CHILDREN BOUGHT AND SOLD

WE CAN STOP IT

CACT
Campaign Against Child Trafficking
ABOUT THIS BOOKLET

Children are bought and sold within and across the country everyday. Some end up in selling their body, some are forced into labour, begging or other such forms of illegal activities. They are all victims of trafficking. Can we as a society tolerate our children being bought and sold? This booklet is a way to learn more about 'Child Trafficking' and preventing it.

Trafficking of children often goes unnoticed. Many of us do not know enough or do not understand the phenomenon of 'child trafficking'. Some of us who do know often feel that it does not happen to us – it happens to others. The Campaign Against Child Trafficking (CACT) has been launched to combat this heinous violation of children’s rights.

The booklet is the first in the series of training and awareness materials being developed by CACT. The others include two booklets on available national laws and policies and international legal instruments addressing the problem.
RECALL THESE FAMILIAR SIGHTS...

Trafficking of children for begging — so what if it is illegal! For some it means huge profits, even more so if it is across borders.

We see these children on the streets every day. Just who are these children? Where do they come from? How come they are begging in our city? Ever wondered? Why are some of them crippled or disabled?

They could well be children trafficked by an organised syndicate or mafia or kidnapped, sold, sometimes maimed and forced to beg. Their daily earnings are kept by the ringleaders of the trade tossing crumbs of a bare survival to the hapless child...

The notorious but lucrative ‘Child Trade’ has now replaced the ‘Silk Trade’ from District Murshidabad in West Bengal. Little girls and boys are sent to Saudi Arabia during Haj pilgrimage for begging. Out of the national total of 1000-1500 children flown out every year, at least 400 are from District Murshidabad alone. These children ‘consent’ to their enslavement after rice & chicken meals at Mecca with free Pepsi reaching them. But many children like Sageera (from Bhawanipur village, District Murshidabad) never return home. No trace of her and many other girls who routinely ‘disappear’ every year into slavery and perhaps to their death...
We see working children around us. They work in our homes, on the streets, in factories, sweatshops, hotels, farms and agricultural fields and a myriad other places. In fact there is seldom an occupation or sector where children are not to be found. What we often do not know is that many of them are trafficked.

A 13-14 year old domestic help taking care of the entire household needs, including feeding the children of the family who may be younger or same age as her or even older — this is surely not unknown to us. Many such children are now also being recruited through agencies that offer services of a domestic servant. Have we ever thought of where they come from and how do they reach the city? The last thing on our minds is how will they take on the responsibility of the household chores when we ourselves are unable to do so. But we still employ them. Indeed it suits our philanthropic self as we find satisfaction in helping a poor helpless child and her/his family. Never do we question why this child cannot have the same rights as our own children.
We see him every day. We even use his services without batting an eyelid or asking, why is he here? Not at home... not in school but earning a paltry income for survival. He may have been trafficked from his native village to our big cities by coercion or consent. His parents were probably paid a sum of Rs. 5,000 or 10,000 for procurement.

Why are these children doing this hazardous work on a construction site? They are probably bonded labourers trafficked by some labour contractor in collusion with some lorry driver to work for a pittance, perhaps to get their parents out of debt bondage...
Entertainment and sports always attract us and knowingly or unknowingly we also allow the use and abuse of children through it.

We have seen pictures of little boys fixed on to the backs of racing camels. Smaller the boy, higher is his price. These are little malnourished and underweight boys trafficked from India and Bangladesh to UAE as camel-racing jockeys, sometimes as young as two years old. They are kidnapped or sold by their parents to the agents. Here they face near-starvation diet as the lighter the weight of the child (as low as four kg.), the better for the business! As the little boys shriek in terror at the starting line... their cries excite the camels, who then race faster. It’s part of the game plan… the boys may be trampled, killed and then dragged to death... but who cares?

Although the law in UAE now prohibits using child camel jockeys, racing is conducted privately in remote desert venues beyond official control by gamblers. So these little boys are still in demand.

