

THE CAUSES OF TRAFFICKING

SUPPLY

SOCIO-CULTURAL

- ◆ Illiteracy, inadequate educational and employment opportunities, and a lack of gender perspective in education.
- ◆ Patriarchy, which is the main cause of discrimination against women and girl-children.
- ◆ Erosion of family structures, and the pursuit of consumerism encourages the sale of women and children.
- ◆ Racial discrimination, racism and related intolerance which makes the women from such communities more vulnerable.
- ◆ The media and new technologies, through advertising and the commercialization of sex, present women's bodies as objects solely for sexual pleasure.

ECONOMIC

- ◆ Economic disparities within countries, and between countries and regions, is the primary cause of growth in trafficking.
- ◆ Feminization of poverty because women constitute 70% of the world's poor and they support their families through precarious employment in the growing informal sector.
- ◆ Globalization and its differential impact on women through economic restructuring and transition with cuts on social spending which affect women.
- ◆ Economic liberalization which relaxes controls and opens borders between countries, facilitating population mobility and illegal migration.
- ◆ A lucrative business with high monetary returns, because women are sold and resold. As well, there is less danger of being apprehended, which attracts criminals.
- ◆ The downfall of communist regimes in Eastern and Central Europe, and the difficulties of an economy in transition.

POLITICAL

- ◆ Feminization of international migration as women enter the labour market, together with the lack of regulation for labour migration, which provides increased opportunities and channels for trafficking.
- ◆ Civil and military conflicts push people to flee their countries. Of the 25 million refugees in the world, 80% are women and children; they become easy prey for traffickers.
- ◆ The growth of transnational crime and the expansion of drug trafficking networks encourage other forms of exploitation.
- ◆ Weak law enforcement mechanisms and measures to penalize offenders.
- ◆ Corruption of police, law enforcers, officials & peacemakers.

DEMAND

SOCIO-CULTURAL

- ◆ Male attitudes and perceptions of women in society, and women's unequal socio-economic status.
- ◆ Pornography and its role in the growth in demand for sex.
- ◆ This is coupled with an ever-increasing use of the internet as its vehicle and as a means for traffickers to market women and children.
- ◆ Patriarchy, resulting in the unequal power relations between men and women and in the discrimination of women.
- ◆ Consumerist behaviour with the commodification and commercialization of sex, leading to treatment of women's bodies as commodities and objects of sexual pleasure.

ECONOMIC

- ◆ Demand by employers for an unskilled and cheap labour market. Women's labour is usually in low status work in the domestic and entertainment spheres and in the informal sector.
- ◆ An expanding commercial sex industry and increased demand for sex. The variety of ways it merchandises women and children include: prostitution, sex trafficking, sex tourism, mail-order brides, strip clubs, topless bars, and so on. The growth in child sexual exploitation is due to male client preferences for younger women and girls because of the fear of HIV infection.
- ◆ Development policies promoting tourism, and patterns of development that depend on temporary migrant workers.

POLITICAL

- ◆ Military bases, both past and present, have created an enormous prostitution infrastructure.
- ◆ Unequal and exploitative political and economic relations dictated by the North which results in the deterioration of conditions of life in the South.
- ◆ Restrictive migration policies which have decreased the possibilities for regular migration.
- ◆ Sales of arms and the increase of armed conflict within and between countries with the consequent increase of displaced people and refugees who fall victim to traffickers.
- ◆ Weak law enforcement mechanisms and measures to penalize offenders.

Reprinted from *Trafficking in Women and Children: Information and Workshop Kit* (see page 25)