondage, forced marriage and any other types of relations that violates the fundamental principle of equality and the universal right to liberty and dignity ([Slavery in India; Harding, 2019](#)).

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2. Materials and methods

2.1. The materials used in our study were provided by journal publications and monographs of researchers such as K. Bales, G. Calandruccio, E. Harding, C. Joffres et al., Kaamila Patherya, A.I. Laxman, A. Nisar and others, official websites of various agencies in India and the US.

The historical background of the phenomenon of slavery and studying the issues of evolution of the Institution of the slave trade in various regions was carried out by scientists A.A. Cherkasov, M.G. Ivantsov, M. Šmigel', S.N. Bratanovskii, V.S. Molchanova, S.V. Nazarov, V.V. Nazarova (Cherkasov et al., 2017; Cherkasov et al., 2018; Nazarov, Nazarova, 2018).

2.2. The study is accomplished using a variety of general research methods such as analysis, synthesis, comparison, specialization, etc.

3. Discussion

Human trafficking or modern slavery is described by the US Department of State as “an act of recruiting, harboring, transporting, providing or obtaining a person for compelled labor or commercial sex acts through the use of force, fraud, or coercion”. Human trafficking is one of the most acute problems in India. No targeted study has been carried out so far to identify the exact number of children who have been trafficked in India. According to The New York Times, human trafficking is a widespread issue in India, especially in the state of Jharkhand. The authors report that young girls are transported to India from neighboring Nepal. There are numerous causes behind human trafficking, and despite 6 decades of independence, the benefits of economic development fail to penetrate the marginal segments of society, and millions of people still live below the poverty line (Laxman, Nisar, 2018).

Slavery is illegal everywhere in the world, yet more than twenty-seven million people are still trapped in one of the oldest social institutions in history. The work by K. Bales investigates the conditions of slaves in Mauritania, Brazil, Thailand, Pakistan and India. The paper reveals the tragic emergence of the phenomenon of “new slavery”, which is inherently connected with the global economy. Kevin Bales writes that new slaves are not long-term investment, as was characteristic of the older forms of slavery. Instead, they are cheap, do not require special care and are a “disposable” material (Bales, 2012). The population explosion over the past three decades has flooded global labor markets with millions of destitute and desperate people. Dynamic economic changes in developing countries gave rise to corruption and violence, while destroying social rules that could once protect the most vulnerable groups.

Asia and the Pacific has the highest number of people living as modern slaves. Almost 46 % of cases of people smuggling are registered in this region. Of these, 83 % are men, and around 17 % are women (Shreya Mittal, Sukanya Bhattacharyya).

Trafficking in women and children is a gross violation of human rights (Nazarov, Nazarova, 2018). However, the fact remains that approximately 800 thousand women and children are annually trafficked across international borders. 80 % of trafficking victims are women forced into prostitution. A study by S. Joffres et al. listed India as one of the Asian countries where human trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation has reached worrisome levels. While schemes of domestic trafficking from one state of the country to another are actively operating, India also acts as an international supplier of children and women smuggled to the Gulf States and South East Asia, as well as a destination country for women and girls sold into commercial sexual exploitation from Nepal and Bangladesh. Human trafficking for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation is a highly profitable and low-risk business that feeds on particularly vulnerable groups (Joffres et al., 2008).

More than 300 thousand people in India experience bonded labor, with 4.2 million coerced into domestic work. According to the source, 8 % of boys and 14 % of girls are beggars, and 3 million women are enslaved in prostitution, of whom 1.2 million are under age. In addition, half of Indian women are forced to marry and then exploited as free laborers (Shakti, 2004).

Table 1 features cases of offences registered under the “crimes against women” article in the period from 2011 to 2015. In 2015, the figure went down by 3.1 % as compared to 2014 and rose by 43.2 % as compared to 2011.