How many children join the local circuses as famished acrobats? Is this a trade, or a cover-up for a trafficked child with no other survival options... no other skills... no schooling? Such children are also found in the ‘Jatras’ in Orissa and in ‘Nautankis’ of North India in similar conditions. Most of them are girls.
Child marriage is common even today. Many young girls are sold into marriage. Marriage is also a means to traffic young girls into labour or prostitution.

In October 1991, nine-year-old Ameena from Hyderabad became a familiar face in the news. Purchased for Rs. 10,000 by a 75-year-old Arab Sheikh Yahyah-al-Sageih, she was his fourth victim in six months via Mumbai to Middle East. Under the legal cover of marriage to an old man from the Middle East, many of these ‘child brides’ never cross the Indian border for they are used, abused, and sold to the brothel owners of Mumbai. Ameena was rescued, but many young girls like Ameena are ‘sold’ into marriage across states within the country too. Others, who face a similar fate, never return....
The first thing that comes to our mind when we talk of ‘trafficking’ is ‘prostitution’. Do we know that nearly 3,000 women and children are trafficked everyday across the world? Many of them end up in prostitution or sex servitude.

A 12-year-old girl is tricked into a situation where she is taken away from her family and transported to another place, even another country. Once there, she is sold like an animal to a brothel owner. From this point on the scenario is very much the same. She is gang-raped and tortured for days until she finally ‘agrees’ to sleep with as many as 10 men a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, for several years until she eventually acquires an illness that deteriorates her body...she dies...
We want to see the progress being made in information technology, entertainment and tourism. But must this all be at the cost of our children?

A little child with a tourist ‘uncle’ on the beaches of Goa, Kovalam, Puri, or even in the tourist resorts of Udaipur. This could be anywhere. A familiar sight that would perhaps go unnoticed, except that this child may be a victim of paedophilia or pornography, in exchange for a few trinkets, some money, a new dress or may be a new school bag. Remember, these paedophiles* are not some perverted sex-starved young males as the common myth goes. They may be highly respectable, ‘well settled’ married men with children of their own and they are combining business with some ‘fun’ on a trip. Or they may be seeking child sex within their families or neighbourhoods or schools.

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* Paedophiles are people with sexual desires for children. There are two types: the preferential and the situational abusers. A minority of abusers are women, who mainly go for adolescent boys. Preferential paedophiles have a clear yearning for sex with children. Situational abusers prefer an adult partner, but find a child less threatening to their self-esteem.
Lest you think we are making this up, here are two cases...

**The Freddy Peats Case**

Freddy Peats aged 76 at the time of his conviction on 15 March 1996 was a friendly old man with white flowing beard cycling on the Goan beach or through the streets of Margao with poor children he befriended. He ran a shelter for poor children called ‘Gurukul’ in Margao, Goa.

In 1991, a young local boy complained to his parents of pain in his testicles after visiting Peats’ ‘Gurukul’. After the boy’s father lodged a police complaint who raided the orphanage, gory details of the organised sexual exploitation of boy children emerged...

**The Nature of the Abuse**

The children who testified against Peats stated that they were required to sleep in the nude and engage in oral-cum-anal sex with him and other foreign nationals who came to the ‘Gurukul’ or took them to their hotel rooms. He often injected something in the boys’ testicles that caused both enlargement and pain. Peats took their photographs engaged in various sexual activities or posing in the nude or writhing in pain after an injection or circumcision. With their arms and feet tied and injection given, Peats would flog these 3 to 7 year olds on the buttocks, the cameraman would take his time to shoot their agonised faces shrieking in terror...Later, the children would be gifted with money, sweets or stamps.
Helmut Brinkmann Case

Helmut Brinkmann, aged 53 years, a German escaped from India during the appeal period. Apart from the nature of the crime the case also revealed how blind, as a society, we are to this kind of violence. It also brought up both the police and judicial apathy on crimes against children.

Brinkmann was convicted by the trial court on 6 February 1999. But when he went into appeal he was acquitted. The judge ruled that the child was an accomplice in the crime. No medical expert advice was sought and the judge’s personal opinion prevailed despite evidence to the contrary.

Even before another appeal could be filed, Brinkmann was out of the country, never to return.

