



www.opcr.org

Produced and
compiled by the
Organization for the
Protection of
Children's Rights,
Mumbai
901B, Emgee Greens,
Indiasteel complex,
M.T.V. Road, Wadala
(E), Mumbai 400 037,
India

Tel: +91 22 32562807

Email:
roshniudyavar@hotmail.com

Head Office

5167 Jean-Talon,
Suite 370

Montreal, Quebec,
Canada

H1S 1K8

Tel: (514) 593-4303

Fax: (514) 593-4659

Email: ficcaa@osde.ca

Editorial Team:

Riccardo Di Done

Angela Ficca

Roshni Udyavar

ISSN 1729-8997

(Online Edition)

Inside . . .

2 Slavery in the 21st
Century

3 Child Trafficking:
International Law

4 Rehabilitation of
Prostitute's
Children

5 Training Programs
for Project Kiran

6 Kites for Kings

Children Speak

Vol 6, No.23, April - May 2007

A Newsletter of the Organization for the Protection of Children's Rights

Message from the President

The most vulnerable among us in society are once again easy crime targets. Child trafficking, the slavery of the modern day, demonstrates the urge of helping each other in finding solutions for the well-being of the adults of tomorrow.

UNICEF estimates that as many as 1.2 million children are being trafficked every year. This very lucrative business is linked with other criminal activities such as child prostitution, pornography and even organ removal. In some other cases, child trafficking include Asian and east European girls, as young as thirteen who are being trafficked as "mail-order brides".

Many children are still being treated as common merchandise. They are often sold directly from their parents, sometimes just for a couple hundred dollars. Many parents are lured by false promises that their child will be cared for and they let them leave home, hoping that their new family will provide them a better life.

Children are then relocated, sometimes outside the borders of their country, where they are subject to being sexually exploited, forced to work hard labor or become child soldiers. Their long working hours are rarely paid and

their basic needs are not often met. They face many dangers, including frequent beatings and other types of violence. Most of these children try to run away and resort to prostitution to earn a living.

Sadly, their troubles do not stop there. When children are separated from their family and are victims of child trafficking, the effects are devastating. Not only are they cut off from their culture and roots, but they are denied any kind of education or recreation. In these kinds of conditions, their social and psychological development is inevitably put in danger.

Fortunately, international laws are being implemented to help protect our children from suspicious activities. Furthermore, many projects are presently under way such as the Ankur Asmitha project which you will read about in the article "Rehabilitation of Prostitutes' Children". Hopefully, with the help of such wonderful project leaders we will one day be able to offer every child on earth, the chance to grow up in a healthy environment. ■



