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Human Trafficking Paradigm in Bangladesh: A Critical Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This paper mostly emphasizes on the scenario of contemporary circumstances and incidents of human trafficking in Bangladesh as human trafficking is a severe issue that occurs worldwide. Almost every nation in the world has been affected by this awful crime. People's rights are violated when they are taken hostage and coerced into making corruption. Indeed, Humans, like products, are purchased, sold, and exchanged. Most importantly, human trafficking has increasingly become a major concern and its inception dates back to the prehistoric era. Trafficking is caused by numerous vulnerability factors worldwide. Furthermore, numerous socioeconomic issues are brought about by human trading. Crucially, it endangers both national and international security and presents a serious threat to the person. Many nations place a high premium on combating human trafficking. In Bangladesh, it has become a developing trend. Finally, in this paper, the researchers endeavored to investigate the major and fundamental causes of human trafficking and compromising human security. Aside from that, it confers even how the COVID pandemic has impacted human trafficking providing certain policy recommendations too for dealing with the problem in a democratic and developing state like Bangladesh.

Keywords: Human trafficking, Paradigm, Violation, Human rights, Bangladesh, and Critical analysis.

INTRODUCTION:

At the outset, it can be mentioned that every year, millions of men, women, and children are victims of human trafficking. In 2020, 109,216 trafficking victims were recognized worldwide (Statista, 2022). Human trafficking is a serious issue in every community and country. It has expanded into a multibillion-dollar industry. People are trafficked for a variety of exploitative objectives. It entails the movement of individuals inside and between nations with the express purpose of exploiting them (Gallagher, A., 2008). Human trafficking is the recruitment and transfer of people for exploitation via

force, compulsion, or deceit. Because of the ease with which they can manipulate individuals, traffickers frequently prey on those who are vulnerable and in danger. People trading thrives in the fragile state of women, addictions, peer pressure, lack of family support, a history of fleeing, lack of male support, and the presence of the offender (Wilson, B., 2014). The frequency of human trafficking varies by nation. It jeopardizes the security and safety of all nations involved. Human trafficking has increased over time due to a number of factors, including globalization, free markets, corruption, poverty, gender discrimination, natural catastrophes, and a lack of know-

ledge (Shelley, L., 2003). Sexual, physical, and emotional assault are among the numerous damages that human trafficking causes to those who are exploited (Todres, J., *et al.*, 2020). People are deprived of their freedom and human rights when they are coerced into doing things against their will in order to be exploited for profit. Due to the minimal investment and huge profit potential, human trading is in high demand. It is difficult to pinpoint the exact extent of subterranean activities since this crime is so complex (Giang University, 2009). The number of people that are trafficked annually is unknown (Dillon, S., 2008). Numerous incidents remain unreported, underreported, and, as a result, penalized. It poses a serious threat to mankind by abusing people both domestically and internationally. Governments have established victim services and anti-trafficking legislation in response to this serious problem (Burke, F., 2015). But it is growing at a dizzying rate and doesn't appear to be slowing down. Human trafficking threatens national, regional, and global security and impedes socio-economic advancement. This covert action is causing problems for nations all around the world (Kara, S., 2011). The purpose of this study is to examine the important underlying factors that contribute to human trafficking problems and jeopardize human security. It also highlights the effect of the COVID epidemic on human trafficking. Human trafficking instances and the current state of affairs in Bangladesh have been discussed. As such, it offers policy suggestions for addressing the problem Islam MN., (2020).

The Conceptual Issues of Human Trafficking

Since the beginning of time, people have been trafficking. From the time of the ancient Greeks and Romans until the present, it has been chronicled. Trafficking even dates back to 1619, when the first African Americans were brought to America and sold into slavery (Lovejoy, P. E., 2011). The buying and selling of Africans was followed by the white slave trade, which involved the sexual enslavement of English female industrial workers. Human trafficking today is a legacy of white slavery (Whyte, C., 2013). Human trafficking is now referred to be a "modern kind of slavery" [Ball, A. D., *et al.*, (2011)]. Human trafficking enterprises continue to operate illegally, but traffickers utilize respectable services to do their