The State failed in its duty to apprehend the culprit and was responsible for the delay in filing the appeal. The judges dismissed the appeal on the grounds that ‘it would be virtually impossible to have notice served on him outside the country’ and that ‘it would not be possible to make the respondent/accused come back to India for hearing the appeal or to serve the sentence in case we decide to set aside the acquittal order’.

The Supreme Court too rejected the petition on the same grounds leaving the child traumatised even further.

Are we aware that any child, rich or poor, can be a victim of pornography? Child pornography through the Internet calls for serious intervention before our children fall prey to the allurement of the paedophiles or ‘sex traders’ on the net.
WHAT IS CHILD TRAFFICKING?

As early as mid-sixteenth century some people were referred to as 'traffickers' but it was a neutral term implying neither wrongdoing nor internal or cross-border movements. Traffickers were synonymous with traders. By the end of the sixteenth century it was referred to as the sale of illicit goods, often smuggling of contraband drugs and weapons, but not yet of human beings across the border for profit. Towards the end-nineteenth century, the term trafficking also referred to the illicit trade of human beings as merchandise and their movement within a country or across the borders.

Today we can define Child Trafficking as:

'The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons below the age of 18 years, (legally or illegally), within or across borders, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of deception, of the abuse of power or of position of vulnerability or, of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person, with the intention or knowledge that it is likely to cause or lead to exploitation'.

- Definition adapted from the United Nations Office of Drugs Control and Crime Prevention (UNODCCP)

The following elements put together constitute a case of Child Trafficking:

- Involvement of the child(ren), that is, person(s) below 18 years of age as defined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by India in 1992.
- Movement of the child(ren) from one place to another, either by way of procurement, sale, purchase, recruitment, transportation, transfer or harbouring.
- Use of force, threat, deception or fraud.
- Some consideration (in cash or in kind).
- Gain or profit of some other person.
- Exploitation of the child(ren) either during the process of being trafficked or as the end result of trafficking.
Some known Forms and Purposes of Child Trafficking

- **Labour**
  - Bonded labour
  - Domestic work
  - Agricultural labour
  - Construction work
  - Carpet industry, garment industry, fish/shrimp export as well as other sites of work in the formal and informal economy

- **Illegal Activities**
  - Begging
  - Organ trade
  - Drug peddling and smuggling

- **Sexual Exploitation**
  - Forced prostitution
  - Socially and religiously sanctified forms of prostitution
  - Sex tourism
  - Pornography

- **Entertainment and Sports**
  - Circus, dance troupes, etc.
  - Camel jockey

- **For and through Marriage**

- **For and through Adoption**
WHY ARE CHILDREN TRAFFICKED?

We are often told the reason is 'Poverty'.

But poverty is by itself not the cause. It is merely the most visible manifestation of a much deeper malaise. It is critically and inextricably linked to the following:

- Unequal distribution of resources
- Lack of proper land reforms
- Food insecurity despite buffer stocks of food grains rotting in the godowns
- Globalisation, the resulting growth in unemployment and increasing gap between the rich and the poor
- Lack of proper implementation of poverty alleviation programmes
- Lack of adequate and appropriate rehabilitation and resettlement policies for persons affected by development projects such as big dams, mining, building of national highways and metros, etc., or for those who are victims of forced evictions
- Lack of well planned, timely and effective programmes to deal with any natural or man-made disaster
- Lack of free and universal elementary education for all children
- (not to be forgotten!) The vote bank politics with the poor being a necessary condition for the sustenance of all political parties

All these make children even more vulnerable to being trafficked.

In Bolangir, Orissa, people have been selling their children due to food starvation. In the Sundarbans, West Bengal, which is cut off by waters for most part of the year, where people have to move out for a bare minimum subsistence or else they remain unemployed with no scope for agriculture, young girls are sold into marriage and boys are sent out for labour.
For a child on the streets or railway platforms or in other similar circumstances, the threat to being trafficked looms large.

These children fall prey to trafficking for a whole range of illegal activities - begging, drug peddling, prostitution (including male child prostitution). The real problem, however, lies in lack of appropriate family environment, shelter and alternative care. This problem is compounded by the inability to monitor and follow-up children placed in alternative care so as to ensure their well-being.

In today's globalised, liberalised and consumerist world children too have become commodities.

