

## **Female Child Trafficking from Bangladesh: A New Form of Slavery<sup>1</sup>**

### **TRAFIC DE PETITES FILLES AU BANGLADESH: UNE NOUVELLE FORME D'ESCLAVAGE**

**N. M. Sajjadul Hoque<sup>2</sup>**

**Abstract:** Slavery was a dominant phenomenon of antiquity. Gradually it has declined in the modern world. The blessings of modern moral attitudes and virtues were instrumental for these structural changes. Recently, child trafficking, especially female child trafficking has become a painful reality in Bangladesh. This child trafficking has been occurring internally and also across the border to India, Pakistan, Malaysia and many Middle Eastern countries. The rate of growth of this trafficking has been increasing alarmingly in this country. Every year several hundred (under the age of eighteen) children are being trafficked abroad. These trafficked children are adapting to a new life style which is different from the life style had they lived in their normal (life style which they supposed to follow before trafficking) situation. A new personality is emerging because of their forced adaptation with the situation they live in. As a result a new culture (culture of trafficked child) emerges in their environment. In this paper, the author argues that this emergent culture of trafficked child is the new form of slave culture of the antiquity.

**Key words:** Female Child; Trafficking; Slavery; Culture of Trafficked Child

**Résumé:** L'esclavage est un phénomène dominant de l'antiquité. Peu à peu, il a décliné dans le monde moderne. Les bénédictions d'attitudes morales et des vertus modernes ont contribué à ces changements structurels. Récemment, le trafic des enfants, en particulier le trafic des petites filles est devenue une réalité douloureuse au Bangladesh. Ce trafic d'enfants est survenu à l'intérieur du pays et également à travers la frontière vers l'Inde, le Pakistan, la Malaisie et de nombreux pays du Moyen-Orient. Le taux de croissance de ce trafic a augmenté de façon alarmante dans ce pays. Chaque année, plusieurs centaines (de moins de dix-huit ans) d'enfants sont trafiqués

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<sup>1</sup> This article is the part of the paper entitled 'Female Child Trafficking from Bangladesh: A New Form of Slavery' presented at the 16th World Congress of the IUAES 2009 held at Kunming in China.

<sup>2</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Chittagong, Chittagong-4331, Bangladesh. E-mail: sajjadanthro@yahoo.com

\* Received 20 January 2010; accepted 5 February, 2010

vers l'étranger. Ces enfants sont obligés de s'adapter à un nouveau style de vie qui est différent de celui qu'ils avaient vécu dans leur situation normale (le style de vie qu'ils sont censés de suivre avant la traite). Une nouvelle personnalité se dessine du fait de leur adaptation forcée à la situation dans laquelle ils vivent actuellement. Par conséquent, une nouvelle culture (culture des enfants trafiqués) apparaît dans leur environnement. Dans cet article, l'auteur fait valoir que cette culture émergente des enfants trafiqués est la nouvelle forme de culture des esclaves de l'antiquité.

**Mots-Clés:** petite fille; trafic; esclavage; culture des enfants trafiqués

## 1. PRELUDE

Trafficking is a phenomenon continuing from the earliest period of civilization (Ali and others ed., 2001). Human trafficking, one of the important global crises is linked with globalization and the sex industry growing across the world. The criminal business "Human trafficking", especially in children and women is the outcome of social and economic vulnerabilities of people in the southern countries as well as in Bangladesh. Presently, child trafficking especially female child trafficking has become a painful reality in Bangladesh. This child trafficking has been occurring internally and also across the border to India, Pakistan, Malaysia and many Middle Eastern countries. The rate of growth of this trafficking has been increasing alarmingly in this country. Every year several hundred (under the age of eighteen) children are being trafficked abroad. These trafficked children are adapting to a new life style which is different from the life style had they lived in their normal (life style which they supposed to follow before trafficking) situation. A new personality is emerging because of their forced adaptation with the situation they live in. As a result, a new culture (culture of trafficked child) emerges in their environment. In this paper, the author argues that this emergent culture of trafficked child is the new form of slave culture of the antiquity.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This paper is the outcome of the author's qualitative thoughts regarding female child trafficking issue which inspired him to deal the issue in different dimension with anthropological insight. Research reports and publications of different organizations concerned working in the area of trafficking, published case studies on trafficking and related many other issues from journals, newsletters, booklets, internet, reports and newspaper clippings were reviewed for this study. Existing information was extracted from various sources to enable readers in understanding the culture of trafficked persons and the problems relating to trafficking from various perspectives. This study on female child trafficking from Bangladesh covers many aspects of the problem but yet it is believed that the study is not as comprehensive as it should have been.