business. There are countless examples of different sectors' engagement in people trade. Computers and the internet have created methods for shedding light on human trafficking networks. Traffickers exploit bank transactions to deposit and launder money (Polaris, 2014). Traffickers frequently use virtual currency such as bit coin to avoid dealing with traditional banking institutions. It may assist them in launder money from illicit activity. They extensively utilize social media outlets to recruit and promote their captives' services. They utilize transportation services. Traffickers reserve hotel rooms for their victims, which is important for sex trafficking. Human traffickers do not necessarily search for the cheapest lodgings. They choose locations based on consumer convenience, pricing, and hotel regulations and procedures (Decadt, L., March 2020). It is expanding because to the constant desire for an infinite supply of human people. In 2015, the global earnings from human trafficking were projected to be EUR 29.4 billion. Because human trafficking is low-risk, criminals may make billions of dollars by capitalizing on people's desire and endless supply (Bump, M. N., *et al.*, 2008). Victims in poor nations are more likely to be abused since anti-trafficking laws are inversely connected to their economic situation. Furthermore, victims are trafficked into wealthier nations (Tobolowsky, 2010). As a result, individuals are trading, endangering millions of lives each day for exploitation.

Major Reasons of Human Trafficking as Well as Existing Challenges:

With annual revenue of over \$150 billion, people trading are one of the most lucrative organized criminal groups in the world. It is associated with a number of elements, some of which are unlawful and socially contentious, while others are legally controlled or socially acceptable (Davidson, J. O. C., February 10, 2010). Smuggling victims both domestically and abroad guarantees a steady flow of victims for this covert operation (Kleemans, E. R., 2011). International law does not sufficiently address the underlying causes of human trafficking and other concerns. Although it is difficult to pinpoint a single cause, several underlying issues are nonetheless prevalent everywhere.

Concerning Poverty

Because of gender discrimination and poverty, many flee their native nations in quest of employment. Some of these individuals could become forced labor traffickers (Mahdavi, P., 2011). Many people are born into slavery as a result of poverty. Because of their terrible financial situation, even unlucky people are forced to sell a family member into slavery in order to improve their family's future. The poor folks only seeking a better life allow traffickers to carry on with their illegal business. As a result, victims are lured in with promises of a healthier lifestyle, forced drug addiction, and fake employment offers.

The Main Purposes are Women and Children

Women are less likely to have resources for fleeing shortages, education, or skills. They are more likely to be trafficked as a result of this. According to a research on human trafficking that covers 155 nations, trafficking women is common in various parts of the world. Furthermore, because of the large audiences, there is a huge demand for prostitutes during major sporting events. The game season is seen by human traffickers as a profitable opportunity. For example, traffickers simply advertise sexual services before and during the American football Super Bowl, taking advantage of the influx and increasing their revenue in a single day (Roe-Sepowitz, D. E., *et al.*, 2014). Additionally, since most men are simply looking for sexual services, ads are not necessary, which increases the number of prostitutes available at various events (Miller, C., 2012).

The issue of sex trafficking is not new. During World War II in the 1930s, the Imperial Japanese Army established "comfort stations" throughout Asia. In order to soothe Japanese soldiers and guarantee that they would not divulge military secrets throughout the war, more than 200,000 women from various countries were sold as prostitutes. It is among the most well-known instances of twentieth-century sex trafficking Whitman, A., *et al.* (2015). Sex trafficking has been around for a while, but it has only lately been acknowledged as a serious issue. It is particularly prevalent in Asian and European nations, where thousands of individuals are trafficked each. Since they are readily seduced into human trafficking,

runaway children are seen as a particularly susceptible demographic (McNulty, M. S., 2014).

Factors that Push and Pull

There are several important, interconnected, and mutually reinforcing factors that contribute to human trafficking. In certain areas, the push and pull factors that affect the desire to leave a country and go to a desired location are important drivers of human trafficking (Bales, K., 2007).

