

MORAL AND SOCIAL EFFECTS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING ON YOUNG FEMALE VICTIMS

Rehema Magesa and Mary Kitula (Professor)

The Open University of Tanzania, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

P.O. Box 23409, Dar Es Salaam, TANZANIA

Email: likainda@yahoo.com and marikitu@yahoo.co.uk

ABSTRACT

The study aimed at assessing the moral and social effects of human trafficking on the victims and especially the young females. In Tanzania, the situation is similar as in other human trafficking cases worldwide. The victims of human trafficking are said to encounter social, moral, health and economic effects. In assessing the effects of human trafficking on the victims and especially against young females trafficked, a research was conducted in seven district councils of Arusha Region. The study used a cross section design and used both quantitative and qualitative data collection tools. The study involved 400 young females for quantitative and 217 respondents for qualitative data collection tools respectively. From the study it was revealed that a good number of the respondents reported to have moral effects due to the abuse they have suffered since they were trafficked. They reported need of alcohol and drug abuse behavior (35%), being violent (32%) and angry (12.8%). Though a few, three percent of the respondents reported of having ideas of suicide or even body harming. Further the victims reported of being stigmatized (43.8%), feeling unsafe (34%), denied job opportunities due to lack of trustworthy (39%), legal problems (22%) and lack of food and clothes (17%).

Keywords: Young Females lives, trafficking, traffickers, social effects, Moral effects.

1. BACKGROUND

Victims of human trafficking suffer a lot of damages during and after this atrocious act. The damages might be multiple, temporary and in some they tend to be long lasting. In many cases of human trafficking the victims suffers from physical health, mental health, social and moral effects. These damages come about as a result of physical and or sexual brutality, exploitation, and mental and emotional abuse (IOM, 2008; Kamazima, 2009; Mteweale, 2012 and Mathias, 2011). As reported by OVC (2012) the impact of human trafficking often mirrors those of other criminal activities such as domestic violence, sexual assault, and torture. Similarly to domestic violence, traffickers often use psychological coercion to control their victims. The forms of psychological coercion used on victims of trafficking are numerous and often vary depending on the type of trafficking and the individual circumstances of each case.

Lack of morality among the victims of human trafficking is among the effects they suffer as the consequence of human trafficking. According to Quora (2019) being moral means to be mindful about the choices in life that have good or evil consequences. For instance, some people may decide that the highest good is to help people and harm as little as possible. Morality is the basis of things and truth is the substance of all morality. In case of human trafficking the victims of human trafficking are given a small opportunity to choose whether to do good or bad due to the number of abuse this atrocious act have on them. They tend to forego the good act for the bad act in preventing further harm and protect to themselves. As acts of immorality the victims of human trafficking have been reported to develop negative coping mechanism to help them survive their situations and the consequences of these situations. They

have been reported to self mutilate or self harm, opt for alcohol and drug addiction, become violent to their abusers and other members of the community and some have developed exorbitant anger management issues (OVC, 2012).

In addition to moral effects the victims of human trafficking encounter, different researchers report that the victims of human trafficking also suffer a number of social effects (IOM, 2008 and UNGIFT, 2008). Social effects encountered range from social stigmatization and discrimination, physical rejection by family or by community, legal consequences and denial of job opportunities among others. These effects are felt by the victims entirely while they are still under captive by their traffickers or after they have been rescued.

In Tanzania, the situation is similar as in other human trafficking cases worldwide. The victims of human trafficking are said to encounter social, moral, health and economic effects (IOM, 2008; Mteweale, 2012; Mathias 2011 and Kamazima, 2009). They suffer from trauma caused by violence, torture and aggravated abuse inflicted on them by their pedophiles, traffickers and employers. The consequences of human trafficking are in some cases temporary but in other cases they are lifelong. Much as the victims of human trafficking suffer a wide range of consequences, the current study intended to assess the moral and social effects of human trafficking on young female in Arusha region.