Children’s images projected by the media too are highly sexualised, for example the Barbie Doll, a toy who spawned a sexualised girl icon of Hollywood, Brook Shields. Later the fashion industry for children marketed its clothing and accessories across the world that is now in vogue in Indian cities of the sexualised little girl...

Thus, childern become a newer and younger sexual commodity in the market place who can be easily possessed, used, abused and cast aside without a murmur, as they are 'voiceless and docile'. Adult women especially independent women, striding forth are perceived as threatening in a man's world...hence the obvious target — the child either inside the family or outside in a poor and deprived environment is easy prey...
Customs, traditions and religious practices also do not spare children.

As much as we would hate to accept this, we do follow religious practices and traditions that have for centuries allowed sexual servitude of young girls to the temple priests — all in the name of dedicating them to gods and goddesses. Examples of this are to be found in the Devadasi, Jogin and Matamma traditions practised in some parts of India. It is now well established that this dedication is a gateway to trafficking of girls for sex servitude.

Growth of the tourism industry without any checks and balances to protect children from the lust and greed of the tourist guest; unregulated outreach of information technology and cyber pornography; superstitions and beliefs that suggest 'sex with a virgin as a cure for sexually transmitted infections and sexual dysfunctions', are all causes.

Child Trafficking is about mafias and nexus. It is also about 'demand' and 'supply' forces.

There is a growing demand from people who survive on making profits out of the situation of the child, and on the other hand is the powerlessness and helplessness of the child that makes their supply easy. Organised syndicates and mafias operate within the knowledge of the authorities and they often have a political back up. 'Child Export Rackets' or 'Child Smuggling Rackets' are some such organised rackets involved in buying and selling of children for adoption. Then there are 'Organ-trade Rackets', 'Begging Mafias', 'Drug Mafias' and so on and so forth. Many children are also kidnapped for trafficking.
In the year 2000...

6562 cases of kidnapping and abduction of children for purposes that qualify as forms of trafficking were reported to the police.

Of these, 37 cases were of kidnapping for adoption, 15 for begging, 4 for camel racing, 1092 for illicit intercourse, 4871 for marriage, 190 for prostitution, 16 for sale, 1 for selling body parts, 63 for slavery and 273 for unlawful activity.

1.19 percent of these cases involved children below 10 years, 22.96 percent involved children aged 11 to 15 years and 75.85 percent involved those aged 16 to 18 years.

Amongst other crimes related to trafficking

147 cases were for procuration of minor girls
15 for selling of minor girls for prostitution
53 for buying of minor girls for prostitution
660 for exposure and abandonment of children

If this is about reported cases, those that go unreported add to the sordid tale!

Source: Crime in India 2000.
Lack of adequate legal framework to protect the child and weak enforcement of laws allows children to be trafficked with impunity.

More than anything else Child Trafficking is about attitudes.

We allow a child to serve us as a domestic servant and take care of the needs of our children either younger to her/him or same age or for that matter much older? We allow laws to be passed that ban contesting for a political office by persons with more than two children because it is easy to disown and abandon the extra child. While we do not allow unwed mothers, we allow our girls to either abort the child in secrecy or to deliver the child and then sell it off or abandon it. A man will perhaps not divorce his wife who cannot conceive if the wife allows him to buy a young girl, sleep with her, impregnate her so that she can be a surrogate mother to his child, and then abandon her forever. As we buy a computer and an internet connection for our children to help them access information and knowledge, we either fail to notice the vulnerability of our children to cyber pornography or do not want to notice it as that would imply talking to children about sexuality and sexual behaviour, a subject tabooed for discussion in the family.

Always Remember!

- Children are the easiest targets for trafficking
- Trafficking of children can never be for their well-being
- All others involved are assured of high returns with low investment
- Children exploited at tender age end up as disempowered, illiterate and unskilled adults, thus perpetuating the poverty cycle.
BREAKING MYTHS

Myth One: The child had consented
With children there is no question of consent. It is always coercion, threat or abuse that is then construed as consent. The consent of a child is of no consequence as they are ill informed of what awaits them at the end by duping, trickery and fraud. The age of consent is thus vital. In reality, these are blame-the-victim arguments used to let the culprit go scot-free and shift the blame squarely on the child victim itself! The devious persuasions of powerful and patriarchal structures carry on unabated.

