



SOCIAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS:

RAISING AWARENESS ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN
INDIA

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What is human trafficking?

“The concept of trafficking in people refers to the criminal practice of exploitation of human beings where they are treated as commodities for monetary gain and after being trafficked are subjected to long-term abuse. In a general sense, trafficking in human beings is a process of transportation of people from one place to another, facilitated by agents seeking commercial benefit for purposes of exploitation.” (Sarkar 485)



Oyibo, Fig. 1

Introduction

- The International Labor Organization claims
 - 20.9 million victims of human trafficking currently present in the world
 - 26% of those victims are **below the age of 18**
 - 600,000-800,000 people are forced into human trafficking across international borders yearly
- There are **three main types** of human trafficking present globally: sexual servitude, labor trafficking/debt bondage, and organ trafficking.
- Push and pull factors include “extreme **poverty, unemployment**, lack of **education, inadequate social programs**, gender-based inequality, **corruption**, war and conflict situations, and political unrest in countries of origin.”

Human trafficking in India

- Highest rate of human trafficking in the world
- Poverty rate is 22% and about 73% of Indians live in rural villages
- Factors that contribute include:
 - cultural norms
 - socio-economic standards
 - profitability
 - the increasing shift from rural to city jobs

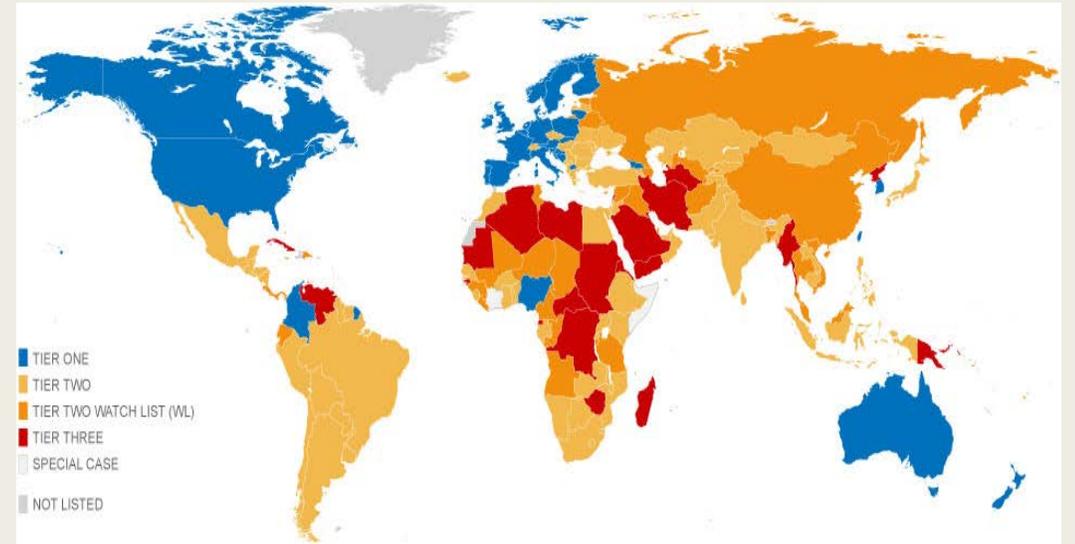


Factors that contribute to human trafficking

- Some communities use the idea of **ritual slavery practices** to justify sexual and commercial exploitation
- The push towards **leaving the village** and creating a new life in the city has led to an increase in human trafficking
- Sex trafficking is a persistent problem because it generates a **large amount of revenue with minimal risk**
- **Corruption**, especially amongst law enforcement and government officials, is another factor that results in such high rates of human trafficking in India

Australia vs. India

- **13.9 million** human trafficking victims in India
- 600 victims in Tamil Nadu alone
- Australia has about **500 victims total**
- Both cities have similar geographical areas, economic standards, populations, and human trafficking victim demographics but vastly different trafficking numbers that can be attributed to **differences in governmental responses** and **social awareness campaigns**.



Australia vs. India

- Australia: comprehensive **legislative framework**, special teams that investigate occurrences of human trafficking, **victim support** and **rehabilitation programs**, and new immigrations laws that allow victims to remain in Australia.
- India: focuses on controlling and limiting human trafficking where it already exists. India **lacks a preventive and deterrence aspect** of its legislation. More than legislation, a higher emphasis on social awareness activities and education and employment opportunities would decrease occurrences of human trafficking in India.

Social Awareness Campaigns

- Because of the pervasive corruption in the government and police departments in India, **increasing legislation** and enforcing harsher laws/punishments has **not proven to be significantly effective**.
- According to “Trafficking in Women and Children in India: Nature, Dimensions and Strategies for Prevention”, “...sustained and vigorous campaigning is necessary to sensitize media and make people, particularly the poor, remain alert about the traffickers.”

