Social Awareness Campaigns:
Raising Awareness on Human Trafficking in India

Abstract:

Human trafficking is a persistent international problem that results in the subjugation of over 1 million people annually. The mass exploitation and abuse of humans for personal gain has taken many different forms over the span of history, including slavery, domestic servitude, labor bondage, etc. Experts report that one of the main reasons for the high rates of human trafficking worldwide is the lack of awareness about its realities and dangers. In order to increase awareness of human trafficking in India, I want to understand what a successful social awareness campaign in India would entail.

During my research process, I explored peer-reviewed articles about the basic background of human trafficking and specific reasons for its prevalence in India. I also investigated articles that looked at specific strategies that should be taken into consideration before developing an effective media campaign. Finally, I compared and contrasted different social media campaigns in Australia and India in order to identify successful elements of campaigns in use in Australia.

According to my research, many social media campaigns are not successful in India because they do not take into account the lack of education and minimal access to technology
and other methods of communication. Rural villages actually respond most effectively to media use.

As a result of my research, I have devised an entirely new social awareness campaign to be executed in India that includes televised soap operas, talk shows on the radio by actual victims of human trafficking, social media notifications, and informational videos/alerts on communication apps such as WhatsApp. The campaign will also utilize various aspects of successful Australian social campaigns, including their content and methods of information dissemination. Ideally, the implementation of this social campaign will raise awareness about the realities of human trafficking and can decrease human trafficking numbers worldwide.

Introduction:

The mass exploitation and abuse of humans for personal gain has taken many different forms over the span of history, including slavery, domestic servitude, labor bondage, and sexual exploitation. While it may seem as though human trafficking is a recent transnational phenomenon, in reality human trafficking has been a public menace for several thousands of years. An atrocious violation of human rights on every level, human trafficking numbers have actually been increasing in the past few centuries. According to the International Labor Organization, there are currently 20.9 million victims of human trafficking present in the world, and 26% of those victims are below the age of 18. In fact, as reported by the US State Department, around 600,000-800,000 people are forced into human trafficking across international borders yearly, and 480,000 to 640,000 of those victims are women.

According to the United Nations 

Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, human trafficking can be defined as “[t]he recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or
use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, or fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or a position of vulnerability, or 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.”

There are three main types of human trafficking present globally: sexual servitude, labor trafficking/debt bondage, and organ trafficking. The most common form of human exploitation is sexual servitude. Women are forced to work in illegal/legal brothels, and are required to engage in sexual acts against their will for commercial purposes. Labor exploitation involves people whose working conditions are not legal (excessive hours, harsh conditions, below minimum wage, etc.), or are different from the original terms of labor agreement. Additionally, labor exploitation can include debt bondage, where workers are tricked into working for their masters for long periods of time since they have to pay off a “debt” that either keeps accumulating or is passed down through family. Finally, organ trafficking involves the illegal sale or purchase of organs. Human traffickers will trick impoverished people into selling their organs or will forcibly remove their organs in order to supply organs to hospitals or countries in need where the number of organs demanded is less than the supply of organs, as stated by Eira Mishra, in “Combating Human Trafficking: A Legal Perspective with Special Reference to India.”

There are many factors that contribute to the occurrence of human trafficking in society. Push and pull factors which all add to the prevalence of human trafficking 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’”, according to O’Brien from “Human Trafficking Heroes and Villains: Representing the Problem in Anti-Trafficking Awareness Campaigns.” The main factors that contribute to human trafficking are socio-economic factors. Unemployment and lack of education are the two biggest indicators of
susceptibility and vulnerability. People from rural areas are even more susceptible to being trafficked because they do not have access to information about trafficking or even the ability to realize the realities of human trafficking and how traffickers catch their victims. The globalization of the world has also resulted in an increase in immigrants, which makes it easier for traffickers to smuggle in their victims across international boundaries. Eira Mishra further claims that the number one reason for the prevalence of child trafficking is poverty. Parents are unable to afford care for their children; the children are either lured into promises of a better life by the traffickers or their parents sell them off in exchange for a measly amount of money, often less than $100.

