UNIT 21 HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND DEVELOPMENT: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

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21.1 INTRODUCTION

Trafficking in women and children, being the most inhuman form of exploitation of vulnerable humans by the economically and socially powerful but morally corrupt fellow humans, continues to be a great challenge in the contemporary societies despite the legal mechanisms put in place to prevent, prohibit, and rehabilitate both at national and international levels. Though it has been a very well established fact that sex trafficking is a forced form of prostitution and hence an organized crime that needs to be abolished and prevented by all means, the debate on whether voluntary sex work should be decriminalised is still an unsettled issue in the academic, legal and policy forums. Any honest attempt to address the vexatious dimensions of abusive trafficking and settling the contentious sex work debate would call for a thorough understanding of the socio, cultural, economic, and political reality of our contemporary world and the development thereof. Therefore, we in this section attempt to understand the linkage between trafficking and development and try to view trafficking as a larger development issue that can arise at any stage of development of a country, be it under or developed stage.
21.2 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

1. discuss causes of human trafficking;
2. define meaning of development of human trafficking;
3. describe emergence of concept of human development;
4. discuss human development index and its components; and
5. analyse linkage between human trafficking and development.

21.3 HUMAN TRAFFICKING: A REVIEW OF DEFINITION

We may recall from our understanding of concepts and definitions that trafficking is an evolving multidimensional and complex human problem that cannot be defined in simple terms. Although arriving at a perfect definition seems to be a continuing debate, most of the countries have adopted the working definition provided by the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, adopted in November 2000. To keep our flow of understanding intact, we shall now quickly recollect the UN’s definition according to which trafficking is “…the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of persons by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or service, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.”¹

There are three elements included in this definition viz., trafficking as an action with intention, the means of recruitment and the purpose implying whether a person is trafficked or not is indicated by whether he/she has been subjected to these three elements.² This definition, besides providing a framework for further discussion, has proved to be a guiding principle for a macro-conceptual understanding of trafficking.³

21.4 CAUSES OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Since our main objective here is to understand the problem of trafficking in the larger context of development, it is important for us to take cognizance of the reasons that perpetuate trafficking and then ask a question whether the development process has been able to address the problem in India. Although we can categorise the reasons into socio-cultural and economic, we must understand that these are very much interlinked and the problem of trafficking needs to be studied keeping in mind all these factors together. However, classifying them into two broad categories like push and pull or supply and demand factors is necessary in order to bring out the causal relationship between them. The push factors are basically supply factors including the circumstances

¹ Definition as cited in Trafficking in Women and Children in India (2005), page 2.
² ibid
³ Trafficking in Women and Children in India (2005), page 7.
that force people into trafficking whereas pull factors are the ones that demand the work of trafficked persons. We shall briefly discuss some of these factors in the following.

21.4.1 Push or Supply Factors

The push factors operate in any under developed regions can generally be divided into three categories viz., (i) economic, (ii) socio-cultural, and (iii) political and legal factors. The economic factors include poverty arising out of illiteracy, ignorance, lack of access to knowledge and resources, unemployment, absence of livelihood opportunities for the underprivileged and landless poor population in rural areas, and lack of income. The socio-cultural factors are basically the prejudiced practices of people like gender bias that takes away the rights and freedom of women and girl children in terms of access to education, resources, employment and equal participation in the political process. The acts of oppression of women and girl children, domestic violence, sexual abuse, and desertion of hapless women by their husbands are all reflections of such prejudiced cultural practices and serve as push factors that force the vulnerable women and children into trafficking. In addition to these, the factors like troubled marriages or break ups, pressure in families or in individuals at times of economic uncertainty due to job loss or situations that erode their livelihood options, drug addiction of women and children either voluntarily or by force, children kept in substitute homes run by dubious organisations or individuals also seem to enhance the chances of the vulnerable to fall prey to trafficking. On the other hand, the political and legal factors like insensitive governments and absence of political will to intervene decisively, lack of effective laws, ineffective implementation of existing laws, and corrupted enforcing officials further aggravate the problem.

21.4.2 Pull or Demand Factors

The pull factors emerge from the demand for women and children’s bodies by those immoral individuals and the organised criminals, who see trafficking as a lucrative and easy business, facilitate such men’s cruel desire by setting up sex industry. Some of the other pull factors would include legal acceptance of prostitution as an industry in some regions which generate demand for women and children. The prospective victims, who usually fall prey to the designs of organised criminals, often come from the economically, socially, and culturally vulnerable sections of the society.