## 3. CONCEPT OF CHILD TRAFFICKING

The Bangla equivalent of the word trafficking is *pachar*. It has a mild connotation, which means transfer from one place to another. If the term *pachar* is used in reference to women and children, in Bangla the phrase *nari o shishu pachar* means illegal transfer of women and children from one place to another. Trafficking, which is a serious problem and is considered a violation of human rights, is yet to be internalized emotionally by society at large in Bangladesh and also in other South Asian countries. The

term itself does not capture the total implications for an adolescent girl to be abducted and taken to a brothel; threatened, beaten, and raped; and forced to submit to having sex with men, seven days a week, for several years until she eventually becomes ill which may sometime result in death (Khan ed. 2001: 14). At present there is no internationally agreed definition of trafficking. International organizations use various definitions for describing trafficking. The definitions tend to focus on gender, age, reason for trafficking, and the issues of coercion and violence which are often associated with trafficking (Ibid: 13).

In the case of children, in 1998, a research report by Archavanitkul titled “Trafficking in Children for Labour Exploitation including Child Prostitution in the Mekong Sub-region” compared definitions used by the UN General Assembly, Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women (GAATW), International Organization for Migrations (IOM), and the International Labour Organisation (ILO). After considering these definitions, it can be stated that important dimensions of child trafficking include the performance of a profitable act by person(s) other than the children themselves who transport a child within or across the national borders usually using false or deceptive information for the purpose of work or services in destructive and exploitative work conditions by means of violence, abuse, or other forms of coercion. For this study, a trafficked child refers to ‘A child who is recruited and transported from one place to another in and across a national border, legally or illegally, with or without the child’s consent, usually but not always organized by an intermediary: parents, family member, teacher, procurer, or local authority. At the destination, the child is coerced or semi-forced (by deceptive information) to engage in activities under exploitative and abusive conditions’ (Ibid).

The countries of SAARC have a definition in their Convention for Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children. Nevertheless, a consultation workshop organized by the Resistance Network in Bangladesh in August 1999 made suggestions for changes to the convention (Ibid). The workshop proposed few definitions; one of which is given below:

“Trafficking in children consists of all acts involved in the procurement, transportation, forced movement, and/or selling and buying of children within and/or across border by fraudulent means, deception, coercion, direct and/or indirect threats, abuse of authority, for the purpose of placing a woman against her will without her consent in exploitative and abusive situations, such as commercial sexual abuse, forced marriage, bonded and forced labour, begging, camel jockeying and other sports, organ trade, etc.”(Ibid).

However, ‘trafficking’ may be defined as, “All acts involved in kidnapping, abduction, capture, acquisition, recruitment and transportation of women, girls and children within and across national borders with the intent to sell, exchange or use of any illegal purpose such as commercial sex work, servitude in the guise of marriage, cheap or bonded labour or sale of human organs by means of violence or threat of violence.” (Shamim, 2001: 1).

Child trafficking is one of the worst forms of child labour (Srivastava: 27), which is affecting 1.2 million children worldwide (Ibid). Majority of children victims in trafficking are below 18 years. There is no question of willingness or voluntarism in the case of children as they often do not know or understand the consequences (Ibid: 28). It is a crime under international law (Ibid: 27).

By no means as a new phenomenon, the trafficking of children continued to grow across all continents and cultures. Nearly all countries are affected, either as sending, receiving, or transit countries for trafficked children (Ibid). Actually, trafficking networks are widespread and highly organized in the Asia, Africa and Europe, well known but complex, operate underground and often out of the reach of the legal system (Rahman and Others, 2004: 13).

#### **4. TREND OF TRAFFICKING FEMALE CHILDREN FROM BANGLADESH**

The history of woman and child trafficking from Bangladesh goes back to the early 50s when camel race and “jockey” gained momentum in the Middle East (Ibid: 12). Bangladeshi children; especially female

children are being smuggled to the Middle East and to other countries like India, Pakistan, Nepal, Malaysia, Japan, Hong Kong for various exploitative and abusive purposes. Most children continue to be trafficked into commercial sexual exploitation mainly. However, many children are also trafficked into other forms of labour exploitation, including domestic service, service industries like restaurants and bars, and hazardous work in factories, agriculture, construction, fishing, begging (Srivastava: 27) and organ trade. It is difficult to assess the magnitude of child trafficking especially female child trafficking due to several reasons. No comprehensive statistical data is available on child trafficking in all its forms and purposes (Ibid: 29). There are no exact figures on how many female children have been trafficked from Bangladesh to other countries over the last decades. Here data on trafficked children by gender from January 1990 to December 1999 is given in the following table no. 1, which will help us in understanding the real picture of female child trafficking from Bangladesh to other countries in the globe.

The above table no.1 on trafficked children by gender from January 1990 to December 1999 reveals that about 3,397 children were trafficked from Bangladesh during the mentioned period, of whom 1,683 were male children and 1,714 were female children. The data reveals that the rate of trafficking in female is higher than in male children. Towards the end of the decade, the figures have reduced to only 76 as reported in 1999. But this does not explain that incidents of trafficking in children have reduced because the numbers of missing children of the same year is still high, i.e., 251. It can be assumed that missing children who are not rescued may have been trafficked because the actual data is not available unless the missing children are rescued. So we cannot conclude that trafficking in children has reduced all of a sudden (Ibid).