Table 1. Crime cases registered under the Crime against women article in 2011–2015

No.	Crimes	Years					Percentage variation in 2015 over 2014
		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	
1	Rape	24,206	24,923	33,707	36,735	34,651	-5.7
2	Attempt to commit rape	-	-	-	4,232	4,434	4.8
3	Abduction of women	35,565	38,262	51,881	57,311	59,277	3.4
4	Dowry death ¹	8,618	8,233	8,083	8,455	7,634	-9.7
5	Assault on women with intent to outrage their modesty/offences against chastity	42,968	45,351	70,739	82,235	82,235	0.2
6	Insult to the modesty of women	8,570	9,173	12,589	9,735	8,685	-10.8
7	Cruelty by husband and his relatives	99,135	106,527	118,866	122,877	113,403	-7.7
8	Importation of girl from foreign country	80	59	31	13	6	-53.8
9	Abetment of suicide of women	-	-	-	3,734	4,060	8.7

According to 2013 data, New Delhi has reported the highest rape rate among Indian cities. In 2012, an average of four rapes were registered in the city. New Delhi is the most unsafe location with the highest rape rate (1,636 people), followed by Mumbai (391), Jaipur (192) and Pune (171). Madhya Pradesh has recorded the maximum rapes as compared to other states, with 11 rapes per day on average. Madhya Pradesh (4,335 cases) was followed by Rajasthan (3,285 cases), Maharashtra (3,063 cases) and Uttar Pradesh (3,050 cases).

Statistics reveal that 93 women are raped in the country every day. The fact is that most offenders – 31,807 (94 %) – were known to the victims, and the figure includes neighbors (10,782), other known persons (18,171), relatives (2,315) and parents (539). It is also pointed out that the age of the victims ranges between 18 and 30 (15,556) and 14 and 18 (8,877) (Philip, 2014).

Most of the violations committed are not recorded by competent bodies. According to Madihi Kark, 54 % of sexual assaults are not reported, while Mihir Srivastava gives 90 % of unreported rapes in India (Khan).

The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) found out that police investigations and legal proceedings related to human trafficking are becoming increasingly common. In 2016, the police arrested a gang of five people on charges of human trafficking, and in 2017 a court in southern India succeeded in sentencing a brick shop owner to several years in prison and a fine of 16 thousand rupees (\$ 246.59) for trafficking in and exploiting workers. However, a variety of factors still discourage victims from seeking justice, such as limited access to justice systems in rural or isolated areas, as well as high costs and uncertainties associated with delays in legal proceedings. In addition, a major challenge in efforts to criminalize human trafficking or bonded labor is the absence of integrated law enforcement systems to investigate and prosecute offenders in different Indian states which leads to the lack of thorough investigations into human smuggling networks in various states (Global Slavery Index, 2018; India..., 2016; Santhosh Kumar, 2016).

¹ Dowry death are deaths of married women who are murdered or driven to suicide by continuous harassment and torture by their husbands and in-laws over a dispute about their dowry. Dowry deaths are found predominantly in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Iran.

The NCRB publishes that in 2014 there were about 5.5 thousand cases of human slavery reported in India. Human trafficking surged by 92 % in six years in 2014, IndiaSpend registers in August 2015 (IndiaSpend, 2015).

Trafficking in people for commercial sexual exploitation

Human trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation is escalating. West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Odisha are still listed as top human trafficking sources in India. The data on missing girls in these states is very high. In terms of modernization, the commercial sexual exploitation of women and children for prostitution has evolved. The business has mushroomed and obtained much more organization, with services provided on demand. Sex trade operators expanded their “coverage areas” and, along with providing services in residential areas, markets, shopping malls, targeted various types of clubs, escort services, massage parlors, spas, disco bars, beer bars, etc. This drives profits to the maximum, as well as facilitates access to wealthy customers. Traffickers actively advertise their services in newspapers and on the Internet. Deals are sealed using the phone and transactions are carried out via the Internet. Such agencies are operating throughout the country, and although the police are making attempts to stop the activity, the business continues to expand (UNTOC, 2013).

The trade in minor girls – the second most prevalent crime in India – has risen 14 times since 2004 and grown by 65 % as of 2014, according to new data released by the NCRB. In 2014, the number reached 2020 people (Figure 1).