Physical Force, Coercion, and Kidnapping

Every year, millions of lives are taken. Due of its high revenue and little risk, human trade is expanding. The lives of people are at danger of being drugged, abducted, and coerced into sexual slavery. An estimated 27 million people were enslaved worldwide, including trafficked individuals who were forced to work for no pay under duress (Skinner, E. B., 2013). Homeless people are particularly susceptible to human trafficking. Upon reaching their desired location, the trafficked individuals are confronted with a reality that differs from their expectations, and their documents are taken Logan, T. K., *et al.* (2009). They are sometimes enslaved to settle debts resulting from false accusations made against them by the criminal court system Logan, T. K., *et al.* (2009). In certain places, like Sri Lanka, where foreign pedophiles utilize the money to lure beach boys, there have been instances of youngsters being sold for sex (Huda, S., 2006). Traffickers brain-wash and isolate victims to keep them from fleeing after they are totally enmeshed in that life after being seized.

Concerning Corruption

Human trafficking and corruption are closely related. In general, when anti-trafficking strategies are being developed, the influence of corruption on trafficking is disregarded. Corruption may take many different forms, ranging from trade-offs and apathy to disclosing or selling victim information. Behind closed doors, it's easy to do. Because corruption is a delicate political topic, governments frequently refuse to look into it for fear of exposing their incapacity to run their agencies or their involvement in corrupt activities (International Council on Human Rights Policy, 2009). Therefore, corruption compromises human security.

Insufficient Knowledge and Education

Insufficient education may make it more difficult to obtain employment that provides a livable salary. It might also result in a lack of awareness of one's rights. Lack of access to correct information and education might make people more susceptible to human trafficking. Traffickers provide those without information with occupations that appear to be legitimate.

Further Reasons

Numerous problems that are connected to globalization and the development of modern liberal societies are the origins of human trafficking (Davidson, J. O. C., February 10, 2016). Globalization has not only made it easier for traffickers to relocate, but it has also feminized poverty, pushed out rural populations, and increased the divide between the developed and developing nations. As a result, some communities were more susceptible to human trafficking. Furthermore, sex tourism has expanded, with paedophiles taking advantage of globalization and lower transportation costs to travel throughout the world. Consumers often want low-cost goods and services, as do paedophiles and those who buy sex. The availability and accessibility of sexual advantages creates an adequate supply, increasing demand (Shelley, L., 2011). The problem of human trafficking is also closely linked to the worldwide refugee crisis. Refugees have lost contact with their social and financial support systems. It causes a wide range of damage to those that survive. Due to their unlawful status, refugees may be deported after they arrive in their destination nations. Within their own nations, it is causing re-victimization. Because of this disrupted cycle, traffickers may more easily entice victims with the promise of a better life overseas (Horzum, Ekin Deniz., 2017). All of the aforementioned factors are somewhat related to one another. In order to address the modern issues that facilitate human trafficking, we must also modify our services.

The Impact of Covid-19 on Human Trafficking in Bangladesh

COVID-19 has had a tremendous influence on vulnerable people and victims of human trafficking. It has upended people's lives and support networks. Similarly, coronavirus has exacerbated the economic Universe PG | www.universepg.com

hardship, food insecurity, physical aggression, and grief over the loss of loved ones. The epidemic has put each country under severe economic hardship. Quarantine, lockdowns, travel restrictions, and limits on various activities were implemented to reduce the infection rate, which affected everyone. In order to manage infectious illnesses, restrictive measures are implemented. Most importantly, inhibiting the identification of trafficking victims and survivors, however, may increase the likelihood of human trafficking. The 'new normal' brought about by the epidemic forces human traffickers to modify their business plans, especially through the misuse of contemporary communication tools. One of the main reasons people trade is poverty, vulnerabilities, and economic and social injustices, all of which have been made worse by the current corona pandemic (Impact of The Covid-19 Pandemic on Trafficking in Persons, July 9, 2021). A number of risk factors for human trafficking are implicated by COVID-19. Due to widespread job loss, many people are now unable to support their families. Because of the pandemic's worsening economic conditions, offers of high earnings, labor permit paperwork, and other benefits can readily ensnare vulnerable people. Traffickers later used physical abuse, financial threats, contract switching, passport snatching, and debt-based pressure to capture victims. In addition, women have frequently been enlisted for sexual exploitation online or locally. Poor young women, those in broken marriages, those with less education, and members of minority ethnic groups are the most common victims of sexual exploitation (COVID makes the weak more vulnerable to Human Trafficking, 2022). Children and teenagers spend more time on the internet while schools are closed. This exposes young people to several types of local and online human trafficking victimization. They were trafficked for coercive criminal activity, forced marriage, forced begging, and sexual assault (The repercussions of the COVID-19: July 9, 2021). As a result, the coronavirus makes susceptible individuals more susceptible to human trafficking. Policies must be created to address the needs of those who are vulnerable to human trafficking. Bangladesh is a popular trafficking destination. It is near to the Gulf area, which links with South Asia. Human trafficking is a concern to the underprivileged, including slum