The main targets of agents and traffickers are the underprivileged and discriminated women and children (especially female children) in Bangladesh. Every year approximately 4,500 women and children are trafficked outside Bangladesh and in the last decade approximately 2, 00,000 women have been victims of trans-border trafficking (Ali, ed., 2001: 35). According to a report of Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association (BNWLA) 95 male, 149 female and 393 undefined (male/female) were trafficked from Bangladesh in 2000 (Ibid:36). A total of 461 male, 408 women (and children) and 296 undefined (male/female) were reportedly trafficked from Bangladesh during 2001 (Ali, ed., 2002:45). In the year 2002, a total of 335 women and children were reportedly trafficked of which the majorities were between the ages of 13 and 18 (Ali, ed., 2003: 25). According to the Bangladesh Police record, in the last seven years (from 1997-2003), a total of 379 cases were filed relating to the trafficking and in those cases, the number of child victims were 541 where most of them were female child. If we consider the reported cases of nine leading newspapers of 2003 it will be open to us that

in 2003, as many as 329 trafficking cases and 537 abduction cases were reported where 95 and 310 cases were filed respectively in the police station. From the following statistics, it is a matter of great concern that the children up to 18 years were the main targets of the traffickers (Ali, ed., 2004: 36).

During 2005 and 2006, BNWLA repatriated a total of 378 transnational trafficking survivors from different states of South Asian countries of them 144 were female and 234 were male survivors. Moreover, during the same period BNWLA rescued/released as many as 87 internal trafficking survivors from different confinements with the help of law enforcing agencies where 54 persons were female and rest of 33 persons were male (Ali, ed., 2007: 18). However, BNWLA and its reliable sources apprehended that the actual number of women and children trafficked to neighboring countries and other destinations were much higher than it was reported. In most of BNWLA's findings, it is revealed that approximately 7,000 women and children become victims of trafficking every year in Bangladesh (Ali, ed., 2002: 44). So, in fine it can be stated that female rather than male children are being trafficked massively from Bangladesh and it is dominant in the present day social context in the world.

## **5. CAUSES OF TRAFFICKING IN/FROM BANGLADESH**

The demand for children is undoubtedly more compared to adults (Srivastava: 30) in trafficking. The root causes of human trafficking are multiple and complex. There are push and pull factors, which are mainly responsible for internal and external trafficking of people from Bangladesh. The push factors could be identified in many ways. Low employment opportunity, social vulnerability, economic vulnerability, urbanization and migration, etc. are considered to be the push factors of female child trafficking. On the other hand, wage employment or bonded labour, labour migration and prostitution, cultural myths, etc. are considered to be pull factors for female child trafficking from Bangladesh. Various studies confirmed this statement. For example, Khan and Arefeen have observed that patriarchal orientation in Bangladesh society play crucial role in creating vulnerable situation for the women and female children and consequently creates conducive situation for female trafficking from Bangladesh. There are reports that one of the main causes of trafficking young girls is the myth that intercourse with a virgin can cure a man of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and rejuvenate him. It is also a widely prevalent belief that sex with a female child does not expose a person to STDs and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) (Khan, ed., 2001: 22).

## **6. MODES OF TRAFFICKING AND THE PROCUREMENT PROCESS**

Traffickers adopt different strategies and tricks to allure and enroll young children and women (and their families) into the trafficking process. The procurement process of women for trafficking in the sex industry in Bangladesh involves skilled entrapment procedure. In Bangladesh, the traffickers hunt for their clients at the river ports, especially the Sadar Ghat area of Dhaka, bus stations, and the railway stations across the country. At these locations, the traffickers look for migrants who come from the rural areas for jobs or for poor young people abandoned by their families and allure them with false promises of better life. The victims collected from these spots are usually sold to Bangladeshi brothels. Procurement of victims in villages and towns in the border areas of the country is more frequently associated with the purpose of supplying sex workers for the sex industry in India and the Middle East (Ibid: 22-23). The following strategies are mainly adopted by the traffickers involved in the national and international human trade in Bangladesh.

### **6.1 Employment Prospects** <sup>(Ibid:23)</sup>

Traffickers look for girls from poorer and vulnerable families in villages and tempt them and their parents with offers of lucrative jobs and a comfortable life in neighbouring countries, such as India and Pakistan. At times, the girls are so motivated by promises of the trafficker that they leave home without consulting their parents (Ibid).

### **6.2 Love Affair** <sup>(Ibid:24)</sup>

Traffickers also pretend to be in love with young girls and asking them to elope. The girls believe them and leave their parents/home with their boyfriends full of illusions about a happy married life (Ibid).