**What’s going on in India?**

India has the highest rate of human trafficking in the world. There are multiple factors that contribute to the extreme prevalence of human trafficking in India, including cultural norms, socio-economic standards, profitability, and the increasing shift from rural to city jobs. According to the World Bank, the poverty level in India is about 22%. CNN states that 73% of Indians live in rural villages, and 75% of them make less than $75 a month. Additionally, about 36% of the population is illiterate and only about 4% of the entire population can call themselves graduates. The average socio-economic standard is barely above the poverty level, and only about 50% of children in India actually attend school. Millions of people in India are forced into the human trafficking industry because they lack any other options. Many parents who have not received a proper education and/or cannot find proper employment will sell their children for labor bondage or sexual servitude in order to provide for the rest of their family. Additionally,
women who are unable to receive any other means of employment will enter the sex industry in order to support themselves or their families.

Some communities in India use the idea of ritual slavery practices to justify sexual and commercial exploitation. Maggie Black, in her article “Ritual Slavery Practices in India – Devadasi, Jogini, and Mathamma” expounds upon each slavery practice: Devadasi is the practice of having adolescent active girls and women become sexually active with the priests in temples for “God’s will”, Jogini is the practice of marrying a girl off to her relative and letting him use her as a concubine for “religious purposes”, and finally in the Mathamma practice, the girl becomes available for sexual exploitation after the first time she dances publicly in a festival. The ritual slavery system adds to the discrimination of women that already exists in Indian society. Maggie Black claims that a vast majority (93%) of the women involved in these situations come from the scheduled caste, where they do not have access to a proper education or unemployment and are already faced with discrimination and lack of employment/social opportunities. Many young girls and women are forced into this system at an early age and are unable to get out of their situation; they are discriminated against for their status, they often end up unmarried and with child, and they lack a proper education or necessary resources to escape from their situation. The cycle continues with their children who are unable to hold a proper status in society because of their mother's’ profession and the fact that they do not have a legitimate father. In many cases, villagers will shun the child and deny them an education, which forces them to accept the only positions they can find - the ritual slavery practices already in place in villages. The situation only reinforces the mentality that subjugating women to the will of men is tolerable and even customary in villages in India, leading to the justification that sexual servitude is acceptable in society.
The push towards leaving the village and creating a new life in the city has also led to an increase in people who are becoming victims of human trafficking. Dipankar Gupta in “Whither the Indian Village: Culture and Agriculture in ‘Rural’ India” states, “Clearly, the poorer one is the greater the temptation to up and leave the village before sun finally sets on one.” Gupta claims many people would rather take a lowly job in the city than a higher paying job in a village, because in the city, they are not dependent on anyone but themselves. There are staggering numbers of people who are moving away from an agricultural way of life, which shows the shift as Indians develop into a more advanced country away from agriculture and into more industrialized jobs. However, this also contributes to the mentality that urban jobs are better and thus leads people in villages to take jobs any job offer with very little background information about the employer or the job description. This desire to simply escape the village is a large factor in the increasing number of trafficking victims, as women will blindly take up a job offer in the city without regards for its dangers because they are desperate to leave.

In addition, Anh Ton in “The Cruel Economics of Human Trafficking in India” states that sex trafficking is a persistent problem because it generates a large amount of revenue with minimal risk. In fact, according to Time Magazine, almost $100 billion dollars are generated annually in the sex trafficking business alone. Human traffickers, also known as pimps, can operate a relatively large-scale business for little cost and high return. Additionally, since many government officials and police members are also involved in the activities, even if they do get caught and fined, the fines are minimal and the operation continues to run smoothly. In fact, the US State Department’s Report on Trafficking in Persons claims that corruption, especially amongst law enforcement and government officials, is another factor that results in such high rates of human trafficking in India.
**Australia and India:**

The countries of Australia and India have similar geographical areas, economic standards, populations, and human trafficking victim demographics. The main difference between the countries of Australia and India are the number of people living in rural versus urban populations in each place and their geographical barriers. Because of their similar characteristics, disparities in human trafficking rates can thus be attributed to differences in governmental responses and social awareness campaigns.