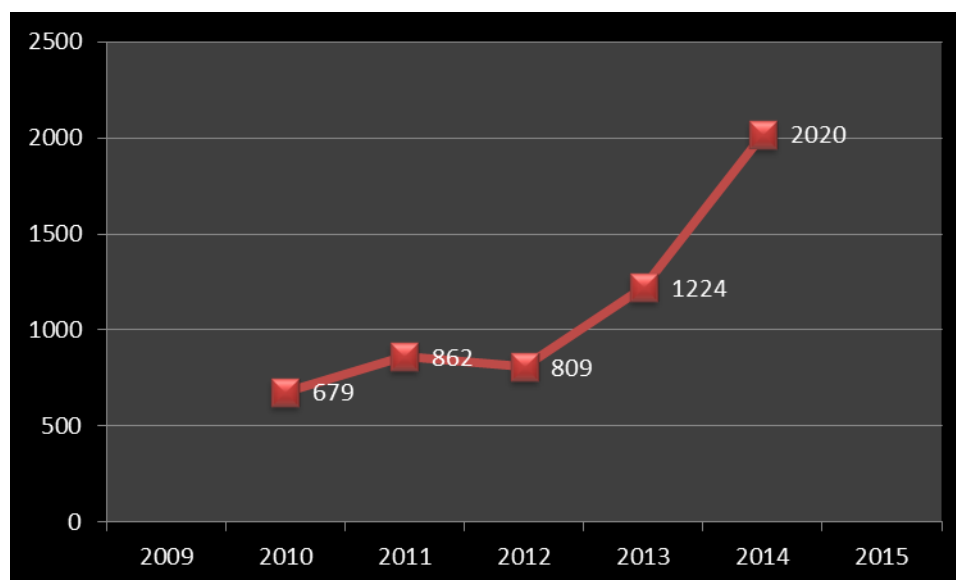


Fig. 1. Trends in procurement of minor girls

Source: IndiaSpend, 2015

Girls and women are the main targets of immoral human trafficking in India, accounting for 76 % of human trafficking cases across the country over a decade, the NCRB data (2009–2014) reveals (NCRB; Kaamila Patherya, 2017).

Other recorded cases of trafficking include the sale of girls for prostitution, the importation of girls from other countries and the purchase of girls for prostitution (as of 2015).

Sexual exploitation of women and children for earning profits takes place in various forms, including in brothels, sex tourism industry and pornography.

Official estimates show that 8,099 people were sold all over India in 2014 (IndiaSpend, 2015).

Figure 2 demonstrates trends in transporting girls from foreign countries in the period from 2010 to 2014.

According to the UN report, traffickers import women and girls from various Indian states, as well as from Ukraine, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Chechnya, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Thailand, Malaysia and Thailand (UNTOC, 2013).

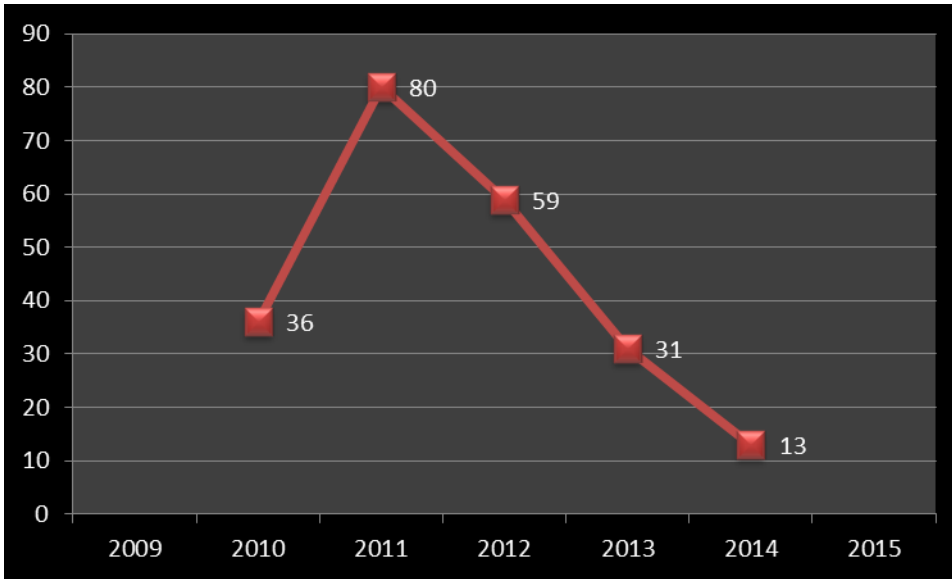


Fig. 2. Trends in the importation of girls from foreign countries
 Source: [IndiaSpend, 2015](#)

[Figure 3](#) highlights dynamics in sales of minors for the purpose of prostitution. In 2013, the figure of 82 victims fell by 42 points as compared to 2009.

