

India

Trafficking

As of February 1998, there were 200 Bangladeshi children and women awaiting repatriation in different Indian shelters. ("Boys, rescued in India while being smuggled to become jockeys in camel races," www.elsiglo.com, 19 February 1998)

India, along with Thailand and the Philippines, has 1.3 million children in its sex-trade centers. The children come from relatively poorer areas and are trafficked to relatively richer ones. (Soma Wadhwa, "For sale childhood," *Outlook*, 1998)

In cross border trafficking, India is a sending, receiving and transit nation. Receiving children from Bangladesh and Nepal and sending women and children to Middle Eastern nations is a daily occurrence. (Executive Director of SANLAAP, Indrani Sinha, Paper on Globalization and Human Rights")

India and Paksitan are the main destinations for children under 16 who are trafficked in south Asia. (Masako Iijima, "S. Asia urged to unite against child prostitution," *Reuters*, 19 June 1998)

More than 40% of 484 prostituted girls rescued during major raids of brothels in Bombay in 1996 were from Nepal. (Masako Iijima, "S. Asia urged to unite against child prostitution," *Reuters*, 19 June 1998)

In India, Karnataka, Andha Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu are considered "high supply zones" for women in prostitution. Bijapur, Belgaum and Kolhapur are common districts from which women migrate to the big cities, as part of an organised trafficking network. (Central Welfare Board, Meena Menon, "The Unknown Faces")

Districts bordering Maharashtra and Karnataka, known as the "devadasi belt," have trafficking structures operating at various levels. The women here are in prostitution either because their husbands deserted them, or they are trafficked through coercion and deception Many are devadasi dedicated into prostitution for the goddess Yellamma. In one Karnataka brothel, all 15 girls are devadasi. (Meena Menon, "The Unknown Faces")

Hundreds, if not thousands, of Bangladeshi women and children are held in foreign prisons, jails, shelters and detention centers awaiting repatriation. Many have been

held for years. In India, 26 women, 27 girls, 71 boys and 13 children of unknown gender are held in Lilua Shelter, Calcutta; Sheha Shelter, Calcutta; Anando Ashram, Calcutta; Alipur Children's Home, Delhi; Nirmal Chaya Children's Home, Delhi; Prayas Observation House for Boys; Delhi; Tihar Jail, Delhi; Udavam Kalanger, Bangalore; Umar Khadi, Bangaore; Kishalay, West Bengal; Kuehbihar, West Bengal and Baharampur, West Bengal. (Fawzia Karim Firoze and Salma Ali of the Bangladesh National Women Layer Association, " Bangladesh Country Paper: Law and Legislation")

Women and children from India are sent to nations of the Middle East daily. Girls in prostitution and domestic service in India, Pakistan and the Middle East are tortured, held in virtual imprisonment, sexually abused, and raped. (Indrani Sinha, SANLAAP India, "Paper on Globalization and Human Rights")

In Bombay, children as young as 9 are bought for up to 60,000 rupees, or US\$2,000, at auctions where Arabs bid against Indian men who believe sleeping with a virgin cures gonorrhea and syphilis. (Robert I. Freidman, "India's Shame: Sexual Slavery and Political Corruption Are Leading to An AIDS Catastrophe," *The Nation*, 8 April 1996)

160,000 Nepalese women are held in India's brothels. (Executive Director of SANLAAP, Indrani Sinha, Paper on Globalization and Human Rights")

Approximately 50,000, or half of the women in prostitution in Bombay, are trafficked from Nepal. (Robert I. Freidman, "India's Shame: Sexual Slavery and Political Corruption Are Leading to An AIDS Catastrophe," *The Nation*, 8 April 1996)

The brothels of India hold between 100,000 and 160,000 Nepalese women and girls, 35 percent were taken on the false pretext of marriage or a good job. (Radhika Coomaraswamy, UN Special Report on Violence Against Women, Gustavo Capdevila, *IPS*, 2 April 1997)