Riccardo Di Done



Slavery in the 21st Century

The Pervasiveness of Human Trafficking

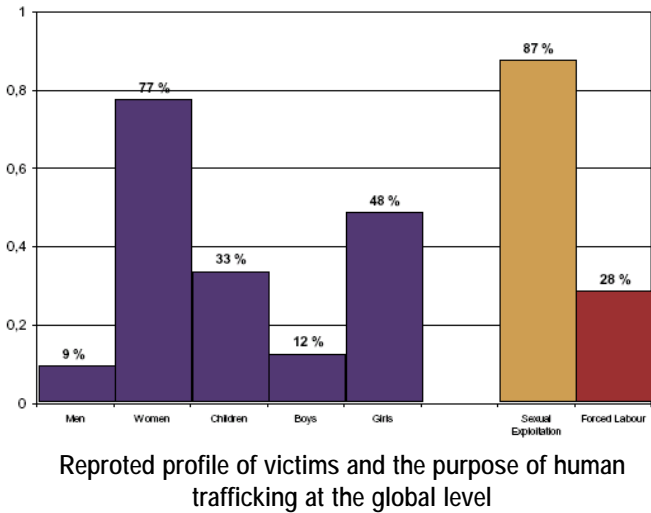
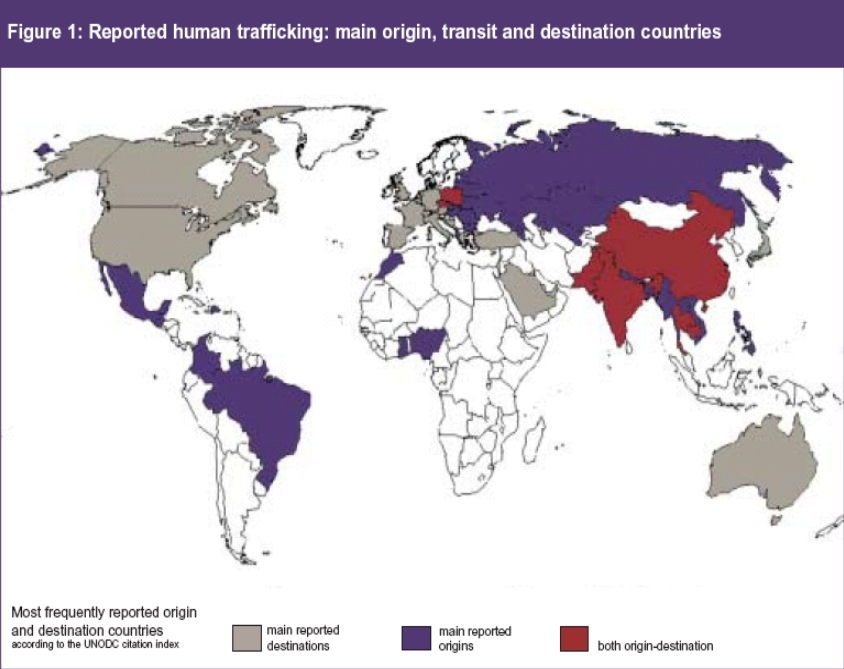
Slavery was abolished nearly fifty years ago. However, the truth is that at the beginning of the 21st century, it exists in the form of human trafficking. Governments, international organizations and civil society are devoting considerable efforts to counter it, but there is still an information deficit about the extent of this tragedy. Only by understanding its depth, breadth and scope can we design policies to reduce human trafficking. Despite their apparently individual characteristics, most trafficking cases follow the same pattern: people are abducted or recruited in the country of origin, transferred through transit regions and then exploited in the destination country. In some cases, the victim can be rescued by legal interventions and it is possible they might receive support in the country of destination either by repatriation to the country of origin; in some cases, relocated to a third country; or, as unfortunately too often still happens, deportation from destination or transit countries as illegal migrants.

The search for work abroad has been fuelled by economic disparity, high unemployment and the disruption of traditional livelihoods. Traffickers face few risks and can earn huge profits by taking advantage of large numbers of potential

immigrants. Human trafficking for sexual exploitation is reported more frequently than trafficking for forced labor at the global level. Over the past decade, trafficking in human beings has reached epidemic proportions. No country is immune.

Africa is predominantly an origin region for trafficking victims and at country level Nigeria ranks very high as an origin country. The UNICEF estimates that more than 200,000 children are enslaved by cross-border trafficking in West and Central Africa mainly for domestic work but also for sexual exploitation and to work in shops or on farms. Nearly 90 per cent of these children are girls.

In Asia, China and Thailand are ranked as 'very high' in the citation index of the UNODC (United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime) report on trafficking. In Europe, at a country level, within the Central and South Eastern European sub-region, Albania, Bulgaria, Lithuania and Romania are ranked very high in the citation index as countries of origin. In Lithuania, 20 to 50 percent of prostitutes are believed to be minors. Children as young as eleven years are known to work as prostitutes. Children from children's homes, some 10 to 12 years old, have been used to make pornographic movies.



Western Europe and North America are the main destinations for victims. The UNICEF (United Nations Children’s Fund) estimates that about 1,000 to 1,500 Guatemalan babies and children are trafficked each year for adoption by couples in North America and Europe. Guatemala lacks appropriate national legislation in order to regulate international adoptions; as a result an open exportation of babies has been developed. Mexico’s social service agency reports that there are more than 16,000 children engaged in prostitution, with tourist destinations being among those areas with the highest number.

Trafficking in children is a global problem affecting large numbers of children. There is a demand for trafficked children as cheap labor or for sexual exploitation. Children and their families are often unaware of the dangers of trafficking since they are led to believe that they will have better employment and consequently a better life in other countries. The children are often “sold” by unsuspecting parents who believe their children are going to be looked after, learn a trade or be educated.