Although the push factors play a major role in the practice of trafficking, the pull factors are largely responsible for perpetuating it as they create demand for sex work. Such practice has become a universal phenomenon as it is prevalent in both developed and under developed societies. The available evidence suggests that the cause of trafficking in developed societies may be slightly different from the under developed ones but the causes found in under developed or backward societies are grounded in the culture that prejudices against women and girl children and the downtrodden. The prejudices practiced in under developed societies are stronger than in the developed ones and they always attempt to keep the vulnerable subjugated by denying their equal rights to education, access to resources, decent employment, access to health, and life with self respect and dignity.

21.4.3 Both Demand and Supply Factors

Apart from the factors explained above, some factors like migration, globalisation, and the lifestyles of sections of population emerged in the recent times contribute significantly
to the prevalence of trafficking. These can act as both demand and supply factors. We will briefly discuss them below.

### 21.4.3.1 Migration

Migration or movement of people takes place between regions within countries or across countries for various purposes like livelihood, better employment opportunities and life, for education and so on. We are concerned about the migration that acts as carriers of women and children of whom some are victimised either by force or deception and some voluntarily migrate for the sole purpose of sex trade in disguise to the regions where there is demand. People who are coerced or deceived into sex trafficking are mostly the ones who migrate with minimum or no literacy and awareness to unknown destinations where there is demand for female migrant workers as a livelihood option. The push factors we discussed above are mainly the reasons for people to migrate from one region to another be it rural to urban or urban to urban within the country or between the countries. The organised criminals use this as a means to lure the vulnerable people and in the end deceive them into trafficking. In some cases where women and children migrate to towns and cities looking for economic and emotional independence are also lured by the trafficking criminals, with false promises of job, who ultimately sell them in brothels. This scenario has been called as feminisation of poverty leading to feminisation of migration resulting in coerced trafficking.

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<th>Self Assessment Question</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fill in the blanks</td>
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<tr>
<td>1) i) Human Trafficking is partially due to _____________.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ii) People who migrate to unknown regions in search of livelihood are _______ to trafficking.</td>
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<tr>
<td>iii) The paradigm shift in development discourse focuses primarily on the _______ instead of _______ alone.</td>
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### 21.4.3.2 Globalisation

The process of globalisation that began with opening up of economies and market integration since the late 20\(^{th}\) century seems to have fuelled the growth of human trafficking at national and international levels. Globalisation, facilitated by information technological revolution, has although produced enormous growth of employment opportunities and wealth for many developed countries and for the educated rich in developing countries, it appears that the liberalisation, privatisation, commercialisation, urbanisation, and growth of service industry that come with the process of globalisation has actually widened the disparities between the rich and poor in the developing countries. For instance, in India the subsistence agriculture and traditional forms of livelihoods seem to have eroded in the face globalised industrialisation, urbanisation, and service sector oriented growth. The unskilled women workers, living below the poverty line and majority of them from scheduled and backward castes, were largely dependent on agriculture and small scale industries for their livelihoods. It appears that the process of globalisation, which does not recognise unskilled unorganised workforce, has eaten away the rural economy leaving its dependents to migrate to crowded cities where they become easy prey to the trafficking criminals and forced to live the life of indignity sacrificing all their human rights. On the other hand, at the international level, this process has helped to integrate the sex industry with the help of cross border migration coupled
with advancement in transportation and communication. This has also lead to the flourishing of prostitution industry disguised as tourism industry in different parts of the world.

### 21.4.3.3 Lifestyles

Life Styles of rich class in some countries and lifestyle changes for the upper middle and higher income groups in some developing countries in the advent of growing opportunities of all sorts thrown open by globalisation, encourage some sections of affluent class to experience carefree and extravagant life by indulging in voluntary sex trade that not only fulfils their pleasure seeking minds, but also helps them to earn easy money. The improved infrastructure, free flow of information, and free movements across borders facilitate trafficking among these affluent sections that treat trafficking as a means to sustain their wealthy life.

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<td>True or False</td>
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<td>i) Cultural prejudices like gender bias in societies like India act as a perpetuating factor as far as human trafficking is concerned. (True/False).</td>
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<tr>
<td>ii) Globalisation prevents human trafficking. (True/False).</td>
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<td>iii) Prostitution as an industry promotes human trafficking. (True/False).</td>
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### 21.5 CONCEPTUALISING DEVELOPMENT

Having cognized the fundamental causes underlying human trafficking, we now move on to understand the meaning of development. A cursory look at the history of development discourse would reveal how controversial the debate has been in so far as the attempts to arrive at a holistic approach to development. Economic aspect of human life dominated the discourse for a very long time until the broader thinking that brought the other important aspects of social life of humans thereby forcing the debate to consider the overall well being of humans as prime objective of any development approach and policy focus. Any such humane approach to development would necessarily attempt to enhance the overall socio, cultural, economic, and political life of human beings. As John Montgomery (1969) stated, “development is a seamless web without clear lines of distinction among its cultural, social, economic, and political strands.”