### **6.3 Promise of Marriage** <sup>(Ibid:25)</sup>

In addition to the strategy of alluring girls from poor families with love affairs, promises of marriage and a better future, the traffickers also take full advantage of the cultural practice of arranged marriages by parents. Sometimes they gain the confidence of parents, and manage to develop a close relationship with them before offering to marry their daughters. The poor parents agree, because the offer may appear to be a good opportunity for the family because of low or no demand of dowry (Ibid).

#### **6.4 Kidnapping** <sup>(Ibid)</sup>

Kidnapping, one of the methods for trafficking, is normally done by deception and by force. Now-a-days the number of kidnapping cases has increased significantly (Ibid).

#### **6.5 Sale and Adoption** <sup>(Srivastava:30)</sup>

Many families, even foreigners in Bangladesh adopt children. Using this opportunity, the traffickers collect children from poor families from rural and slum areas and sell them.

#### **6.6 Entertainment** <sup>(Ibid:35-36)</sup>

Many children join the local circuses as feminized acrobats. This is a trade, under cover-up for a trafficked child with no other survival options, no other skill and no schooling (Ibid). These children, who are mostly girls, are also found in different places of Bangladesh in similar conditions.

## **7. TRAFFICKING ROUTES**

Traffickers seek routes that allow easy movement of people and are profitable (Shamim, 2001: 73). As such most advantageous route used by the traffickers is over land, followed by air and water in Bangladesh. Those using the air routes usually have work permit or a false family visa to travel to the countries of the Middle East (Ibid: 67).

Twenty-eight districts of Bangladesh have common borders with India and two districts have borders with Myanmar. There are as many as 20 transit points from districts of Bangladesh bordering India through which the children and women are smuggled out of the country (Ibid). The border areas of Khulna, Jessore, Satkhira, Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Rangpur, Mymensingh, Comilla, Brahmanbaria, and Sylhet are frequently used as land routes for trafficking. In the northern region, the districts of Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari, Panchagarh, Thakurgoan, Dinajpur, Naogaon, Chapai Nawabganj, and Rajshahi, and in the south, Jessore and Satkhira are the areas in which women and children are most susceptible to trafficking (Khan, ed., 2001: 3). Cox's Bazar is said to be one of the major centers where the children and women are gathered before being smuggled out of the country to Myanmar (Shamim, 2001: 67). The most easy and well-known land route to India is Benapole border in Jessore, which is the southwest transit point of crossing route from Bangladesh to India. As it is well connected by bus and train, traffickers can easily reach Calcutta. The West Bengal town of Bongaon to Calcutta is around 10 kilometers from Benapole, where women and children are collected from all over Bangladesh. They are taken to Bongaon, another major shipment point to be trafficked either through the legal border post or through illegal entry. For a long time, Calcutta has been well known for its prostitution and the sale of women and children. Traffickers are well organized to take them to Mumbai and New Delhi (Ibid: 69).

## **8. CULTURE OF TRAFFICKED FEMALE CHILDREN**

A new way of life emerges gradually among the lives of trafficked persons. This section will be devoted to understand more about this life style. Anthropologically speaking, to understand the trafficked female children culture, it is urgent to know the total culture of it. In anthropology, the term culture has been used in a different sense. Tylor was the first anthropologist to provide a scientific definition of culture. He, in

his book entitled, *Primitive Culture*, (1871), defines culture as that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. According to Malinowski, culture is total way of life and it includes all the mental, social and physical means which make life run its course (Upadhyay & Pandey, 1993: 347). As man is the creator of culture, trafficked children and traffickers (both male and female) are also creating a new culture through trafficking. Trafficked children are adapting to a new life style which is different from the life style had they lived in their normal (life style which they supposed to follow before trafficking) situation. The following section mainly focuses on the newly emerged culture of the trafficked children, which will help in understanding this contemporary human problem.

The trafficked children generally are given new names in lieu of real names by the traffickers, which gradually help them forgetting their own identity. They start to live in unknown foreign places with foreign customs and language inefficiency. They adopt with the new language where they trafficked and gradually forgets their mother tongue with new life style. They get training on how to behave with the new environment. Actually, they start a life without knowing anything and slowly they start to realize what is happening to them.

They wear a particular band or tabiz (talisman) on their arms for easy identification at the destination of the traffickers. They get fake parents and also get leader or master, who often changes frequently. The trafficked children generally call the owners of them using different terminologies like 'didi', 'bhavi', 'mashi', 'nani', 'madam', 'apa', 'boss', 'sardarni', 'ma'. Trafficked children when use as domestic worker then the label's 'servant', 'maid', 'girl' are use to describe their identity. Sometimes the trafficked female children are forced to use *burka* (purdā) but sometimes they are forced to use short dresses. They are forced to accept new hair style and make up for beautification. They are allowed to use cosmetics, perfume, and body spray.

The trafficked children fall into an unprotected labor sector where they are often first exploited mercilessly in different work situation like the garment industry, domestic work and local brothels, and afterwards trafficked again to neighboring countries and beyond. The trafficked children are mainly use in prostitution forcibly. Primarily, they cook, wash and laundry during the staying in the selected places of the traffickers and even they often use as models, television performers, artists, waitresses, dancers, beggars. Sometimes they also use for pornography. In a real sense, they do not have any opinion on choosing any job after trafficked.

