

Frimun: Position Paper on Human Trafficking in India

Human trafficking, describing the illegal trade of human beings, mostly for sexual exploitation and forced labor, is a significant problem in India. The number of people in India living in modern slavery is estimated to be at 7'989'000 according to the Global Slavery Index. (Approximately 6.1 persons per 1000).

This can be partly explained by gender-based discrimination - a common thing in Indian culture, where boys usually have more value than girls. As a consequence girls are more often victims of human trafficking in India, than they would in another country. This disparity between genders therefore explains the trafficking of young women in some parts, as the illegal sale of women for the purpose of marriage is very current in India.

When taking a look at the causes of human trafficking within India in relation to gender, one quickly sees, that almost all people being recruited for sexual exploitation are girls, whereas the boys are being used for forced labor, as factory workers, domestic servants or beggars. However, one has to be careful with those numbers, especially the one describing the female victims, since it's hard to tell the difference between sexual exploitation respectively forced marriages and arranged marriages, since arranged marriages are very common in Indian culture and are not necessarily exploited on a sexual basis.

Although human trafficking remains illegal under Indian law, it still is a major problem in the country's society. However, government authorities made improvements in law enforcements efforts against sex trafficking and forced child labor. Between 2015 and 2017, the government prescribed new penalties, defining the penalty for sex trafficking to last from seven years to lifelong imprisonment and the penalty for bonded and forced labor to last a maximum of three years in prison.

However, the enforcement of these new constructed laws turns out to be challenging, since corruption, as in many other countries, still is another major issue the government is persuaded to address and solve.

Furthermore, the solving of these issues is hindered by various other countries adjoining the Indian borders, like Nepal and Bangladesh. These countries also stand benefit from the human trafficking within India, as especially girls are being trafficked from these countries into Indian territories for sexual exploitation. As a consequence, the issue does not remain national, which hinders Indian officials to take legal measures to solve this problem.

Nevertheless, India is determined to address the issue and solve it, by

- expanding central and state government law enforcement capacity to conduct external and domestic political laws against trafficking
- punishing traffickers but also complicit officials with imprisonment and
- raising public awareness to the issue,

to only name a few measurements.

In order to further narrow down the causes for human trafficking, India is calling its neighbouring countries, namely Nepal and Bangladesh, to action. External political laws have got to be tightened on both sides of the borders, in order to facilitate the solving of human trafficking within India. India is proposing the creation of a set of new strict laws, regulating international human trafficking between India and said countries.