Although specific data on the number of human trafficking victims in Australia cannot be determined because of the clandestine nature of the activity, according to TC Bierne School of Law, there are about on average 500 cases of human trafficking annually in Australia. Even though Australia has limited opportunities for traffickers, because of their geography and legislation, there is still a relatively large influx of human trafficking victims. Australia has a comprehensive list of legislation and social measures to take action against human trafficking, known as *The Action Plan to Eradicate Human Trafficking*. Australia partners with civil society organizations including the National Roundtable and uses awareness-raising measures to help the population realize the significance of human trafficking. The Australian Attorney-General’s Department adds that Australia has portioned off about $150 million dollars in support of anti-trafficking plans. They have also set aside about $4 million dollars for civil unions and societies, which include funding for ACRATH, Project Respect, Scarlet Alliance, Asian Women at Work, ACTU, etc. Australia’s *National Action Plan* works to fight against all types of human trafficking and slavery with five main principles, including a comprehensive manner, supporting victims holistically, acting as regional leader, having a collaborative response, and keeping a strong compliance framework.
The Australian Attorney-General’s Department states the four pillars that help Australia combat human trafficking include “Prevention and Deterrence, Detection and Investigation, Prosecution and Compliance, and Victim Support and Protection”. Australia also focuses on education and awareness-raising in the battle against human trafficking. The Australian Attorney-General’s Department enforces international regulations involving human trafficking and makes use of multiple government and national organizations to help combat the issue. Australia focuses not only on controlling the issue of human trafficking, but also on preventing it by using investigators, providing support to the victims, enforcing criminal codes, monitoring legislative reforms, raising awareness, keeping operational protocols in minors, and international and regional leadership. The Australian Attorney-General’s Department uses strategies such as employing the Seasonal Worker Program to help with immigrants. They also raise social awareness by having information on the Fair Work Ombudsman’s website, having educational materials easy for access, and providing monetary compensations for organizations that support victims of human trafficking.

As far as legislation, a few key criminal codes and laws that Australia has include: Criminal Code Act 1995, Crimes Act 1914, Migration Act 1958, and legal options for victim of human trafficking. Australia works with multiple organizations such as the annual Human Trafficking Investigators Programs for Australian Federal Police investigators, Support For Trafficked People Program, Operational Working Group, and Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions Witness Assistance Office. Australia also actively carries out investigations and research into the problems of human trafficking, and often collaborates with different countries on research ideas and grants. Finally, Australia offers many options for victims of human trafficking, including counseling, rehabilitation, providing support through the Support for
Trafficked People Program, working with child protection agencies in human trafficking, increasing accessibility to different remedies, and ensuring victims are not persecuted for legal issues.

Although specific data on human trafficking numbers is difficult to pinpoint, according to Biswajit Ghosh, the author of “Trafficking in Women and Children in India: Nature, Dimensions and Strategies for Prevention,” there are about one million new victims of human trafficking in India annually. Additionally, there are about 45-60 million victims of human trafficking currently living in India, with the major of victims being subject to forced debt bondage or physical/domestic labor.

Trafficking is present at every level in India, including local, district, state, and transborder. Exploitation of men, women, and children can occur in any industry, including entertainment, pornography, labor, debt bondage, and sex tourism. A major factor in the prevalence of human trafficking in India is the fact that it shares a border with Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, China and Pakistan. The US Department of State also notes that there are millions of unsuspecting women and children who are victim to sex trafficking in India. Their low economic status and inability to have many options out of their situation further contributes to their vulnerable situation.

India is quickly becoming a top hub for human trafficking victims in the world. As a Tier 2 country, India is not technically doing everything in its power to combat human trafficking throughout the country. The issue of human trafficking is of low priority to many individuals, whether it is police who take bribes, parents who turn a blind eye to the abuse of their children for the sake of money, or bystanders who do not want to deal with the human trafficking perpetrators. Traffickers are able to manipulate the emotions of the victims and confuse the
victim to such an extent that they believe they are not being trafficked. Siddhartha Sarkar, in “Rethinking Human Trafficking in India: Nature, Extent and Identification of Survivors,” gives the ‘modus operandi’ that the traffickers use in India in order to capture their victims. He states that they use various methods to trick the women and children including: offering them jobs, promising them roles in movies, offering them money, falsely promising to marry them, befriending them, etc.