Myth Two: Family is always the safest haven
'Family' is a place of nurturance, protection and care for the child. Child protection is the primary duty of every family where a child is born. But that does not always happen. Today it is well established that often child abuse and child trafficking takes place with the connivance of the adult family members especially the powerful men-folk who are the key violators of children. For children are seen as their parents' private property who can be sold or bartered away in times of distress. But human rights of children are absolute and indivisible.

Myth Three: The 'problem' is 'out there', it doesn't affect me
It affects 'other' children not ours. in reality, in this fast-paced world the Internet has brought the Paedophile stalking our children in our homes! Websites are devoted to pornography using children in abusive contexts. How safe are our children from the organised mafia/syndicates/groups who are on the look-out for potential targets? Moreover, kidnappers do not target any poor, starving children. It may be any unaccompanied child who is made the target. The child can be ours.
The more we turn our face away the more the problem comes right back to us! Can we afford to shut our eyes, our ears, our conscience when we confront a child victim? Because if we do so, we perpetuate the crime and are party to it by this ‘culture of silence’. In fact, this culture of silence only condones the heinous crimes that are meted out to all our children, not just their children!
WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT IT?

If confronted with a distressed child who has been or is being trafficked, how would you face the situation? Turn your face away? Ostrich-like, hoping the problem would go away and spare your conscience? But the problem comes right back staring at our children, who are now under threat from both poverty and development alike!

Instead you may choose to:

- Rush to the authorities, the Police Station or Child-line or perhaps call the nearest NGO working in this field in your area/city and report the matter. For Child Line you can dial 1098 from anywhere in the country.
- Not avoid children in difficulty like we avoid road accidents. Help the child if you can. Always remember that the child may need medical/psychological attention immediately. The crime has to be reported, and child victim has to be kept in some institutional care in the interim period until s/he is produced before a magistrate in the court.
- Campaign in your neighbourhood/school/university/office by collecting signatures against child trafficking or by collecting small donations for a concerned NGO working in this field and/or boycotting goods made by child labour or exposing the perpetrators of this crime through the media by calling up the Press immediately.
- Advocate for policy and legal reform to ensure protection to children.
- Write about it in newspapers and magazines, if possible. Remember, do not make it sensual and please do not expose the child as that would lead to further victimisation.
- If you are an artist, use your knowledge and expertise to draw attention to the problem.

Indeed we can all be an agent of change of a humane society that protects all its children and their fundamental rights not just on paper but as a living practice.
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In the year 2001...

5598 cases of kidnapping and abduction of children for purposes that qualify as forms of trafficking were reported to the police.

Of these, 45 cases were of kidnapping for adoption, 24 for begging, 0 for camel racing, 952 for illicit intercourse, 4250 for marriage, 61 for prostitution, 21 for sale, 1 for selling body parts, 57 for slavery and 178 for unlawful activity.

1.93 percent of these cases involved children below 10 years, 20.16 percent involved children aged 11 to 15 years and 77.90 percent involved those aged 16 to 18 years.

Amongst other crimes related to trafficking

138 cases were for procuration of minor girls
8 for selling of minor girls for prostitution
6 for buying of minor girls for prostitution
678 for exposure and abandonment of children

If this is about reported cases, those that go unreported add to the sordid tale!

CACT

CACT, the Campaign Against Child Trafficking in India is part of the International Campaign against Child Trafficking (ICaCT), supported by the tdh Federation in Geneva and its other European chapters. The International campaign is functional in six regions namely South East Asia, India, South and West Africa, Europe and Latin America.

Formally launched in New Delhi on 12 December 2001, CACT presently extends to 16 States — Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Delhi, Goa, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Uttaranchal, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

We believe that all children have a right to survival, development, protection and participation. Trafficking of children is one of the worst violations of these rights.

Our vision is a world where children are not seen as commodities to be bought and sold in the open market, a world where humanity is founded upon freedom, dignity and happiness of children and not upon their exploitation and abuse.

Our Mission is to STOP CHILD TRAFFICKING!