2.0 Methodology

This study employed a mixed research approach where by both qualitative and quantitative research methods were applied in data collection, analysis and reporting. Also it opted for a cross section design which allows for the researcher to collect data of a population at a certain time and drawing conclusion about phenomena across a wide population. The study was conducted in Arusha region where data was collected from all seven district councils. The Arusha district councils involved were; Monduli, Meru, Arusha City, Karatu, Ngorongoro, Longindo and Arusha District councils. A questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data while a focus group discussions, observation, face to face and key informant interviews were utilized to collect qualitative information. The questionnaire was utilized to a total of 400 respondents while 217 were involved in collecting qualitative information. The data obtained were analyzed using different data analysis methods according to the nature of the data. Quantitative data were entered and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science while Content analysis method was used in analyzing the qualitative findings.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Demographic Findings

The field findings shows that majority (71.2%) of the respondents were at the age group of 20 to 24 years, while 43.8% of them reported to be married. In case of their education level, a good number of them (74%) revealed that they at least have completed primary education while very few of them (1.5%) had achieved tertiary education. Only 12.5% have completed adult education and another 12.5% have completed secondary education as Table 3.1 shows.

Table 3.1 Respondents by age group, marital status and education levels (n=400)

Age group (years)	Frequency	Percent
10 - 14	2	0.5
15 - 19	113	28.3
20 - 24	285	71.2
Total	400	100.0
Marital status		
Have been married before	175	43.8
Have never been married	225	56.2
Total	400	100.0
Education level		
Primary	296	74.0
Secondary	50	12.5
Adult education	48	12.0
Tertiary	6	1.5
Total	400	100.0

Field Findings, 2019

3.2 Moral effects

This was also the case in the current study since the respondents reported a number of moral conducts they had to do to prevent further damage to their dignity and body. Table 4.32 presents these findings.

Table 3.2: Moral effects of human trafficking to young females (n=400)

Moral Effects		
Impact	Frequency	Percentage
	Yes	Yes
Need of drug, smoke and alcohol abuse	140	35
Violent behaviour	130	32.5
Aggravated Anger	51	12.8
Suicidal and body harming thoughts	12	3

Source: Field findings 2019

A good number of the respondents reported to have moral effects due to the abuse they have suffered since they were trafficked. They reported need of alcohol and drug abuse behavior (35%), being violent (32%) and angry (12.8%). Though a few, three percent of the respondents reported of having ideas of suicide or even body harming. The respondents working as sex workers reported of constantly being sad, angry and afraid of being judged by the people around them. They isolated themselves from the public since they felt that they have lost their dignity, and the community identifies them as dirty and worthless. They even did not want to go back to their homes, since they were afraid of being stigmatized and judged. The same situation was confirmed by community members during focus group discussions. They reported that the victims of human trafficking face a lot of emotional trauma especially those involved in prostitution. The girls in prostitution were reported to be always angry, use weed, alcohol and even drugs of several natures. This was also supported by FARAJA center officials who revealed that;

“The victims of human trafficking coming to our center suffer a lot of emotional challenges. They are always sad, fearful and angry sometimes. We understand, because we know through counseling they will be okay since we know the situation they have passed through was terrifying and saddening”.

Apart from anger, the respondents also reported to have the urge to use alcohol, cigarette and drugs. When asked, the respondents admitted to be smokers of either normal cigarettes or marijuana (*Bangi*). The reasons being just adapted habit upon their arrival or it helped them forget the ordeal they were facing. Further they explained that with marijuana the sensation was different as after smoking they did not feel shy to do anything coming their way. With the use of drugs the only few girls admitted having used illicit drugs such as cocaine, heroin, Khat (*mirungi*) and other forms of drugs. When discussing with them it was noted that some girls started taking drugs in small amount given by fellow friends with the aim of reducing fear, shyness when meeting with their customers who are cruel and eventually they become addicted. The following case from a face to face interview in Arusha Municipality exemplifies this case;

“In the beginning I never smoked neither did I take alcohol. But I always felt remorse every after meeting my clients. I thought of what I was doing and knew I was a sinner. I felt bad. I thought of my parents, their teachings and felt extremely bad. I told my friends who were a bit experienced than I was, and they introduced me to marijuana. I started taking it in small amount, but it helped me. I no longer feel bad though sometimes I think of my parents and cry.”