residents, floating women, and children. Currently, the majority of trafficking victims is *Rohingyas* who have escaped Myanmar. Even among *Rohingyas*, crime has surged in Bangladesh. They are involved in a variety of illicit acts, including human trafficking, smuggling, commercial sexual exploitation, and more. Bangladesh is a trafficking hotspot due to poverty and illiteracy, as well as its geographical location. People in need are ready to take any job offer. Human traffickers exploit this circumstance to seduce the defenseless. The traffickers utilize unlucky people for forced labor and sex labor, but in actuality, they offer them a good job in another nation. In a similar vein, many Bangladeshi laborers fall prey to other recruitment actors that abuse them. Migrant laborers are exploited by recruitment firms. Fake contracts, false employment offers, salary, and exorbitant recruiting costs are examples of exploitation (Jureidini, R., 2014). Trafficking is made easier by Bangladesh's open and wide borders with India and Myanmar. The formal leave and entry procedures are rarely followed, and border restrictions are inadequate. There isn't even any specific law that deals with cross-border trafficking (Alam, R., 2005). Regional gangs that are well-organized and connected to several law enforcement agencies in the nation are responsible for trafficking (Women and Children, The Protection Project, 2002). Different national regulations are in place in Bangladesh to prevent human trafficking. One important step against human trafficking is the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act of 2012. Trafficking women and children for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation is prohibited by the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act of 2000. Several laws can be used to prosecute trafficking offenses, among other things. On the other hand, enforcement is inconsistent.

In Bangladesh, there are several notable instances of human trafficking. In the case of Abdul Gafur, traffickers kidnapped and sold a 15-year-old girl in India. Her family found out a few years later. The girl's father then wrote to the government of Bangladesh, asking them to return her. The government doesn't believe it. In the end, he petitioned the court for a writ, asking the relevant department to take urgent action. According to the writ petition, the girl was entitled to protection under

Articles 27, 31, and 32 of the Bangladesh Constitution. In order to guarantee the victim's return, the Court ordered the government to take all required actions (*Abdul Gafur, Vs. Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Govt. of Bangladesh*, (17, 1997) BLD (HCD)). It is one of the most notable cases of cross-border trafficking.

Recent Relevant Incidents in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is concerned about the problem of human trafficking. The media seems to cover trafficking on a regular basis. Seven fortune-seekers lost their lives to freezing weather in January 2022 while traveling across the Mediterranean to Europe. 26 Bangladeshis were shot dead by traffickers in Libya in 2020 (March 4, 2020: BD nationals risk becoming easy prey to human trafficking). At least 693 Bangladeshis were detained between January and April 2020 for trying to enter Europe illegally, according to the BRAC Migration Programme (Libya killing: The Independent, 2020).

Additionally, victims of human trafficking have a challenging existence in the nation, along with anguish, frustration, and uncertainty for their family (Combating Human Trafficking: January 30, 2022). Children and women from Bangladesh are frequently trafficked in a variety of ways. Each year, such tragedies serve as evidence of the ongoing cycle of human trafficking. Since the coronavirus epidemic, many expats have returned home; nevertheless, more may lose their employment. Between April and September 2020, records reveal that around 165,658 workers came home from 29 nations. Approximately 100,000 workers who were 'on leave' have yet to return to work due to COVID travel restrictions. Many workers' visas and iqama have already expired (The Financial Express, 2020). Even if the coronavirus is eradicated soon, the Middle East's employment opportunities would surely diminish. A forecasted post-Covid-19 job crisis at home, combined with restrictions on hiring foreign workers in many nations, might exacerbate human trafficking. As a result, traffickers may entice unemployed youth and returnee migrants by promising jobs in unusual locations.