Put it simply, development is a process through which the overall wellbeing of the human beings is achieved through concerted policy measures.

### 21.5.1 Emergence of the Concept of Human Development

Such a refined broader understanding of the development process derived above is a result largely from the revolutionary thinking, which injected a paradigm shift in the development discourse in the late 20th century, by Mahbub ul Haq along with Amartya Sen and others with the pioneering concept of human development that placed people at the centre of development process. To give life to the concept, the United Nations Development Programme launched Human Development Reports since 1990 under the leadership of Mahbub ul Haq, the main architect of the reports, in order to prepare

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4 As cited by Uphoff and Itchman (1973) in page 75.
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the nations for determined action to change the way we think about development and adopt a people-centric approach that ultimately brings about overall well being of people with their choices and freedom. Subsequently, the reports prepared at regional, national, sub-national levels put human development at the top of nations’ political agenda. The annual exercise carried out by UNDP measuring the human development and progress has now been widely recognised and appreciated despite the initial opposition and criticism from the mainstream thinking. So far the annual reports have analysed a wide range of critical issues such as poverty, gender, democracy, human rights, cultural liberty, globalization, water scarcity, climate change, and mobility leaving a great influence in the development thinking of nations.

While observing that the idea of human development has swept the world today, Shiva Kumar (2001) quotes Amartya Sen’s reflections, “…What was, barely ten years ago, some untried thoughts in Mahbub’s mind, with nothing much on paper, have become a central part of the manifest reality of the global thinking on evaluation and action. What must have appeared to many in the United Nations system as a rather eccentric plan of an independent-minded Pakistani economist has become a central component of critical attention in the world of communications and public discourse.”

Now we need to dwell a bit more on the meaning of concept of human development to enhance our understanding. To put it in the words of Mahbub ul Haq, “The basic purpose of development is to enlarge people’s choices. In principle, these choices can be infinite and can change over time. People often value achievements that do not show up at all, or not immediately, in income or growth figures: greater access to knowledge, better nutrition and health services, more secure livelihoods, security against crime and physical violence, satisfying leisure hours, political and cultural freedoms and sense of participation in community activities. The objective of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives.”

In the views of Amartya Sen, “Human development, as an approach, is concerned with what I take to be the basic development idea: namely, advancing the richness of human life, rather than the richness of the economy in which human beings live, which is only a part of it.”

It is worthwhile here to quote Khadija Haq (2001), who witnessed the notion of human development taking shape from its conception to its implementation, so as to broaden our understanding of the concept. According to her, “The human development model goes beyond treating human beings as only a means to the production process. While human productivity is an essential element of economic growth, to treat human beings as only a resource for the production process obscures the centrality of people as the ultimate end of development. Human development is concerned not only with building human capabilities through investment on people, it is also concerned with using those capabilities fully through an enabling framework for growth as essential, but pays equal attention to its quality and distribution, its link to human lives and to its sustainability.”

She further explained, “The critical difference between the economic growth model and the human development model is that the first focuses exclusively on the expansion of income while the second embraces the enlargement of all human choices-economic, political, social, and cultural. The human development model questions the presumed automatic link between expanding incomes and expanding human choices. Such a link depends on the quality and distribution of economic growth, and not only on the quantity

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5 As cited in the UNDP’s official website http://hdr.undp.org/en/humandev/
of such growth. A link between growth and human lives has to be created consciously, through deliberate public policy-in areas such as public spending on social services, and fiscal policy to redistribute income and assets. Such a deliberate, forward-looking and equitable public policy has been lacking in some countries of South Asia and has led to the current state of poverty and human deprivation in the region.”

21.5.1.1 Human Development Index and its Components

The human development report uses a broad composite index called Human Development Index (HDI) to measure the average socio-economic development of a country or region’s population in terms of three aspects viz., life expectancy at birth measuring a long and healthy life of humans; educational attainment of population calculated using adult literacy and combined gross enrolment ratio of primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of schooling representing the access to knowledge; and per capita income that defines a decent standard of living represented by gross domestic product per capita.