India has explicitly forbidden human trafficking in Article 23 of the Indian Constitution, has enacted the Immoral Traffic Prevention Act (ITPA), and has ratified the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic of Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others. However, these pieces of legislation are not effective since they do not punish the trafficker enough; they have to serve only three years in jail and pay a small fine, and many traffickers are able to bribe the policemen to get out of their jail sentences.

The US Department of State’s *Trafficking in Persons Report* compares and contrasts Australia and India in terms of their responses to human trafficking by claiming that while the Australian government meets all the standards required for the elimination of human trafficking, the government of India does not meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but concedes that they are persistently working on the issue. Australia has also been much more diligent about curtailing incidences of human trafficking than India, with a 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. Australia focuses on not only controlling trafficking through legislation and awareness, but also on protecting and rehabilitating victims after the incident and getting rid of the social stigma that surrounds them. In contrast, India only focuses on controlling and limiting
human trafficking where it already exists. India would benefit from taking a more preventive approach. Eira Mishra argues that India lacks a preventive and deterrence aspect of its legislation, which is a large reason why legislation in India is not very effective; more than legislation, a higher emphasis on social awareness activities and education and employment opportunities would decrease occurrences of human trafficking in India.

**Why 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. Additionally, the relatively low levels of punishment do not serve as a deterrent for human traffickers. Thus, social awareness campaigns to reduce trafficking would be more effective in reducing human trafficking. In fact, according to Ghosh in “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.” Many researchers now believe that a combination of the two strategies (legislation and social awareness) is the most effective way to combat human trafficking.

Many social media campaigns are not successful in India because they do not take into account the lack of education and minimal access to technology and other methods of communication. An entirely new social campaign that caters more to the needs of the rural population in India would be more effective in reducing occurrences of trafficking. The campaign would also utilize various aspects of successful Australian social campaigns, including their informational content and methods of dissemination.
By looking at successful campaigns, it is easy to discern what strategies can be implemented in India to more effectively convey the message of the realities of human trafficking to people all over the country. Social campaigns utilize simple and fairly familiar methods of communication in order to allow for maximum participation, engage their target audience, tap into already existing communication framework, and not be too cost-intensive.

According to the *Framework on Effective Rural Communication for Development*, most rural areas depend mainly on media as their primary source of information. Similarly, according to Eira Mishra, the media is an excellent medium for all types of people since it can be used to send relevant messages and provide information to hundreds of thousands of viewers. Campaigns include media channels that are trusted, that are conducted in their own language, that are accessible, and that are relevant to their daily lives.

An important criterion in any trafficking program is the “Three Ps”, as stated by Deanny Davy in her article “Anti-human Trafficking Interventions: How Do We Know If They Are Working?” Campaigns include three components: prevention, protection, and prosecution. Prevention includes raising awareness and increasing opportunities for victims; protection includes recovering and reintegrating the victims back into society; prosecution has a focus on legislation and judicial action. Campaigns stress the importance of a holistic approach to combating human trafficking by looking at not only the needs of victims but also how to stop the situation in the first place.

Successful campaigns do not have unrealistic and lofty goals, such as eliminating all human trafficking in five years, and instead focus on specific ideas, such as reducing human trafficking numbers by 100,000 in one year, in order to have a more meaningful and realistic campaign. There is also an emphasis on both transparency with the public and on having an unbiased evaluator to make the impact of the campaign impartial. Additionally, studies are used to test the effects of the campaign.
in the long-term. Another idea to consider is the use of victims in the campaign process itself to have more of an emotional impact on the public. A big focus of successful campaigns is specifically on including reliable data and unbiased editors to make sure the data is not getting manipulated.