Accompanying the need of drug and alcohol abuse, the few respondents revealed that there are times they feel like committing suicide and even harming their body. This feeling comes about as the victims see themselves as unworthy and dirty, they generally feel that they have lost self worth and self esteem, and they develop feelings of hopelessness and helplessness. They feel like they have lost their dignity and cannot return to their families nor can they have a family of their own. This was reported mainly by respondents working in entertainment places such as bars and those working in commercial sex industry. The following respondents stated this during face to face interview;

“My boss tells me that I am dirty and worthless, that is true since my body is dirty. In a normal work day I sleep with three to five customers. They do all the dirty things on me. However, during weekends the number of customer increases. After the act, I always feel dirty and disgusting. I feel that I do not deserve to be living in this world. Much as it pains, I continue doing it as I need money to survive.”

The respondents also mentioned that due to the abuse they receive from their perpetrators and customers, they have developed a violent attitude in order to protect themselves. This was mainly the case with respondents working as bar attendants and those working in sexual industry. Since they were constantly abuse the victims developed a protective mechanism on their own or with their peers. In some cases they attacked their abusers using knives, razor blades, or any sharp object and in some cases they ganged and beat their abusers and robbed them. The following case from Kaloleni ward in Arusha Municipal Illustrates this;

“In several instances i have been raped by ruthless men. I used to cry for days after the incidences. I did nothing to defend myself letting them abuse me. One day my friend told me to carry a knife whenever I meet a client, since I could not know their intention. Also she told me to take the money before the act and not afterwards, since majority of them never pay after abusing you. Then on this particular day I remember a heavy structured men, wanted to use force on me, I managed to harm him with the knife, left him bleeding and ran. Since then I have used the knife and other tools to protect myself”.

Complementing the above impacts, moral impacts were also mentioned by the respondents. A good number of the respondents reported to have moral effects due to the abuse they have suffered since they were trafficked. They reported need of alcohol and drug abuse behavior

(35%), being violent (32%) and angry (12.8%). Though a few, three percent of the respondents reported of having ideas of suicide or even body harming. During focus group discussion the girls emphasized the importance of taking care and protecting themselves. In so doing they reported use of violent methods since pleading and use of humorous method will never work with their abusers. They reported that while working as sex workers they form sisterhood amongst themselves since they have no one to defend and protect them. They reported never going to the police, since going their meant more trouble to them. They revealed that in cases where they went to the police to file complaint against their abusers, they were the ones put in custody as violators of laws. So in avoiding those situation, they never took their cases to the police, instead they handled it using violence. Violence and theft by the victims of sex and labour trafficking have been reported in a number of studies worldwide. In a study conducted in East Africa by IOM (2008) it was reported that around a quarter of all trafficked respondents reported turning violent, while 24% reported to have anger issues. While angry the victims could become very violent and aggressive harming anyone who comes in contact with them while in this situation.

Substance abuse was also mentioned as a method of dealing with depression and other outcomes of trafficking. A number of the respondents mentioned the urge to use and substance abuse to feel calm and forget all the nightmares they face. A number of drugs and alcohol were mentioned to be used by the respondents. The common substance used was alcohol and marijuana which was readily available and affordable to them. Hard drugs such as cocaine and heroin were scarcely used and expensive, so only few of them used it. Substance abuse as means of forgetting suffering of sexual and labour exploitation has been mentioned in a number of studies. In a study by IOM (2008) in East Africa it was specifically mentioned that high levels of substance abuse were reported by those trafficked in the Kenya sample (33 respondents or 21%) and the Uganda sample (12 respondents or 18%). Also in a study by Shimba et al (2013) this was also revealed. In this study 30% of the respondents reported to be using marijuana and other hard drugs. The respondents justified the use of drugs as a way of calming their nerves and forgetting the ordeal they were in. According to UNODC (2008) trafficked victims may be subjected to substance abuse by their traffickers. Some trafficked women have described how they were forced to use drugs or alcohol to ensure their compliance and to enable them to take on more clients, work longer hours or perform objectionable or risky acts. In another instance, trafficked persons may also turn to substance abuse to alleviate the pain of their situation, often resulting in addiction, organ damage, malnutrition, needle-induced infections, overdose and death.