Since HDI reveals only the average progress of a country in terms of these three indicators and does not take into account the vital indicators like health deprivation and gender bias, the human poverty index (HPI) and gender development index (GDI) were added in the measurement of overall wellbeing. The HPI captures severe health deprivation of people by considering indicators like probability of people who are not expected to survive to age 40; educational level measured by adult illiteracy rate of people aged 15 and above; proportion of people not using improved water source; and the proportion of children aged below 5 who are underweight for their age. The GDI is a relative measure used to assess the degree of gender bias by capturing the inequalities in achievement between men and women in a country. According to this, if the gender inequality is greater, the country’s gender development index in relation to its human development index would be lower.

Self Assessment Question

3) Provide Answer in no more than two sentences.
   i) What is Human Poverty Index?

21.6 LINKAGE BETWEEN HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND DEVELOPMENT

In the backdrop of what is being explained above, if we now raise a simple question whether trafficking is a social, or cultural, or economic or political problem, we would now confidently say from our conceptual understanding that a combination of these factors gives rise to such ill practice. The lack of socio, cultural, and economic development of a country is a fertile ground for the growth of push, pull, and other factors that contribute to the practice and prevalence of trafficking. We therefore now come to an understanding that human trafficking is basically a development issue that can only be addressed by giving life to the concept of human development through determined collective efforts of all stakeholders at different levels with greater emphasis on the local governance in the society.

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7 For a detailed discussion on the calculation of these indicators, visit UNDP’s official website www.hdr.undp.org/
21.7 SUMMARY

Trafficking in women and children has become a universal phenomenon as it exists in almost all parts of the world. This immoral practice continues unabated despite the legal mechanism put in place to prevent, prohibit, and rehabilitate the victims.

Sex trafficking in vulnerable women and children is largely due to lack of socio, cultural, economic, and political development of a region or country.

The factors that perpetuate the vulnerability of women and children that force or draw them into sex trafficking can be summarised into supply (push) and demand (pull) factors and are found to be operational in both developed as well as underdeveloped regions.

Development definition has changed its focus from being economic development to the concept of human development which considers the overall welfare of human beings. In other words, development is a process through which the overall wellbeing of the human beings is achieved through concerted policy measures.

The thrust to the concept of human development in the recent times paved way for the development of human development index that measures the average socio-economic development of a country’s population through certain indicators.

Lack of development of a country leads to problems like sex trafficking in vulnerable women and children and their exploitation. This establishes a definite link between development and trafficking.

21.8 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1) Why trafficking has become a universal problem and what contributes to it? Discuss in light of your understanding of the factors that perpetuate trafficking.

2) What is your understanding of development and how do you link it with the problem of trafficking in vulnerable women and children?

3) Explain the components of human development index.

21.9 ANSWERS AND HINTS

Self Assessment Questions

1) i) Economic Deprivation; ii) more vulnerable; iii) overall wellbeing; economic wellbeing

2) i) True; ii) False; ii) True

3) i) In addition to the broader human development index, the human development report uses human poverty index in order to measure the severe health deprivation of people.

Terminal Questions

1) Refer Section 21.3 and 21.4

2) Refer Section 21.3 and 21.5

3) Refer Section 21.5.1.1.
REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED READINGS


6) Gonzales, Sarah M (2006), Poverty & Sex Trafficking: How will Warren Buffett’s $30.7 billion donation to The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, earmarked to fight poverty, affect global sex trafficking, the cause of which is rooted in poverty?, Captive Daughters. Referred on the site: www.captivedaughters.org.


14) Sanghera, Jyoti (1999), Trafficking of Women and Children in South Asia: A Review of Anti-Trafficking Initiatives in Nepal, Bangladesh and India, UNICEF Regional Office and Save the Children Alliance, New Delhi.


19) Trafficking in Women and Children in India (2005), Institute of Social Sciences, Orient Longman, New Delhi.


Websites

1) International Labour Organisation
   www.ilo.org/

2) National Human Rights Commission, Government of India
   http://nhrc.nic.in/

3) National Commission for the Enterprises in Unorganised Sector, Government of India
   http://nceus.gov.in/

4) Ministry of Finance, Government of India
   http://finmin.nic.in/

5) Planning Commission, Government of India
   http://planningcommission.nic.in/

6) United Nations Development Programme
   http://hdr.undp.org/

7) United Nations Development Fund for Women
   http://www.unifem.org.in/

8) United Nations Children’s Fund
   www.unicef.org/

9) United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
   http://www.unodc.org/