About 5,000-7,000 Nepalese girls are trafficked to India every day. 100,000-160,000 Nepalese girls are prostituted in brothels in India. About 45,000 Nepalese girls are in the brothels of Bombay and 40,000 in Calcutta. (Women's groups in Nepal, 'Trafficking in Women and Children: The Cases of Bangladesh, pp.8 & 9, UBINIG, 1995)

Calcutta is one of the important transit points for the traffickers for Bombay and to Pakistan. 99% women are trafficked out of Bangladesh through land routes along the border areas of Bangladesh and India, such as Jessore, Satkhira, and Rajshahi. (*Trafficking in Women and Children: The Cases of Bangladesh*, pp.18 & 19, UBINIG, 1995)

In shelters in India, there are 200 Bangladeshi women and children who have been trafficked awaiting repatriation.

(<http://www.webpage.com/hindu/daily/980220/03/03200004.htm>, 19 February 1998)

Of the 5,000-7,000 Nepalese girls trafficked into India yearly, the average age over the past decade has fallen from 14-16 years old to 10-14 years old. (CATW - Asia Pacific, *Trafficking in Women and Prostitution in the Asia Pacific*)

In Bombay, one brothel has only Nepalese women, who men buy because of their golden skin and docile personalities. (Robert I. Freidman, "India's Shame: Sexual Slavery and Political Corruption Are Leading to An AIDS Catastrophe," *The Nation*, 8 April 1996)

2.5% of prostitutes in India are Nepalese, and 2.7% are Bangladeshi. ("Devadasi System Continues to Legitimise Prostitution: The Devadasi Tradition and Prostitution," *TOI*, 4 December 1997)

Some Indian men believe that it is good luck to have sex with scalp-eczema afflicted prostitutes. Infants with the condition, called "pus babies," are sold by their parents to brothels for a premium. (Robert I. Freidman, "India's Shame: Sexual Slavery and Political Corruption Are Leading to An AIDS Catastrophe," *The Nation*, 8 April 1996)

70% of students surveyed at a wealthy high school seek a career in organized crime, citing their reasoning as "good money and good fun." (surveyed student, [Robert I. Freidman, "India's Shame: Sexual Slavery and Political Corruption Are Leading to An AIDS Catastrophe," *The Nation*, 8 April 1996])

Methods and Techniques of Traffickers

Every year between 5,000 and 7,000 Nepalese girls are trafficked into the red light districts in Indian cities. Many of the girls are barely 9 or 10 years old. 200,000 to over 250,000 Nepalese women and girls are already in Indian brothels. The girls are sold by poor parents, tricked into fraudulent marriages, or promised employment in towns only to find themselves in Hindustan's brothels. They're locked up for days, starved, beaten, and burned with cigarettes until they learn how to service up to 25 clients a day. Some girls go through 'training' before being initiated into prostitution, which can include constant exposure to pornographic films, tutorials in how to 'please' customers, repeated rapes. (Soma Wadhwa, "For sale childhood," *Outlook*, 1998)

Trafficking in women and girls is easy along the 1,740 mile-long open border between India and Nepal. Trafficking in Nepalese women and girls is less risky than smuggling narcotics and electronic equipment into India. Traffickers ferry

large groups of girls at a time without the hassle of paperwork or threats of police checks. The procurer-pimp-police network makes the process even smoother. Bought for as little as Rs (Nepalese) 1,000, girls have been known to fetch up to Rs 30,000 in later transactions. Police are paid by brothel owners to ignore the situation. Girls may not leave the brothels until they have repaid their debt, at which time they are sick, with HIV and/or tuberculosis, and often have children of their own. (Soma Wadhwa, "For sale childhood," *Outlook*, 1998)

The areas used by traffickers to procure women and girls are the isolated districts of Sindhupalchow, Makwanpur, Dhading and Khavre, Nepal where the population is largely illiterate. (Soma Wadhwa, "For sale childhood," *Outlook*, 1998)