Suicidal ideation and self body harm was mentioned by only few respondents (3%). Although the percentage reported in this study was low, this does not mean that the victims do not think of body harm and suicide. It has been reported in several reports that the victims of human trafficking merely express their feelings. They prefer to keep quiet and conceal what they real feel inside since they are afraid and ashamed of being judged (IOM, 2008). So the study believes that, the respondents of the current study might have feared to reveal what they felt on issues related to suicidal thoughts and body self harm. Much as it is hard to grasp this information from the victims, different studies had similar findings as the current study. In a study by IOM (2008) only 8% of the respondents said they have harmed themselves and thought of suicide. This was also the case with Ligia (2015) who did a study in Cambodia to the victims of child trafficking. Ligia (2015) reported that Self-injury was reported by 8.8% of children (7.1% boys; 9.2% girls; $P = .82$) and at least 1 suicide attempt was reported by 5.4% (2.9% boys; 6% girls; $P = .39$). Twelve percent had self-injured or attempted suicide and 2% reported both.

3.3 Social impacts

According to Build Abroad (2019) social impact is how organizations, businesses or individuals' actions affect the surrounding community or individual. It may be the result of an activity, project, program or policy and the impact can be intentional or unintentional, as well as both positive or negative. The social impact can be felt by people directly associated with that organization or individual, or have a more far reaching effect on people in different communities, states and even countries. In case of human trafficking, the social impact of this action is obvious negative and the effects are mainly felt by the victims and their families. They range from the victims being stigmatized (43.8%), feeling unsafe (34%), denied job opportunities due to lack of trustworthy (39%), legal problems (22%) and lack of food and clothes (17%). Table 1.2 elaborates the effects.

Table 3.3 Social impact felt by the victims of human trafficking (n = 400)

Effect	Frequency		Percentage	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Stigma	175	225	43.8	56.2
Lack of Employment	156	244	39	61
Feeling unsafe	138	262	34	66
Legal problems	89	311	22	78
Lack of food and clothes	68	332	17	83

Source: Field findings 2019

The victims reported of being facing stigma from the community members and even their families. This was also discussed in focus groups and in interviews. The participants revealed that the victims of human trafficking are always alienated from the social circle. They tend to be marginalized and stigmatized when they try to be as normal beings. In Meru district the following was revealed;

“My daughter works in Dodoma in a bar, we as her parents have denied her permission to come back home since she will be a bad influence to her sisters”.

Also during a discussion with the victims, when asked about how they feel to go back home;

“I will not go back there, because the whole village regards me as a sinner just because I work in town. They all think I have HIV and I will transmit it to their kids. Even my father does not want me to stay at home regardless that he is the one who send me to work in town. So once you work in town you become like an alien in your own family”.

It was clear that, a good number of the victims were not ready to go back home to their families due to discrimination and stigma. Only 34.5% of the respondents were ready to be reintegrated back with their families while 65.5% of the respondents were not ready to go back home due to different reasons. But mainly it was due to fear of stigma, shame and discrimination from their communities.