### **8.1. Food, Shelter & Bargaining Power**

The trafficked children are dependent on the traffickers for food, clothing and housing. The trafficked female children live in many houses during the trafficking period. In other words, they have no fixed destination. They receive physical setting of shelter, which they had not before due to poverty. Traffickers keep the trafficked children under terrible conditions in 'dens' crowded, filthy rooms without proper food. But sometimes they are well-fed and well-taken care of by the traffickers. At one stage of female trafficked children get three square meals in a day, earn money, feel free, achieve bargaining power little bit, get value to the traffickers. They are often given sedatives with their food so that they feel sleepy. They (especially who works as commercial sex workers) often eat pickle. Because they think this kind of food keeps their health fit. They have no bargaining power in a real sense. If they bargain about their amount of money, they are often beaten by their owners. Sometimes they fall into the hand of good owners and receive good behave, sympathy and well food but do not get rid of that trafficked cycle due to the norms, customs of human trafficking world.

### **8.2 Religion and Recreation**

The trafficked children come in touch with different religious people and often they do not bother about religion at one stage in the trafficked life. The new environment bound them to give up the conservative or traditional values and customs of their own previous culture. The trafficked children loss the comfort of their kin members and instead they make new fictive kin relationship in the trafficked circle. They

have no recreation. They pass their leisure hours through watching movies, TV-serials in general and spend most of their time in silent cry. They are deprived of the joys of their childhood. They (especially those who forced into prostitution) sleep during the day time in most of time. Many of them often sing and use vulgar words while talking to each other. They have symbolic interaction, which they only exchange with their faithful mates. They share their joys and sorrows with faithful mates in the trafficked circle. Actually, they face all time threat, fraud, deception or coercion. They have fear of torture.

### **8.3 Marriage**

The female victims of trafficking are forced to marry unknown persons. Though there is a registered marriage between a trafficked female child and an unknown person but usually that is a farce. Because the so-called husbands indeed buy the girls. Actually the trafficked children get married again and again. The longevity of marriage life exists for one or two months in general.

### **8.4 Forceful Prostitution and Sexual Bondage**

At first, the female trafficked children may be physically and sexually abused as a means of ensuring their submission. They are treated as 'commodity' after trafficked that can be sold and bought only. As a prostitute, they are treated as the personal property of the pimp or trafficker and therefore a saleable and negotiable item (Rahman and Others 2004: 119). They are sold at high rates, ranging from one thousand to two thousand dollars, depending on the age, beauty and perceived desirability of customers for several times. The trafficked children treated as 'sex objects' as well as 'display item. They brought to a safe place and auctioning take place indoors. There is no bidding because there are always an understanding between the procurers and the customers even before the auction started. Usually the younger and more beautiful girls are sold for USD 375 to USD 500. Also groups of ten to twenty girls are sold for higher rates than single sale ranging from USD 1250 to USD 5000 to brothel owners and pimps. On the other hand, some selected trafficked girls are kept aside before the auction to be taken separately to the hotels for wealthy buyers. They are given the opportunity to inspect the girls individually. Men from different areas also come to seek wives in these auctions. Once a person buys a young woman, she becomes his wife-cum-slave, and is forced to work for him for the rest of her life. When the auction ends, those who are sold goes with the buyers, and the rest returns to the place they come from. In an auction pimp takes one girl by the hand and shows her to the buyers saying she is physically fit, can walk, can work; then shows her face from different angles continuously using obscene language and pinching her flesh (Shamim, 2001: 11). This reveals the perfect picture of ancient slavery.

### **8.5 Attitude toward Trafficked Female Children**

The trafficked children face severe humiliation and brutality. They are virtually controlled through threats of violence and total confinement. Trafficked children are abused and denied their freedom. They have no freedom of movement, if at all allowed; victims cannot leave the premises without the traffickers escort and are denied access to education, health care. They have no social and economic security.

The labour of trafficked children gives profit to them and also to their owners. They earn money and sometimes they send money to their family. But often they do not want their families to know what has happened to them and the source of their income. In many cases they are not well paid according to contact. Even if the culture of trafficked children is full of risk but comparatively it assure at least three square meals than that of previous situation.

### **8.6 Issue of Legal Protection**

The trafficked children have no social and legal protection. They get a passport, though they do not get it in their own hands. They have no papers (documentations) to prove their nationality and become illegal

migrants. The trafficked female children, who work forcibly as commercial sex workers may, therefore, deprive of legal and moral protection. Actually, they fall into an 'unsafe custody'. They are often criminalized in the receiving states where they are without any legal protection (Ibid: 73). They are mainly treated as criminals to the eyes of law enforcement agencies. They, even tortured, physically and sexually abused in police custody and are often bound to give bribe to the police. They face racial behavior/racism from police, authorities and the communities where they stay and also do not have chance to lodge complaints, assessment whether it is safe to return home, collect their belongings or apply for asylum (Rahman and Others 2004: 120).