Health and Well-being

Of the 218 Nepalese girls rescued in February 1996 from a Bombay police raid, 60-70% of them were HIV positive. (Tim McGirk "Nepal's Lost Daughters, 'India's soiled goods,'" *Nepal/India News*, 27 January 1997)

Cases

Activists discovered inter-state trafficking in teenaged girls from poor families in 24 Parganas North districts. More than 300 teenagers from Deganga, Harwa and Bashirhat may have been lured by false marriages to Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Punjab. 32 victims from six villages have been identified. After the girl was taken from her home village she would be sold for Rs 2,500 to Rs 10,000, depending on the number of middlemen involved. Those who escaped said the girls were watched all the time and not allowed to speak to anyone outside their room. Any attempt to resist resulted in brutal torture. All their "earnings" was taken away by the so-called husbands or mistresses. The "husbands" would occasionally write from fake addresses to their parents to avoid arousing any suspicion. Women organized a rally to protest the inaction of police, who they suspect knew about the trafficking. (Mumtaz Khatun, Kolsur Nari Vikas Kendra, Centre of Communication and Development, Madhyamgram, *The Times of India News Service*, 1 October 1997)

A twenty year old Bangladeshi woman escaped prostitution in Calcutta. A year before she had been sold for Rs. 10,000 to men who forced her into prostitution and tortured her. She later escaped to become a maid, then escaped from that to seek help from police. Along with others, her husband was arrested by police. She informed police that she knew a lot of Bangladeshi girls in Calcutta who were being prostituted. (Ittefak report, 8 March 1993, *Trafficking in Women and Children: The Cases of Bangladesh*, pp. 29 & 30, Ittefak, 5 March 1993, UBINIG, 1995)

13-year-old Mira of Nepal was offered a job as a domestic worker in Bombay, India. She arrived at a brothel on Bombay's Falkland Road, where tens of

thousands of young women are displayed in row after row of zoo-like animal cages. Her father had been duped into giving her to a trafficker. When she refused to have sex, she was dragged into a torture chamber in a dark alley used for 'breaking in' new girls. She was locked in a narrow, windowless room without food or water. On the fourth day, one of the madam's thugs goonda wrestled her to the floor and banged her head against the concrete until she passed out. When she awoke, she was naked; a rattan cane smeared with pureed red chili peppers shoved into her vagina. Later she was raped by the goonda. Afterwards, she complied with their demands. The madam told Mira that she had been sold to the brothel for 50,000 rupees (about US\$1,700), that she had to work until she paid off her debt. Mira was sold to a client who then became her pimp. (Robert I. Freidman, "India's Shame: Sexual Slavery and Political Corruption Are Leading to An AIDS Catastrophe," *The Nation*, 8 April 1996)

In 1982, 13 year old Tulasa was abducted from a village near Kathmandu in Nepal and sold to a brothel in Bombay. She was dressed in European-style clothes and taken to luxury hotels to serve mostly Arab clients until a hotel manager called the police. Hospitalized, Tulasa was found to be suffering from three types of venereal disease and tuberculosis. (Robert I. Freidman, "India's Shame: Sexual Slavery and Political Corruption Are Leading to An AIDS Catastrophe," *The Nation*, 8 April 1996)

Policy and Law

The UN Convention of the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (1949), and the supplementary convention on the abolition of slavery, the slave trade and institutions and practices of slavery have been signed by most of the SAARC countries, including Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. (Trafficking in Women and Children: The Cases of Bangladesh, p.9, UBINIG, 1995)

In 1992, Bombay, India, police intercepted the traffic of 25 Bangladeshi children, 5 to 8 years old. The children and trafficker were held in the same jail. Three years later, 12 of the children were returned to their homes. (Fawzia Karim Firoze & Salma Ali of the Bangladesh National Women Layer Association, "Bangladesh Country Paper: Law and Legislation")

Actions of NGOs

A major trafficking network was discovered by the Karnataka State Commission for Women (KSCW), smuggling 12-18-year-old girls from various impoverished districts to contractors who run brothels in Goa. The contractors pay the parents for their girl children under false pretenses. (Seethalakshmi S., "Karnataka girls being sold to Goa brothels," *Time of India*, 28 May 1998)