The stigma felt by the victims in Arusha, relates to the same situation worldwide as in a report by IOM (2016) it is reported that the shame of sexual exploitation can lead to social ostracism for trafficked women and girls and is a fact of life for the victims all across the world. Families either disown their offspring or risk being disowned themselves by communities who believe that the fault lies with the victim and not the trafficker. In southern Africa, trafficked women from rural areas are often rejected by their families upon their return and hence they are forced to move back to urban areas and work in sex industry in order to survive. For them, commercial sex is the only way they know of earning a living. The report further explains that in other parts

of Africa, and elsewhere in Europe and South America, there is stigma of failure if trafficked victim returns without money or the promised wealth that going abroad was supposed to achieve. This is also reported by Dahal *et al* (2015) who did a research to returnees of human trafficking in Nepal and reports that the returnees find it close to impossible to find proper ways to reintegrate into their own society. Continued social stigma, lack of support, and limited opportunities for finding any means of survival cripple and isolate them to a maximum. The following case is also reported from his study which relates to the case studies reported in the current study;

“Even a glass of drinking water from the hands of a returnee is considered to be impure and unholy; their presence at any cultural or religious events is considered to be a bad omen. The trafficking returnees are always looked down upon and rejected socially. The short stay at the rehabilitation centers does provide some security, but it becomes completely different after coming out into the real world”.

Apart from stigma, the respondents complained of being discriminated in different places once they are seeking new job opportunities. They reported that the employers could not take them after knowing that they are victims of sex trafficking or labour servitude. The employers thought that the girls were thieves and not trustworthy person to be employed. Also due to their academic background they could not be hired into productive jobs since majority of them only knew how to read and write their names. They had problems in counting and reading properly. As a result they were sought to be employed in waitress and domestic job.

A significant percentage of the respondents also reported of feeling unsafe (22%) and also having legal problems (17%). As discussed in section above, a number of females interviewed reported being accused of destroying and stealing material things i.e. plates, glasses, mobile phones, etc. from their work places, and hence they were forced to pay. Failures to pay the victims were faced by legal cases. They were threatened to be jailed unless they pay the money or continue to work without salary. Some of the girls reported to escape from this kind of torture to new places. Despite their movement, they reported that they still felt unsafe and always feared that they will be caught by their former bosses and sent to jail. Apart from their bosses, the respondents working as sex workers reported of harming their clients while defending themselves. The girls had to run, fearing of being reported to authorities as the following victim explains;

“My client wanted unprotected sex, I refused but he wanted to force me threatening to beat me. I had to do something. We always carry knives and razor to protect ourselves. In this case I had to defend myself, so I took my razor and used it on his chest. He started bleeding and screaming. I had to run very fast from that guesthouse to my room. I packed my things and escaped knowing I will be caught. Since that day, I am afraid whenever I see a police officer”.

Worldwide victims of human trafficking have suffered from community and family stigma. They have been stigmatized and alienated from their families once they are reintegrated back. Families related to the victims either disowns their children or risk being disowned themselves by the communities. The communities believe that the victims and especially victims of sex trafficking are the ones to be blamed for what has happened to them and not another way around. This has been shown in different studies done to the victims' reintegration. In childreach (2013) study it was reported that repatriation of victims is extremely difficult as many families and communities are unwilling to accept trafficked children back either because of the financial burden or because of the strong stigma association with girls' previous employed as sex workers. Unfortunately, once a child in Nepal has been trafficked, the same child can go in and out of exploitation numerous times, even after repatriation. Elsewhere in

South Africa trafficked women from poor families are often rejected by their families upon their return, while in other parts of Africa, South America and Asia (IOM, 2008) reports that the stigma is more experienced to the victims if they return without the money or promised wealth. In extreme cases sex trafficking victims are often not first identified as victims but as criminals, blamed for their victimization and stigmatized by the labels people place on them. In a study of juvenile victims of sex trafficking, Mitchell, et al. (2009) found that juveniles involved in prostitution cases were more likely to be treated as victims (rather than delinquents) by law enforcement if they were younger, appeared frightened or their appearance was dirty, and if their case came to the attention of the police via an outside report.