Social Awareness Campaigns

- Social media campaigns **raise awareness by spreading information** and allowing for small, manageable goals to be set.
- Since many villagers in India are **unaware of the prevalence** of human trafficking and how traffickers lure their victims into the city, implementing a social awareness campaign could **increase understanding** of the dangers of human trafficking and dramatically **reduce incidences** of human trafficking.



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Components of a successful campaign

- Social campaigns should:
 - utilize **simple** and fairly **familiar methods of communication**
 - engage their target audience
 - tap into already existing communication framework
 - **not be too cost-intensive**
 - use media channels that are **trusted** and conducted in their own language
 - not have unrealistic and lofty goals
 - focus on **specific ideas**
- Campaigns include three components:
 1. **Prevention**
 2. **Protection**
 3. **Prosecution**

Australian campaigns

- Australia is **internationally known** for its efficacy in combating smoking through its effective public education media campaigns.
- A media non-smoking awareness campaign that took place in Australia led to a reduction in almost 2% of the entire population's smoking habits.
- In order to make sure that all of the audiences are targeted, the Australian government **focuses on four different areas of interest**: Personal, Professional, Physical, and Production.



Preliminary Plan of Attack

- 94% of rural Indians do not have computer access
- 20% of Indians nationwide have access to a working computer
- About every 45 in 100 Indians have access to some type of cellular device
- Rural households also use television as their primary form of entertainment
- Devise social awareness campaigns that utilize both popular forms of entertainment, including smartphones and television

Plan of Attack – Soap Operas

- Soap operas are the dominant form of television entertainment in rural India
- 1/3 of Indians watch soap operas on a daily basis
- Many people **subconsciously absorb the values** that are discussed in soap operas
- The information disseminates relatively quickly and across a broad range of audiences.
- In fact, the introduction of women's rights as a topic in Indian soap operas has **significantly improved the status of women in society.**

Soap Operas

- *Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Ha*: The longest running Hindi serial to ever air in India, with more than 2,200 episodes having been aired.
- Show the modus operandi of traffickers or discuss rehabilitation efforts of victims of human trafficking during *Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Ha*
- Will dramatically increase awareness of human trafficking in the general populace.



Movie Industry

- There are about **13,000 movie screens in India**, and the Indian movie industry grosses about \$2 billion per year
- The recent release of *Slumdog Millionaire*, a movie about poverty in the slums, resulted in an **increase of more than \$3 million** to donations to orphanages in India.
- If a movie includes famous actors and **portrays a realistic story** of a trafficker capturing a victim, villagers might be able to **better understand the realities** of how traffickers capture their victims.

Movie Guidelines



- Most effective movies portray the intricacies and multi-layered realities of human by depicting the life of a victim from the minute they are captured until they are able to escape.
- The films also need to show the connections between the victims, the police, and NGOs, all which help to reveal how serious and complicated the issue of human trafficking really is to the general populace.

Social Media in Australia

- While entertainment campaigns are not as popular in Australia, **social media** is the **most important** aspect of Australian social awareness campaigns
- Social awareness campaigns in Australia focus mainly on social media in order to garner attention to the issue at hand
- In order **to attract more viewers and fans**, during the Australian Open, the Tennis Australia campaign utilized new hashtags as well as rewards for people who posted selfies of themselves with the new hashtag
 - resulted in more than **300,000 new members** of their social media page

Facebook



- In India, Facebook has around 142 million followers, and 90% of Facebook users are mobile
- Facebook in India can focus more on implementing hashtags that can unite an entire population behind human trafficking
- Facebook can create “missing person” alerts in order to alert people when someone has been abducted or has been missing for more than two days, so that people are more aware of the number of people who become victims of human trafficking daily.
- Facebook can include a page where people can post human trafficking stories and can post about potential traffickers, so that others are aware of potential abductors and their methods of operations

WhatsApp

- WhatsApp is a free messaging system that allows users to send texts, make calls, and share videos/images for free
- Downloaded on 90% of cell phones in India
- Include informational videos/alerts with testimonies from real victims and a live count of the number of human trafficking victims reported annually
- Videos can utilize ideas from the “The ‘Not for Sale’ Campaign in Australia, and utilize videos from survivors of human trafficking, such as in World Vision Australia’s ‘Don’t Trade Lives’ Campaign



Conclusion

- Almost one million people are forced to become victims of human trafficking annually.
- The number of victims in Australia is significantly lower than the number of victims in India, which can be attributed to differences in legislation and social awareness campaigns
- The major factor that contributes is the lack of awareness about human trafficking, especially in rural villages. Many people simply do not know about the dangers and realities of the situation.
- To start combatting human trafficking, India should consider implementing a social awareness campaign that utilizes soap operas, social media, and movies, in order to raise awareness of human trafficking in rural villages.



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