### 8.7 Escape Culture

Trafficked children sometimes try to escape. But they fear physical punishment for themselves or their families, owe money to the trafficker, distrust law enforcement officers, or feel that they have no other options. Traffickers intensify the abuse if they attempt to escape. The trafficked children who manage to escape are frequently found, returned to the brothels, and punished (Shamim, 2001: 74). Sometimes trafficked children who escape from the grip of original traffickers work independently in tourist resorts, on beaches or in street based sex work.

### 8.8 Societal Views towards the Trafficked Children

Once a female child falls prey to human traffickers in this male-dominated society she loses the chance of going back to their family and has to adopt her with the trafficked culture. Society treats them as 'polluted' or 'nosta' girl. The female trafficked children stigmatized and unacceptable by their own families and societies are regarded as 'spoilt' through prostitution. In other words, stigmatization leaves trafficked girls as social outcasts. It actually creates more vulnerability to the trafficked persons. Besides, fear and shame often lead many trafficked children to remain silent about their experiences of abuse and thus they fail to warn others who might be vulnerable (Rahman and Others 2004: 120).

In fine it can be stated from the above mentioned culture of trafficked female children that they are caught in a "*chain of bondage*" and the culture of trafficked children is dominated and interpreted by the traffickers as well as their owners. Moreover, it makes a cultural construction in them that they are for 'exploitation' only. In real sense, exploitation destroys trafficked children trust in others and makes them vulnerable to further exploitation or becoming an exploiter themselves.

The culture of trafficked female children makes it clear that it is full of cruelty and the most important thing is it is similar to slavery in many cases. The word 'slavery' today covers a variety of human rights violations. In addition to traditional slavery and the slave trade, these abuses include the sale of children, child prostitution, child pornography, the exploitation of child labour, the sexual mutilation of female children, the use of children in armed conflicts, debt bondage, the traffic in persons and in the sale of human organs, the exploitation of prostitution, and certain practices under apartheid and colonial regimes.<sup>3</sup> (The Daily Star, 2006: 23).

## 9. GLIMPSES OF SLAVERY

Slavery, a condition of societal life in which certain persons (slaves) are held as the property of other persons (slaveholders) either legally or by customary law. One of the oldest of human institutions, slavery has been practiced from prehistoric times by social groups ranging culturally from primitive to the most advanced (The Encyclopedia Americana, 1829: 88a); of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It originated when it was found to be more profitable to enslave than to slaughter captives of war (New Standard

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<sup>3</sup> Fact Sheet No. 14, Contemporary Forms of Slavery, Office of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Encyclopedia: 465). Slavery expanded along with the expansion of commerce and industry. A slave works without pay. The owner, who is called a master or mistress, provides the slave with food, shelter, and clothing (The World Book Encyclopedia, 1988: 502). The Greek philosophers Aristotle and Plato regarded mastery over the weak by the strong as natural and inevitable (New Standard Encyclopedia: 465). Aristotle regarded slavery as a natural consequence of the occurrence of dominance and submission and defined a slave as 'a living possession'. Under Roman law the slave was legally defined as not a person, but a thing serving as a medium for the master's aims (Gould and Kolb ed., 1964: 642). The start of slavery probably followed the development of farming about 10,000 years ago (The World Book Encyclopedia, 1988: 502). All ancient peoples practiced some form of slavery, and extended to many areas-such as Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, Greece, Rome, India, and China (New Standard Encyclopedia: 465). Most people of the ancient world regarded slavery as a natural condition of life that could befall anyone at any time (The World Book Encyclopedia, 1988: 502). Warfare was the original source of slave labor. When slavery proved economically beneficial, it was extended to include debtors and criminals. To insure a continuous and plentiful supply, a slave trade was established, with people being seized and sold into slavery. Breeding (natural increase) also produced additional slaves. The Christian Church did not oppose the institution of slavery, considering it a part of the divine order of the world in the middle ages. The religious wars between Christians and Moslems helped to keep slavery alive, as each side enslaved prisoners of the opposing religion (New Standard Encyclopedia: 465-466).

Among the Romans, slavery was relatively deep rooted and flourishing institution (The Encyclopedia Americana, 1829: 88b). Slavery in the America began shortly after the first European settlers arrived in the New World. In some areas Indian slave labor was used at first, but soon the Europeans began to import Negroes from Africa (New Standard Encyclopedia: 466). Bengal was no exception and to some extent slavery was there from very ancient times. People marginalized by famines, wars and the caste system were the main victims of slavery in Bengal (Islam and Others ed., 2003: 321). But it is important to mention that slavery of Bengal was not as extensive as of Greece and Rome.