Although many people are removed forcibly from their families for the purpose of trafficking, many others go willingly, choosing to believe their traffickers’ promise of a better life. This deceit is all too common. A Cambodian study found that 85 percent of victims were trafficked by someone close to them, someone from within the family, a friend, neighbor or boyfriend.

Child trafficking is lucrative and linked with criminal activity and corruption. It is often hidden and hard to address. Trafficking always violates the child’s right to grow up in a family environment. In addition, children who have been trafficked face a range of dangers, including violence and sexual abuse. Trafficked children are even arrested and detained as illegal aliens.

Where sources expressly report exploitation of boys, this tends to be in the labor market, while sexual exploitation is reported more frequently among female children. The situation in Asia is the worst. It is estimated that one-third of the world’s human trafficking takes place in Asia out of which 30% of the victims are children.

In Asia, girls from villages in Nepal and Bangladesh – the majority of whom are under 18 – are sold to brothels in India. Trafficked women from Thailand and the Philippines are

Continued on Page 6

Child Trafficking: International laws

Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989):

Article 11

1. State Parties shall take measures to combat the illicit transfer and non-return of children abroad.
2. To this end, State Parties shall promote the conclusion of bilateral or multilateral agreements or accession to existing agreements.

Article 35

States Parties shall take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent the abduction of, the sale of or traffic in children for any purpose or in any form.

ILO Convention on Worst Forms of Child Labor (1999):

The predefined worst forms of child labour are:

all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale of a child; trafficking of children, recruitment of children to do work far away from home and from the care of their families, in circumstances within which they are exploited; debt bondage or any other form of bonded labour or serfdom; forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict; procuring or offering of a child for: prostitution, or the production of pornography or for pornographic performances or for trafficking/production of drugs.

FACT-FILE

Optional Protocol to the convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (2000):

1. Sale of children means any act or transaction whereby a child is transferred by any person or group of persons to another for remuneration or any other consideration;
2. Child prostitution means the use of a child in sexual activities for remuneration or any other form of consideration;
3. Child pornography means any representation, by whatever means, of a child engaged in real or simulated explicit sexual activities or any representation of the sexual parts of a child for primarily sexual purposes.

Traffic in Women and Girls. General Assembly Resolution (2001):

Urges Governments to take appropriate measures to address its root factors, including external factors, that encourage trafficking in women or other forms of commercialized sex, forced marriages and forced labor, including present legislation with a view to providing better protection of rights of women and girls and to punishing perpetrators through both criminal and civil measures. ■

Rehabilitation of Prostitutes' Children

Sarita Shankaran, Asst. Director, Committed Communities Development Trust (CCDT), in a talk with Maitri Porecha



Children of the Ankur Asmitha project in Mumbai

Committed Communities Development Trust (established in June 1990), a voluntary secular trust registered in Mumbai, helps to provide marginalized communities with social relevance through comprehensive programs of development, integrating health services, social education and community development. The various projects initiated by the organization include Titliyan: a girl child project for rag pickers, Kishori Vatika, night shelter for adolescent girls and Ankur Asmitha: a project for children of prostitutes in the red light areas of Kamathipura and Worli.

CS: Are minor girls involved in prostitution at Kamathipura, Mumbai?

SS: Kamathipura is Mumbai's oldest red light area. A majority of girls who are trafficked as minor girls come from the neighboring countries of Nepal and Bangladesh. However, it is not easy to differentiate between a girl from Bangladesh and a girl from India. Certain districts of West Bengal such as Murshidabad in India serve as transit regions in the trafficking route.

CS: Who are involved in the trafficking of minor girls into prostitution?

SS: It is generally those in positions of trust, most of the times, family members, relatives or friends, who bring the girls into forced prostitution. The main reasons the girls agree to come are the lack of financial resources with the family or if prostitution has been a family profession. The Dev Daasi system in Karnataka is an appropriate example.

CS: How is the mental (psychological) state of a child affected when he/she is exposed to the vices of prostitution?