3.3 Conclusion

From the above discussion it becomes evident that human trafficking has negative effect on the lives of the victims. Human trafficking has severe social and moral impact to its victims. The impacts range from feeling unsafe and denial of job opportunities due to lack of trustworthy and legal problems. They also tend to abuse alcohol and drugs, become thieves, violent and sometimes harm their bodies. All these happen as a result of different abuses and exploitation acts inflicted on them. The victims feel they have lost worthiness and dignity of the body and soul respectively. All these effects tend to damage the victims. The only way they can survive is through rehabilitation and reintegration. These include recovering their self-confidence and self-esteem, finding a suitable way of earning a living and, in the case of girls and women suspected of having been involved in prostitution, avoiding the stigma attached to prostitution

4. REFERENCES

- Build Abroad (2019). Social Impact: What does it real mean?
<https://buildabroad.org/2017/03/03/social-impact/>. Accessed on 22nd April, 2020.
- Childreach International (2013). Child trafficking in Nepal: Causes and Consequences. Pp 1-39. Accessed 2nd January, 2017.
- Dahal, P., Joshi S. K., and Swanhberg K. (2015). “We are looked down upon and rejected socially: qualitative study on the experiences of trafficking survivors in Nepal. Global Health Action 8: 29267.
- International Labour Organization (2012). Profits and poverty: The economics of forced labour.
https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_norm/@declaration/documents/publication/wcms_243027.pdf. Accessed on the 12th May, 2019. Pp 1 - 8.
- International Organization for Migration (2008). Human Trafficking in Eastern Africa, Research Assessment and Baseline. IOM. (2010). About IOM. pp 5 – 8. Retrieved on the 10th October, 2015, from <http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/about-iom/lang/en> (Accessed on 18th March, 2016).
- Kamazima S.R. (2009) Human Trafficking Baseline Assessment in Tanzania: Findings from selected regions. A Report published for International Organization for Migration. Pp 7-8.
- Ligia K., Katherine Y, and Nicola P. (2015). Exploitation, Violence, and Suicide Risk Among Child and Adolescent Survivors of Human Trafficking in the Greater Mekong Subregion. JAMA Pediatr. 2015; 169(9):e152278. doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2015.2278. Accessed on 4th May, 2020.
- Mathias A. (2011). Child trafficking in Tanzania: Exploring Experiences of trafficked girls in Dar Es Salaam. Unpublished Master of Philosophy thesis in gender and Development. Faculty of Health Promotion and Development. University of Bergen. Pp 125.

- Mtewele G. (2012). The Influence of Traditional Customs and Practices on Girls Secondary Education in Morogoro Region in Tanzania. Unpublished Thesis submitted for partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of master of philosophy in comparative and international education institute of educational research. University of Oslo. Norway. Pp 101.
- Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center (OVC) (2012). Human Trafficking. Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center. Pp 22.
- Quora (2019). What does it mean to be moral? *World Development*, 41 (1), 67-82. doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2012.05.023. Accessed on 2nd May, 2020.
- Shimba C., Magesa R., Magombola D. (2013) The Root Causes of the Girl Prostitution in Tanzania. A Case of Arusha Municipality, *IISTE Journal of Developing Countries studies*, ISSN 2225-0565, Vol.3, No.9, 2013. Pp 80-89.
- United Nations Development Programme (2011). Human Development Report: Sustainability and Equity: A Better Future for All, Published for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Pp 185.
- United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (2008). Human Trafficking: An Overview, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Vienna. Pp 1 – 10 Available at <https://www.unodc.org/pdf/gift%20brochure.pdf>, last retrieved on 2nd July 2018.
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2014). *United nations convention against transnational organized crime and the protocols thereto*, Vienna: Vienna International Centre. Pp 42. Retrieved on 16th may, 2018. Available at https://www.unodc.org/documents/middleeastandnorthafrica/organised-crime/united_nations_convention_against_transnational_organized_crime_and_the_protocols_thereto.pdf.
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2008). *Challenges to the Implementation of the National Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons, Brasilia, 2-4 October 2007*. Report of the UN.GIFT regional event for Latin America and the Caribbean. Pp 27 – 34. Retrieved on 11 May, 2017. Available at <https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/2008/HumanTrafficking-AnOverview.pdf>.