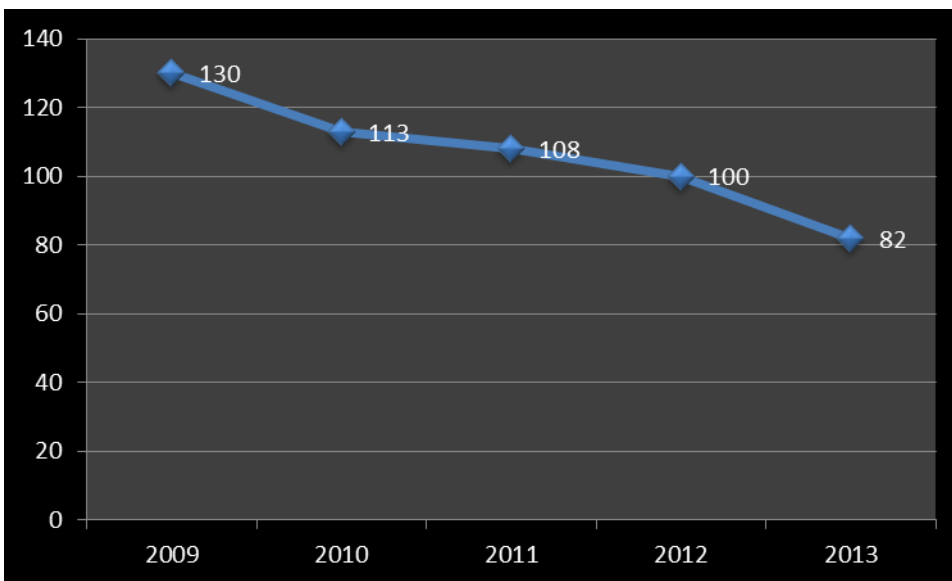


Fig. 3. The sale of minors for prostitution
 Source: [IndiaSpend, 2015](#)

The purchase number for minors bought for prostitution in 2013 amounted for 14 victims ([Figure 4](#)).

Sources indicate that the statistics are only based on officially reported crimes and data from various agencies and bodies.

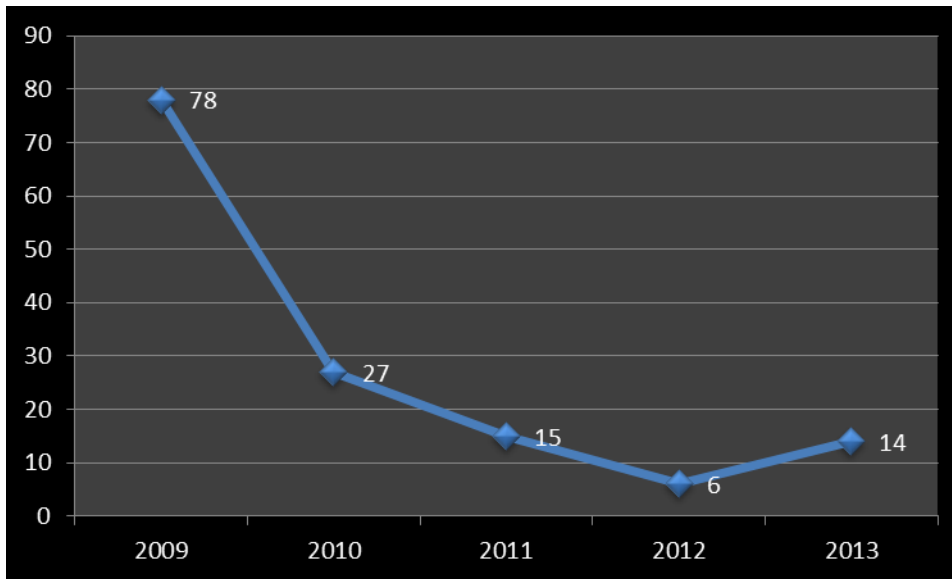


Fig. 4. The purchase of minors for prostitution

Source: [IndiaSpend, 2015](#)

Forced marriages

Around half of Indian women are forced to marry before they are 18, the minimum age legally set forth for marriage, and then they are coerced to work as unpaid laborers. According to a survey conducted by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in May 2013, over 9,000 married women were sold from the states of Assam and West Bengal to Haryana. The survey, comprising more than 10 thousand households, has showed that people who buy brides usually deny it ([Shreya Mittal, Sukanya Bhattacharyya](#)).