SS: The prostitutes prefer to keep their children

back in the villages with their family hoping that the child will be taken care of. However, they do not understand that they were trafficked from the same place when they were minors and that they are keeping their children in grave danger. Babies of less than four years hardly understand what is going on. These young ones sleep under the cots of a 100 sq.ft rooms in Kamathipura. The older the child, the more impressionable he/she becomes. Most of the times, these children end up in NGO shelters in the area or on the streets. Young daughters of the prostitutes are often mistaken as ones in the profession and are asked "rate for a night" by the client. The boys who end up on the streets are bullied and molested by older boys. Children gather information from their surroundings and eventually become "normalized" to their mother's profession and it does not bother them any more.

CS: How does the CCDT Ankur Project help rehabilitate the children of prostitutes?

SS: Project Ankur – Asmita was developed in 1993 with a long term vision of rehabilitating the children of prostitutes. Sustained efforts were made to help the children understand what their mothers go through on a day to day basis. They are given training in "Life Skills" –

Interview

decision-making and problem-solving in order to rescue them from their vulnerable surroundings. Girls between 12 and 18 years of age are given training, boarding and lodging facilities. Once the children turn 20 years, they are admitted to Working Men's / Women's hostels with stable jobs, so that they begin living in a new environment.

CS: What is the structure of empowerment mechanisms built for protecting the child in such an environment?

SS: The Convention on the Rights of the Child formulated by the UN inspires us immensely in the project. In fact, the CRC is the model document of the project. "The right to participation", is incorporated in the project wherein the children are encouraged in the decision-making procedures of the project. The crux is to share with children in order to make them responsible and understanding. In the life skills training, problem solving, risk analysis, issues dealing with trust, relationships and adolescence are tackled.

Continued on Page 6

Training Programs for Project Kiran

In order to strengthen the work force conducting the weekly educational programs for the run-away street children of Dadar, Mumbai, a need was felt to train the N.S.S. and O.P.C.R. volunteers. Under the leadership of Volunteer Aditya Behara, a program for human resource development was chalked out from April to July 2007. The program includes topics such as communication skills, child psychology, self and team management, law related to child protection and so on. The program aims at making the volunteers better informed and motivated.

Project Kiran works with the street-railway children of Dadar. Every Sunday, children come to the Kirti College campus where in an academic environment they are provided sessions on yoga, languages, maths and science, art and sculpture, and entertainment.

The workshops commenced on April 8, with O.P.C.R. Mumbai trustee Adv. Sadhana Mahashabde and Clinical Counsellor Nutan Warerkar conducting a lecture on "Child Laws and Juvenile Justice." A brief idea of law in general was provided to the volunteers, after which international child laws formulated through the "Geneva Declaration - 1924" and "General Assembly of UN - 1959" were discussed at length. Also, the volunteers were asked to study the structure and hierarchy of the Juvenile Justice Court and the functioning of Juvenile Aid Protection Unit (JAPU), in Mumbai.

On April 15, an interactive session on Management and Self organization was conducted by O.P.C.R. Mumbai trustee, Prof. Roshni. Udyavar, who addressed the issues such as perception, attitude, self-development, team work and co-ordination.



Communication Skills by Suman Keluskar

Events

A lecture on Communication skills by Prof. Suman Keluskar was held on April 22. The lecture discussed the necessity of good communication in social work. "The building of dialogue, clarity of thoughts to put the ideas forward and the judgement of the audience is very necessary while communicating", said Prof. Suman, during the course of the lecture.

Last in the series for the month, dated April 29, was a discussion on "Problems faced by street children", conducted by Medhavinee Joshi, Coordinator, DoTRC (Documentation Training & Research Center), Vatsalya Trust which is a local orphanage and parent-child guidance centre in the city. The lecture provided an informal setting for the participants to share their experiences while working with Project Kiran. The participants were sensitized to the difficult conditions that the vulnerable children are faced with every day and how they should be dealt with positively. ■

(Compiled by Maitri Porecha, Aditya Behara and Kshitija Rangnekar)

Global partnership to reduce Measles Deaths

The Measles Initiative – one of the many global partnerships in which UNICEF plays a leading role – has announced dramatic progress in the fight against a major childhood killer disease.