Human trafficking campaigns that have been implemented in Australia will be used as a model for campaigns in India because historically, social awareness campaigns have proven to be significantly effective in Australia. In fact, Pierce, Macaskill, Mappstat, and Hill, in “Long-term Effectiveness of Mass Media Led Antismoking Campaigns in Australia” claim that 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. Australia is internationally known for its efficacy in combating smoking through its effective public education media campaigns. In terms of human trafficking social campaigns specifically, Australia's National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking and Slavery states, “The Communication and Awareness Strategy aims to improve general awareness of human trafficking, slavery and slavery-like practices, including as a human rights issue, within the Australian community and amongst target groups.” 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.

Plan of Attack

Three-pronged attack:

There are certain factors that must be taken into consideration before implementing a social awareness campaign in India. There is a lack of literacy and limited access to technology and other means of communication in rural India. According to the article “60 Million People in Rural India to Benefit from New Digital Literacy Mission,” about 94% of rural Indians do not have access to a computer. According to the PewResearch Center, only about 20% of Indians
nationwide have access to a working computer. In fact, a lot more Indians, including those who live in rural populations, have access to cellphones and television. According to the United Nations University, about every 45 in 100 Indians have access to some type of cellular device. Similarly, Saritha Rai, in her Forbes article, states that Indian recently hit more than 1 billion mobile subscribers, further emphasizing the fact that a vast majority of Indians use cellular devices on a daily basis. She adds that India is expected to become the second largest user of smartphones by 2016. Rural households also use television as their primary form of entertainment. According to The Times of India, about 89.6 million rural households have access to television. Literacy rates in rural India are also somewhat low, with most rural populations having a literacy rate of about 59%, according to Purkayastha, Jain, and Rishi from the article entitled “Marketing Communication Strategies for Rural India”. Thus, the most effective way to target the rural population of India is through campaigns that can be broadcast on televisions and/or smartphones.

Part I: Television

Helene Leyucer in “Soap Operas Dominate Prime-time Television In India”, states that soap operas are the dominant form of television entertainment in rural India. Gokulsing, in her novel Soft-Soaping India, adds that about one-third of Indians watch soap operas on a daily basis. Soap operas are the main form of entertainment and are a national activity. Not only do they function as a family pastime, soap operas help showcase cultural norms, deliver human rights messages, contribute to the overall identity of India, and discuss the morphing role of women in society. Many people subconsciously absorb the values that are discussed in soap operas, and since the number of people who watch soap operas is so large, the information disseminates relatively quickly and across a broad range of audiences. According to Robert
Jensen and Emily Oster in “The Power of TV: Cable Television and Women’s Status in India”, the introduction of women’s rights as a topic in Indian soap operas has significantly improved the status of women in society. There have been dramatic increases in women's autonomy, decreases in fertility rates, and decreases in domestic abuse. Therefore, incorporating messages about awareness on human trafficking in soap operas can significantly impact the occurrence of human trafficking cases nationwide.

Currently, the most popular soap opera running in India is a Hindi soap opera entitled *Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Ha*. It is the longest running Hindi serial to ever air in India, with more than 2,200 episodes having been aired. The story focuses on the ups and downs of a family, and takes place over the span of about 25 years. It addresses issues such as women’s role in family, the practice of arranged marriages and dowries, gender stereotypes, and the sexual appearance of women. The soap opera also has a star-studded cast, with actors including Vishal Singh, Shivangi Joshi, and Mohena Singh. Addressing the issue of human trafficking by either discussing rehabilitation efforts of victims of human trafficking or showing the modus operandi of traffickers during *Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Ha* would raise awareness on human trafficking. For example, one of the main characters in *Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Ha* could take a job in the city, only to find out when she arrives that it was a plot by traffickers to imprison her. The show could elaborate on the trials she and the family have to go through in order to help her escape, which serves as an effective reminder for people, especially in rural villages, about the modus operandi of most human traffickers. Since more than ten million people are following this soap opera, even including two or three episodes that address the issue of human trafficking and portray the realities and dangers of human trafficking will dramatically increase awareness of human trafficking in the general populace.
Part II: Movies

Movies can be another element of social campaigns implemented in rural parts of India. There are about 13,000 movie screens in India, and the Indian movie industry grosses about $2 billion per year, according to Rob Cain in his article entitled, “India’s Film Industry – A $10 Billion Business Trapped in a $2 Billion Body.” Thus, there is an increased push for mass entertainment, since watching films is one of the most popular modes of entertainment in India. Movies affect a large number of the population, and have the potential to dramatically change public opinion. In fact, 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. In the same way, a movie about human trafficking has the potential to dramatically affect public awareness.