The exploitation of Nepalese women and girls may never end. "[F]or some there is too much easy money in it, for others there's nothing to be gained by lobbying for its abolition. But surely, for now, it can be monitored. Its magnitude can be lessened," says Durga Ghimire, chairperson of a 98-NGO-strong pressure group National Network Groups Against Trafficking. She feels that the alarmingly low rates of female literacy, coupled with the traditionally low status of the girl-child in Nepal have to be addressed to tackle the problem. Gauri Pradhan of Child Workers in Nepal Concerned Centre (CWIN) emphasizes the need for collaboration by the two governments on this issue. (Soma Wadhwa, "For sale childhood," *Outlook*, 1998)

There are several shelters run by various Katmandu-based NGOs working against trafficking and towards rehabilitation of girls who manage to escape or are rescued from Indian brothels. This is not easy work. Relatives of the rescued girls generally don't want them back and Nepal's government is worried about the spread of HIV, as many of the trafficked girls have contracted HIV while enslaved in India. (Soma Wadhwa, "For sale childhood," *Outlook*, 1998)

Official Response and Action

139 prostituted Nepalese girls were rescued through a police raid in Kamatipura, India and were then repatriated to Katmandu. (Soma Wadhwa, "For sale childhood," *Outlook*, 1998)

Rehabilitation of trafficked women and children forced into prostitution in Indian brothels is hampered by lack of Indian government support and agenda for their rehabilitation. The sending country may not come forward to claim them and younger children may not know where they originally came from. (Soma Wadhwa, "For sale childhood," *Outlook*, 1998)

Prostitution

There are approximately 10 million prostitutes in India. (Human Rights Watch, Robert I. Freidman, "India's Shame: Sexual Slavery and Political Corruption Are Leading to An AIDS Catastrophe," *The Nation*, 8 April 1996)

There are more than 100,000 women in prostitution in Bombay, Asia's largest sex industry center. (Robert I. Freidman, "India's Shame: Sexual Slavery and Political Corruption Are Leading to An AIDS Catastrophe," *The Nation*, 8 April 1996)

At least 2,000 women are in prostitution along the Baina beachfront in Goa. (Frederick Moronha, *India Abroad News Service*, 9 August 1997)

There are 300,000-500,000 children in prostitution in India. (Rahul Bedi, "Bid To Protect Children As Sex Tourism Spreads," *London's Daily Telegraph*, 23 August,

1997)

Men who believe that AIDS and other STDs can be cured by having sex with a virgin, are forcing young girls into the sex industry; seven year old girls are neither uncommon nor the youngest. (Tim McGirk "Nepal's Lost Daughters, 'India's soiled goods," *Nepal/India News*, 27 January 1997)

Approximately 20,000 or 20% of women in prostitution in Bombay are under 18. (Robert I. Freidman, "India's Shame: Sexual Slavery and Political Corruption Are Leading to An AIDS Catastrophe," *The Nation*, 8 April 1996)

Every day, about 200 girls and women in India enter prostitution, 80% of them against their will. (Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA) and Planning Rural-Urban Intergrated Development through Education (PRIDE), "Devadasi System Continues to Legitimise Prostitution: The Devadasi Tradition and Prostitution," *TOI*, 4 December 1997)

Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh are the high-supply zones for women in prostitution. Belgaum, Bijapur, and Kolhapur are some common districts from which women migrate to cities either through an organized trafficking network, or due to socioeconomic forces (Central Social Welfare Board, Meena Menon, "Women in India's Trafficking Belt", 30 March 1998)

Bangalore is one of the five major cities in India which together account for 80 percent of child prostitutes in the country. (Seethalakshmi S., "Karnataka girls being sold to Goa brothels," *Time Of India*, 28 May 1998)

90% of the 100,000 women in prostitution in Bombay are indentured slaves. (Robert I. Freidman, "India's Shame: Sexual Slavery and Political Corruption Are Leading to An AIDS Catastrophe," *The Nation*, 8 April 1996)