Deaths from measles dropped by 60 per cent worldwide over a five-year period, with an estimated 2.3 million lives saved through intensified efforts to vaccinate millions of children, according to new data from the World Health Organization (WHO). Between 1999 and 2005, more than 360 million children under the age of 15 were immunized as a result of campaigns in 45 priority countries. The total number of deaths from measles fell from 873,000 to 345,000 a year. This unprecedented decline is a historic victory for public health.

News

The encouraging news about measles comes some five years after the Measles Initiative partnership was formed by UNICEF, WHO, the American Red Cross, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the United Nations Foundation. But in spite of this success, the disease remains a leading cause of vaccine-preventable deaths among children. Over the coming years, increased attention will be paid to countries in South Asia with large numbers of measles deaths.

The new goal of the Measles Initiative is to achieve a 90 per cent reduction in measles deaths worldwide by 2010. ■

Kites for Kings

By Maitri Porecha

Surprises come in packages. This has been the rule rather than an exception for Project Kiran. Time and again, people - citizens from unexpected places - have come forward to contribute their services towards this project - towards the brave but destitute runaway children who make their livelihood in this megalopolis (Mumbai). The afternoon of January 13th brought a wonderful surprise for these children. It was just one day before the kite festival of "Makar - Sankranti" when Project Kiran volunteers decided to share the joy of kite-flying with the railway children of Dadar

. After an exhaustive search, a few NSS volunteers came across "King Kites", a famous Kite Shop located amidst the cacophonous streets of Bandra, a suburb of Mumbai. As the volunteers bargained for



Faraz and other volunteers at the King Kites shop

Updates

rates with their limited budget, the kite seller asked them whom were the kites for. When the volunteers explained the goal of "Project Kiran" - a program to bring hope into the lives of runaway street children of Mumbai - the kind vendor was touched. He narrated to the volunteers his role in the National Social Service Scheme (N.S.S.) and his visit to Kirti College in 1979 to appear

for his final year University examinations. He expressed his joy in learning that the college had continued with its legacy of social service. And with it he handed over a bunch of kites to the volunteers as his contribution to the Project.

The blessings of the kite vendor went a long way in the success of the celebration of the festival of Makar Sankranti on the 14th day of January 2007. ■

Continued from Page 3

Slavery in the 21st Century

increasingly being joined by women from other countries in Southeast Asia. The estimated industry is now worth several billion dollars a year. One of the largest forms of trafficking is sex trafficking where the majority of victims are young females between the ages of 12-18. Between 50-90% of the children rescued from brothels in parts of South East Asia are infected with HIV.

Myths, such as the belief that HIV/AIDS can be cured through sex with a virgin, technological advances such as the Internet that has facilitated child pornography, and sex tourism targeting children, all add to their vulnerability. Surveys indicate that 30 to 35 per cent of all sex workers in the Mekong sub-region of Southeast Asia are between 12 and 17 years of age.

In 2003, the UN estimated that 1.2 million children are trafficked annually around the world. Their most recent global estimate dated back to 1995 and indicated that one million children, mainly girls, but also a significant number of boys, entered the commercial sex trade industry every year. Trafficking in children is not confined to the sex industry. Children are trafficked to work in sweatshops as bonded labor in the "three D-jobs" - dirty, difficult and dangerous.

Despite the existence of nearly four UN resolutions to deal with the problem, human and child trafficking continues to escape the legal net. A vigilant army force working closely with border police of countries can ensure a solution to this problem. Only through watchful governmental and non-governmental bodies, a strong political will and severe punishment imposed for traffickers can the suffering of millions of children being trafficked be arrested. ■

(*Trafficking in Persons: Global Report, April 2006, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime - www.unodc.com*)

Continued from Page 4

CS: In spite of the mother's profession having a certain amount of negative impact on the child's mind, how is the mother-child bonding encouraged to form better ties between both and society at large?

SS: The project encourages prostitute mothers to visit their children two hours in a day. The women are also encouraged to bring their children clothes, food and raise the children like a normal parent. They are told to take active interest in the child's study and school activities.■