

WHAT IS TRAFFICKING ALL ABOUT?

“A twelve-year-old girl is tricked into a situation where she is taken away from her family and transported to another country. Once there, she is sold like an animal to a brothel owner. From this point on, the scenario is very much the same -- she is gang raped and tortured for days until she finally agrees to sleep with up to 10 men a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, for several years until she eventually acquires an illness that deteriorates her body – she dies.”

- This case provides a typical example of a trafficking situation that happens to countless women and children in South Asia. Every year, more than 1 million women and children worldwide are reportedly trafficked and sold for a variety of different purposes – many end up in the sex trade. If one were to calculate this number, it comes to nearly 3,000 women and children per day. In the time it takes you to read this text, up to another 12 persons will have been trafficked!
- In Bangladesh, the problem is very acute. It is estimated that 10-20,000 persons (30 - 50 per day) are trafficked per year to major cities in India, Pakistan and the Middle East. The ages of the women and girls trafficked range from 7 to 24, with a mean age around 15. As for boys, their age ranges from 4 to 12. Most of the women and girls are trafficked for the sex trade and domestic work, while the boys are recruited to act as camel jockeys and beggars. Once oriented into the sex trade, a girl might find herself forced to service between five and ten clients a day. Imagine how devastated you would be if your daughter, your son, your niece or your nephew had to endure such torment.
- There are basically three ways in which persons are trafficked from Bangladesh: 1) he/she is sold by a family member, friend or neighbor; 2) he/she is tricked into going to another country with the promise of a job or a marriage proposal; or 3) he/she is kidnapped and forcefully taken away. Once in the hands of brothel owners and pimps, girls/women are subjected to a tortuous “break in period” that often includes multiple gang rapes, beatings, deprivation of food, and being burned by acid or cigarettes. There is no limit to the abuse one is subjected to in order to ensure that this person complies with the wishes of the house.
- The human rights violations associated with the trafficking of persons are staggering. This trade violates nearly every human right, resulting in a form of modern day slavery. Likewise, the public health implications are also significant. Many sex workers are forced to have unprotected sex. Based on studies carried out in Bombay, as many as 65 percent of the sex workers were HIV positive. Many of the victims live in horrible conditions and suffer from a full array of chronic infectious diseases. Girls who manage to escape from the sex trade and return to Bangladesh are often not accepted into their communities – they are considered “spoiled”. In order to survive, they must go underground where they continue selling sex; few have any other means of livelihood.
- **In summary:** Trafficking is a social evil that seems to be growing at an alarming rate throughout the world. This practice results in unimaginable human suffering and represents one of the most important human rights issues of our time! The world needs to take notice and learn more about this crime against humanity in order so that it can someday be stopped.