A slave was a transferable commodity. Many slave owners thus sold their surplus or unwanted slaves to the market (Ibid). Slaves were mainly utilized in agriculture, industry, commerce, domestic, service, and the armed forces (New Standard Encyclopedia: 465). The prices of slaves varied according to their age, physique, sex, caste, race and most importantly, the prevailing economic conditions of the country. In the early nineteenth century the market price of children and the aged varied from five to ten rupees. The prices of young and healthy slaves varied from twenty to fifty rupees. During famines and scarcities the market was gutted by slaves and hence their market price depressed (Islam and Others ed., 2003: 322). The treatment of slaves varied greatly, but almost no slaves could legally marry, have a family, testify in court, or own property (The World Book Encyclopedia, 1988: 502). Actually in some societies, a slave was considered merely chattel, a piece of property (New Standard Encyclopedia: 465). For the vast majority of slaves however, bondage meant submission and degradation. It was a physically and psychologically brutalizing experience (Ibid: 467). In other social systems a slave was recognized as human being, differing only in degree not in kind, from his master. Thus manumission (release from slavery) was sometimes possible (Ibid: 465). In ancient Greece and the Roman Empire, slaves who worked in large gangs in mines or on plantations served long hours and suffered harsh punishment (The World Book Encyclopedia, 1988: 502). However, many of those who worked as house hold servants were treated equally with the members of owner's family. Rhodes showed in his work how the domestic slave trade, which separated husbands from wives and parents from children, made steady and pitiless assaults on whatever family life the slave might have; and he pictured the slave's helplessness against the aggressions of a brutal master. Rhodes pointed to numerous transactions in mulatto and quadroon girls for wanton purposes and to the corruption of plantation morals affected by the dalliance of the master and his sons with their female slaves- a fact which occasioned untold anguish to many Southern women. He emphasized the slave's degraded lot and his constant longing for freedom (Elkins, 1959: 7).

Like any other means of production, the slave is 'a thing'. From the point of view of efficient production, slave labour presents a number of problems, which suggest that slavery does not provide an appropriate basis for long-term economic growth. There is some debate as to whether slavery is compatible with a capitalist economy:

M. Weber (1922) has argued that capitalism requires free labour markets if it is to fulfill its potential;

while B. Moore (1967) believes that slavery is incompatible only with a particular form of capitalism- competitive, democratic capitalism- and not with capitalism as such (Abercrombie, Hill and Turner, 1984: 380-381).

Slavery, as an institution, was abolished in Europe in the late eighteenth century. It was found to be inconsistent with industrialism and with the new human values associated with the Industrial Revolution (Islam and Others ed., 2003: 322).

More than fifty years ago, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stated in its Article 4 that “no one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms”. Despite the many efforts made to abolish all forms of slavery, it is not dead. It exists, and is even on the rise in some parts of the world (The Daily Star, 2006: 23).

The female child trafficking, however, in many ways, is a modern version of slavery. It is, in fact, is a trade in human flesh. There are many trafficked female children, who are in many forms of servitude. Culture of trafficked children strongly upholds the culture of forbidden, illegal and inhuman slavery in many cases. If we compare the culture of trafficked children with the culture of slaves, then similarities will be found in many cases between these two cultures.

## **10. RESEMBLANCE OF TRAFFICKED FEMALE CHILDREN CULTURE AND SLAVERY**

A person became slave by birth during slavery. Besides, the persons who were sold and bought knew that they will be treated as ‘slave’. But in trafficking trafficked person do not know that they are going to be trafficked and also going to be slaves. Moreover, they are alluring in the name of better life and opportunities. Actually, the trafficked person fall into trap, face fraud and cheated by traffickers. In this way, there are differences between the culture of trafficked persons and the culture of slaves but it is the fact that there are also similarities between these two cultures in many cases, which are pointed out below in brief:

Trafficked children and slave- both work as bonded laborers forcedly.

Debt-slavery was found in slave culture. Debt-bondage also found in trafficked culture.

Actually both of them are caught in a ‘chain of bondage’.

Poverty play vital role for making both a slave and a person to be trafficked.

Both of them are treated as “Commodity” who can be sold and bought at different rates only.

They are transferable commodity.

A slave and a trafficked person-both of them are sold again and again by human traders.

Slaves were personal property to their masters and similarly, a trafficked person is also treated as personal property to their owners.

Both of their labor gives profit to their owners.

A powerful, wealthy section of people and even state used slaves for increasing production as well as their development. On the other hand, traffickers use trafficked persons forcedly in different domestic services/works, prostitution, begging and also selling their organs for their financial benefit. In real sense, traffickers are making capital by capitalizing the trafficked persons.

Slaves were imported from different parts of the world. Similarly, trafficked persons are also collected from different regions of the world.

Human trading as well as slave auction during slavery was open and legalized by the society. But now auction also held for human trading with trafficked persons but it is occurring secretly and forcedly as it is not legalized in the society.

The prices of slaves and trafficked persons varied according to their age, physique, sex and beauty.