Prostitution is increasing in India where there have been fears over the spread of AIDS and reports of young girls being abducted and forced into prostitution. ("Asian prostitutes meet to demand legal status," Reuters, 29 July 1998)

It takes up to fifteen years for girls held in prostitution via debt-bondage to purchase their freedom. (Robert I. Freidman, "India's Shame: Sexual Slavery and Political Corruption Are Leading to An AIDS Catastrophe," *The Nation*, 8 April 1996)

Children of prostituted women are victims of sexual abuse as well. Children are forced to perform dances and songs for male buyers, and some are forced to sexually service the males. (Activists, Meena Menon, "Tourism and Prostitution,"

1997)

Of 1,000 red light districts all over India, cage prostitutes are mostly minors, often from Nepal and Bangladesh. (CATW - Asia Pacific, *Trafficking in Women and Prostitution in the Asia Pacific*)

In Bombay, 95% of the children of prostituted women become prostitutes. One child, who had repeatedly been sodomized by the men who bought his mother, decided to become a eunuch. He was ritually castrated. (Sheela Remedios program director of Project Child, Robert I. Freidman, "India's Shame: Sexual Slavery and Political Corruption Are Leading to An AIDS Catastrophe," *The Nation*, 8 April 1996)

There are three routes into prostitution for most women in India. 1) Deception; 2) Devadasi dedication and 3) Bad marriages or families. For some women their marriages were so violent they preferred prostitution. Husbands or families introduced some women to prostitution. Many families knew what the women had to do, but ignored it as long as they got the benefits from it. (Malini Karkal "Down Memory Lane," (interview, *The Maharashtra Times*, 19 November 1997)

The red light district in Bombay generates at least \$400 million a year in revenue, with 100,000 prostitutes servicing men 365 days a year, averaging 6 customers a day, at \$2 each. (Robert I. Freidman, "India's Shame: Sexual Slavery and Political Corruption Are Leading to An AIDS Catastrophe," *The Nation*, 8 April 1996)

The largest red light district in India, perhaps in the world, is the Falkland Road Kamatipura area of Bombay. (film, "The Selling of Innocents" 1997)

In Kamathipura brothel district in Bombay more than 70,000 prostituted women and girls are bought by three men a day. Condoms are seldom used. Escape is rare. (Tim McGirk "Nepal's Lost Daughters, 'India's soiled goods,'" 27 January 1997)

There are many dhabhas, or small-scale brothels, along the Solapur-Hyderabad highway, which provide women as an "additional service" to truck drivers and motorists. One woman who runs a dhabha had previously been in prostitution. Now, with a shed, two cots and a few girls from nearby villages, she owns the brothel. "I rented this place for Rs 1000 a month and take Rs 20 per man from the girls. (Meena Menon "The Twilight Zone," *The Hindu*, 27 July 1997)

A brothel owner along the Solapur-Hyderabad highway reported that he has two women. He takes a Rs 15 commission for each man. Since this is illegal, he pays the nearest police station Rs 1,000 a month as hafta, or bribe. If a girl is beautiful, she will be bought by five to ten men a day. The owner's monthly earnings can reach Rs 4,000 to 5,000 a month. (Meena Menon "The Twilight Zone," *The Hindu*,

27 July 1997)

A brothel owner along the Solapur-Hyderabad highway reported that prostituting women is good a business. He had ten to 12 girls. He paid the police Rs 6,000 as a monthly bribe. He goes to Bombay to bring women and girls, implying he was part of a bigger network. (Meena Menon, "The Twilight Zone," *The Hindu*, 27 July 1997)

The women and girls in the dhabhas, or brothels, along the Solapur-Hyderabad highway, are threatened, harassed, forced to service men, or *goondas*, freely and beaten by men and police. Local farmers abuse them also. Police do not register any complaints of assault. In one cases, a woman who was running over unfamiliar fields to escape the police in pitch darkness; she stumbled into a well and was killed. Sometimes, bodies of women are found on the fields, half eaten by animals. Another woman had her ears cut off, was robbed and left unconscious on the road. (Meena Menon, "The Twilight Zone," *The Hindu*, 27 July 1997)