If a movie includes famous actors and portrays a realistic story of a trafficker capturing a victim, villagers might be able to identify the realities of how traffickers capture their victims. In fact, James and Ranganatham in “From Victimhood to Survivor-Hood: Reflections on Women’s Agency in Popular Films on Sex Trafficking in India,” reviewed three different movies on human trafficking in India, stating that the movies that were the most effective portrayed 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 showed 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. Movies should also include a call to action, stress the importance of support programs, and provide viewers with multiple examples of how to find a way out of their situation.
Part III: Social Media

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. For example, during the Australian Open, Tennis Australia implemented a social media campaign that resulted in more than 300,000 new members of their social media page as well as record-breaking ticket sales in less than two weeks, according to the company Hootsuite. In order to attract more viewers and fans, the campaign utilized new hashtags as well as rewards for people who posted selfies of themselves with the new hashtag.

Social media is also an important part of daily life in rural India. Salman, in his article in the online journal Medianama, states that Facebook has around 142 million followers, and 90% of Facebook users are mobile. In order to generate more awareness about the issue of human trafficking, Facebook in India can focus more on implementing hashtags and other common trends that can unite an entire population behind a common cause – in this case human trafficking. Actors and actresses can first start the hashtag on social media, and it will slowly proliferate throughout the rest of the population. 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. Additionally, Facebook can also 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 operation. The most important factor to consider when implementing these changes in social media is that people are unaware of how common human
trafficking is, so even by increasing alerts about human trafficking victims, awareness about human trafficking will increase.

In terms of cellphones, social media campaigns utilize WhatsApp, a free messaging system that allows users to send texts, make calls, and share videos/images for free. It is downloaded on 90% of cell phones in India, according to The Hindu. WhatsApp could 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, which calls for responses to human trafficking to center around a greater awareness and consideration of the source and journey of goods and services demanded and consumed. Additionally, by utilizing videos from survivors of human trafficking, such as in World Vision Australia’s ‘Don’t Trade Lives’ Campaign, which asks people to consider ‘the story behind the purchase’ in many industries,” awareness about human trafficking can increase.

**Conclusion**

Human trafficking, a transnational phenomenon, is one of the oldest crimes known to mankind. Almost one million people are forced to become victims of human trafficking annually. The three main types of human trafficking are sexual, labor, and organ trafficking, with labor exploitation having the largest number of victims worldwide. Many factors contribute to the prevalence of human trafficking, including socioeconomic standards, gender discrimination, and lack of education. In India especially, human trafficking rates are relatively high because of cultural norms, low literacy rates, and a push to leave rural villages. Another 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. Differences in human
trafficking numbers between Australia and India were looked at specifically because of the many similar characteristics between countries. 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. Since legislation is not as effective in India because of the rampant corruption present in the government/police forces, social awareness campaigns should be implemented in India to help raise awareness on human trafficking. The social awareness campaign can involve the use of soap operas, movies, and social media, including Facebook and WhatsApp. Another campaign strategy that could be highly beneficial to raising awareness on human trafficking if literacy rates were increased is awareness implementation in educational systems. The *Prevention of Trafficking in Persons* report gives another example of a effective media campaign that is in use all throughout Asia. “Meena has been incorporated in the school curricula of Bangladesh and, along with her brother Raju, she is an Ambassador for Children’s Rights in Pakistan...Child rights education and mine risk education programmes in Sri Lanka use Meena as a role model for children.” The dangers of human trafficking can be taught in a school setting, with survival stories coming from a cartoon girl/boy around the same age as the children. Additionally, cartoons are one of the most effective means of communication, since they utilize images and words in order to get their messages across. Children will be more likely to absorb information about human trafficking if awareness-raising starts from an early age. India has the potential to dramatically reduce incidences of human trafficking; it just needs new methods and social awareness campaigns to focus on. To start with, 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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