Beautiful girls had demand in slavery. Similarly, beautiful trafficked girls have demand in trafficking.

Masters usually enjoyed the sexuality of female slaves. And now owners and many other customers

also enjoy the sexuality of female trafficked children.

Slaves received new names through his masters. Trafficked persons also received new names after trafficking by their owners.

Slaves and trafficked persons- both are dependent upon their masters and owners for their food, clothing and lodging.

Kidnapping was found in slavery. It is also occur for the collection of persons for trafficking.

Slaves and trafficked persons- both of them are not well paid-off.

Both of them are abused and denied their freedom in many cases.

The working environment of both of slaves and trafficked persons is unhygienic.

Their culture is dominated by their masters and owners.

They have no bargaining power and often beaten by their masters and owners.

They have fear of torture.

A slave child becomes slave in slavery. The children of bonded female also become slave.

Exploitation is found both in slavery and in trafficking.

So, it can be stated without any doubt and it has already been proved that the culture of trafficking actually represents the culture of slavery and trafficking, in real sense, is a new form of contemporary slavery, which is operating in contemporary capitalist society.

## **11. CONCLUSION**

Female children trafficking from Bangladesh, a threat to humanity as well as to societal development has already been reached in an alarming stage. The female children who trafficked internally and externally fall into a new vulnerable culture, which resembles the culture of slavery in a new form in many cases in contemporary human society. Even if there are differences in the culture of trafficked female children and the culture of slavery; but it is not deniable that the brutal face of slavery still exists with new label in our modern society. A United Nations official has described the trafficking of women and children across Asia as “the largest slave trade in history”. The transfers are made using “even more cruel and devious means than the original slave trade.”<sup>4</sup>

Like government and non-government agencies, civil societies and many other social scientists, the inhuman trafficking has now gained the attention also to the anthropologists. Anthropology considers this issue as one of the vital contemporary human problems.

To save humanity from trafficking it needs an in-depth and holistic study on trafficking where the contributing factors of it will be analyzed with native perspective. The trafficking problem varied in different culture in different states. It should be dealt with the basis of the nature of its distinctive problem. Policies should be formulated by giving priority to particular culture for eliminating this problem in a sustainable way. Societal norms and values, religious values should be given priority in formulating human trafficking eliminating policies. Taking indigenous anti-trafficking policies, global communications and information networks should be linked up, which will strengthen the anti-trafficking as well as anti-slavery movement in this globe.

The most important matter is, people should be committed to each other and treat each other as ‘Human’ not as ‘Commodity’ or ‘Toy’ in this capitalist era. Only this could prevent humans from trafficking as well as from new form of slavery. Besides, large and developed states should co-operate the small-states providing necessary supports to improve the quality of human lives and save the humanity from the brutality of trafficking.

In fine, it can be stated that no analysis of contemporary human trafficking problem and solutions would be complete without taking into consideration of cultural factors. This is not problem of human nature, and will not be solved by a narrow technological approach. Therefore, to solve the contemporary

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<sup>4</sup> Unicef’s Kul Gautum told an International Symposium on Trafficking of Children, being held in Tokyo.

human problems like female child trafficking requires a careful assessment in the light of culturally organized perception of the particular society. The author invites all the scholars to pay their attention in this direction for future research.

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**Table no-1: Trafficked Children by Gender (from Bangladesh) (January 1990 – December 1999)<sup>5</sup>**

| Year  | Male Child | Female Child | Total |
|-------|------------|--------------|-------|
| 1990  | 20         | 17           | 37    |
| 1991  | 75         | 127          | 202   |
| 1992  | 97         | 147          | 244   |
| 1993  | 88         | 118          | 206   |
| 1994  | 113        | 104          | 217   |
| 1995  | 240        | 185          | 425   |
| 1996  | 197        | 181          | 378   |
| 1997  | 490        | 437          | 927   |
| 1998  | 331        | 354          | 685   |
| 1999  | 32         | 44           | 76    |
| Total | 1683       | 1714         | 3397  |

(Shamim, 2001: 33)

### **Trafficking in Women and Children, 2003**

AGE<sup>6</sup>

| Nature of Crime | 0-6 | 7-12 | 13-18 | 19-24 | 25-30 | 30+ | Not Mentioned | Total | Case Filed |
|-----------------|-----|------|-------|-------|-------|-----|---------------|-------|------------|
| Trafficking     | 27  | 65   | 53    | 11    | 8     | 9   | 156           | 329   | 95         |
| Abduction       | 46  | 104  | 211   | 24    | 5     | 9   | 138           | 537   | 310        |
| Total           | 73  | 169  | 264   | 35    | 13    | 18  | 294           | 866   | 405        |

(Ibid)

<sup>5</sup> Table no. 1 is produced on the basis of Media Coverage of trafficked children, 1990-1999.

<sup>6</sup> The age of 0-18 year's old female has treated as female child in this paper.