International Regulations Regarding Human Trafficking

International control of human trafficking has long been in place to safeguard human security and victims. One of the main international tools for fighting human trafficking is the Palermo Protocol. According to Article 5 of the Protocol, a State Party must make trafficking a crime and try to commit, plan, or oversee trafficking arrangements. One of the worst forms of child labor, according to the International Labour Organization (ILO), is child trafficking, which seriously impairs a kid's development. According to the 1999 Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention, each ratifying state must take prompt, efficient action to guarantee the outlawing and eradication of the most severe types of child labor. Notably, specific regulations pertaining to trafficking are included in several additional international frameworks. To safeguard the vulnerable, international laws pertaining to human trafficking should be closely adhered to.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

In conclusion, it can be said that there are no limits to the crime of human trafficking. Trafficking has received a lot of attention in recent decades. A wide range of national and international entities working in industries from private supply chains to cyberspace must be involved in the fight against human trafficking. Additionally, it seems that crime is increasing as a result of globalization and the convenience of international travel. The result of our economies' and society' inability to safeguard the weak is people trading. In addition to violating victims' human rights, this puts their safety in jeopardy. As previously said, trafficking is a growing modern concern that is closely related to many other problems. In the modern world, policy development on the topic of human trafficking has been sluggish and ineffective, despite the efforts of several state parties. States will continue to enforce domestic anti-trafficking legislation, prevention measures, and protection actions unless appropriate action is taken. Reducing or ending human trafficking will therefore continue to be a pipe dream. Finally, this paper highpoints some of the core reasons of human trafficking and makes certain recommendations for how to address the issue. These are mentioned below

1. Civil society, community leaders, NGOs, and local government can arrange awareness-raising programs or events for certain groups, such as impoverished women, bonded laborers, community members, or potential migrants in high-outmigration areas. The grassroots movement has the potential to significantly reduce human trafficking in South Asia.
2. Furthermore, the function of recruitment agencies, migrant rights, migrating with legal papers, risk factors of human trafficking, and other topics should be included in various seminars on people trading.
3. To strengthen the battle against human trafficking, the level of corruption must be reduced. Security for trafficking victims must be addressed immediately, with a focus on issues connected to corruption. Priority should be given to the establishment of social, economic, and political stability as well as the decrease in migration rates brought on by extreme poverty and trafficking.
4. To avoid women's victimization, we need to improve their employment opportunities and develop gender awareness.
5. Children's access to education and employment possibilities has to be increased, especially for minorities and females. Increase livelihood opportunities by lowering barriers to entrepreneurship and improving elementary education, communication, current knowledge, and other skills.
6. A customized livelihood program and life skills training are required to increase survivors' earning potential.
7. To promote survivors' long-term reintegration by providing food and monetary assistance to compensate for lost income during the COVID crisis, which was compounded by lockdowns and closures of earning opportunities.
8. More criminal trials and punishments for human trafficking are needed.
9. Governments should provide legal support to victims and families of human trafficking. Especially to overcome hurdles in places with low resources and labor.

10. The global problem of human trafficking has spread to Bangladesh. A few more detailed suggestions for addressing the Bangladeshi issue are as follows:

- a) Identifying trafficking routes in the vicinity and along the border. Stepping up security at routes and transportation hubs used by traffickers.
- b) Although the government has several anti-trafficking legislations, they are rarely implemented. The enforcement of these regulations is critical to eradicating trafficking.
- c) Initiatives at the national and international levels must address problems and defend the human rights of victims.
- d) Determine the weaknesses that are contributing to the failure of various regional government and international organizations' initiatives.

Finally, in addition to all these, it can be mentioned that the vital issue regarding the Human Trafficking could be under controlled if the Government in a democratic and developing country like Bangladesh as well as world widely combined taken necessary actions ensuring the actual application of rule of law inside their territory before crossing international boundary through illegal migration.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS:

M.A.M.B. Conceptualization, writing the original draft of the manuscript, and M.N.I. Investigation, reviewing, abstract writing, supervision, editing, corresponding of the manuscript.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:

There is no conflict of interest from the authors' end with respect to the research work.

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