Child labor and trafficking in children

Various parts in India demonstrate an increasing trend of migration and trafficking in children. Forced by a combination of social and economic factors, the majority of children migrate from economically backward regions to large cities in search of employment. Children most often fall prey to criminal networks and are taken out by intermediaries and agents who have direct relations with employers in the city. Parents are typically given meagre advance payments and false assurances about profitable jobs, etc. In fact, the children are heavily exploited: excessively long working hours, miserable wages, unsanitary environments and harsh workplace conditions. The children mainly work in industries such as zari making (gold thread work), jewelry production, domestic chores, dhabas (local highway restaurants), tea shops, etc. Children very often live in the workplaces and, therefore, have no freedom of any kind. There are cases of child migration or trafficking for work from neighboring countries, such as Nepal and Bangladesh. Being so far from their families, these children are extremely vulnerable to all forms of abuse, including physical and sexual harassment ([UNTOC, 2013; Global Research..., 2016; Fabric of Slavery, 2016 Sinha, 2006](#)).

Organ trafficking

The media feature reports on illegal trade in organs from India on a regular basis. The availability of cyclosporine¹, new surgical methods in organ transplantation and the lack of proper medical ethics that might prevent illegal practices have served as catalysts for a boost in organ trade in India. An additional factor is active here – poverty that makes people sell their kidneys, for example, to pay off any debts. Victims for organ trafficking are lured from vulnerable groups struggling absolute poverty, unemployment, or having no alternative sources of income. However, the nature of intermediaries in organ trafficking is, in essence, different from other forms of human trafficking as it implies an active role of medical workers, ambulance drivers and morgue personnel. Police investigations have revealed that a trafficker would pay about one hundred

¹ Cyclosporin is a drug and an immunosuppressant that arrests the function of the cellular immunity and prevents the rejection of a transplanted organ or tissue. Source: Helix Medical Knowledge Base

thousand rupees (about \$1.8 thousand) to a person who wants to sell a kidney (UNTOC, 2013; Trafficking in Persons Report, 2007).

Using modern slavery in the production of goods

The realities of global trade and business contribute to the exposure of India, like many other countries, to modern slavery by means of the products the country imports. Table 2 provides information on five main types of products (the value is given in USD) imported by India from countries of a higher risk of using modern slavery in the production of the goods (Global Slavery Index, 2018).

Table 2. Main types of products imported by India from countries that are exposed to modern slavery in the production of goods

No.	Product name	Import value (in thousands of \$US)	Source countries
1	Laptops, computers and mobile phones	8,338,931	China, Malaysia
2	Sugarcane	456,472	Brasil
3	Gold	363,795	North Korea, Peru
4	Apparel and clothing accessories	360,045	Brazil, China, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam
5	Diamonds	97,062	Angola

Currently, no single central legal framework regulating public procurement exists in India. Yet, government ministries and departments should comply with various guidelines and procedures available for public procurement, but none of which specifically addresses modern slavery. In June 2017, the Indian Government issued a government procurement order as part of the government policy to promote the domestic manufacturing of goods and services. The policy is intended to provide preferences to local suppliers in public procurement. There is argued that the policy can facilitate the inclusion of human rights in the public procurement process (Ministry of Commerce & Industry, 2017; Calandruccio, 2005; Labour Organization, 2006; Misir, 2017; Srivastava, 2005; Yook, 2018).

4. Conclusion

Summing up the above points, it is necessary to note that the continuing crimes against people in the form of modern slavery have confirmed the need for introducing mechanisms to regulate the work of government bodies and recruitment agencies. The latter are involved in financial exploitation and emotional traumatization of their victims.

The analysis of the sources suggests that more police investigations into slavery have recently been recorded in India. This improvement has been enabled as the partnership between the National Crime Records Bureau and the police has enhanced. Awareness raising and information programs, as well as the ever expanding media space given to such issues have made it possible to strengthen public commitment in providing information on these types of violence.

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