Eunuch Lane in Bombay has more than 2,000 eunuchs in prostitution. The eunuchs, or *hijras*, have deep religious roots in Hinduism. As young boys they are abandoned or sold by their families to a sex ring and taken into the jungle, where a priest cuts off their genitals in a ceremony called *nirvana*. The priest then folds back a strip of flesh to create an artificial vagina. Eunuchs are generally more available to perform high-risk sex than female prostitutes, and some Indian men believe they can't contract HIV from them. (Robert I. Freidman, "India's Shame: Sexual Slavery and Political Corruption Are Leading to An AIDS Catastrophe," *The Nation*, 8 April 1996)

A survey of prostituted women in India reveals their reasoning for staying in prostitution (in descending order of significance): poverty/ unemployment; lack of proper reintegration services, lack of options; stigma and adverse social attitudes; family expectations and pressure; resignation and acclimation to the lifestyle. (CATW - Asia Pacific, *Trafficking in Women and Prostitution in the Asia Pacific*)

Health and Well-being

Madams take sick women to one of the red light districts 200 unlicensed doctors, who give the women mood elevators, IV drips of colored water or medicinal herbs. The women must pay for this "treatment" with cash from moneylenders, and the Mafia collects a percentage from the "doctors." (Robert I. Freidman, "India's Shame: Sexual Slavery and Political Corruption Are Leading to An AIDS Catastrophe," *The Nation*, 8 April 1996)

60% of prostituted women in Bombay's red-light district areas are infected with STDs and AIDS. (CATW - Asia Pacific, *Trafficking in Women and Prostitution in*

the Asia Pacific)

More than half of Bombay's 100,000 prostitutes are infected with HIV. A magazine publisher in Bombay said AIDS will benefit the country because it will depopulate the vast underclass. (Robert I. Freidman, "India's Shame: Sexual Slavery and Political Corruption Are Leading to An AIDS Catastrophe," *The Nation*, 8 April 1996)

In July 1990, mob bosses permitted Savahdan, a charity group, to repatriate 700 South Indian prostitutes to Madras, most of whom were HIV positive. It was perceived as a cheap way of getting rid of HIV infected girls. Many women, too sick to prostitute are thrown onto the street. Government hospitals won't treat prostitutes who are HIV positive, or are developing symptoms of AIDS. In Bombay's J.J. Hospital an HIV infected woman was refused treatment, though she was bleeding and her condition was life threatening. She delivered a baby in the brothel. [government report, Robert I. Freidman, "India's Shame: Sexual Slavery and Political Corruption Are Leading to An AIDS Catastrophe," *The Nation*, 8 April 1996]

In Bombay, on average the girls are bought by six men a day, who pay US\$1.10 - 2 per sex act, the madam gets the money up front. To pay for movies, clothes, make-up and extra food to supplement a diet of rice and dal, the girls have to borrow from moneylenders at an interest rate of up to 500%. They are perpetually in debt. (Robert I. Freidman, "India's Shame: Sexual Slavery and Political Corruption Are Leading to An AIDS Catastrophe," *The Nation*, 8 April 1996)

In 1991, Bombay's 100,000 prostituted women averaged 600,000 sexual contacts a day. At the time 30% were HIV positive, the chance of transmission was 0.1%. On that basis, 200 clients were being infected with HIV everyday, 6,000 each month. (Robert I. Freidman, "India's Shame: Sexual Slavery and Political Corruption Are Leading to An AIDS Catastrophe," *The Nation*, 8 April 1996)

Prostitution Tourism

Foreign tourists are frequenting India because of its relaxed laws, abundant child prostitutes and the false idea that there is a lower incidence of AIDS. (Rahul Bedi, "Bid To Protect Chedren As Sex Tourism Spreads," 1997)

India is one of the favored destinations of paedophile sex tourists from Europe and the United States. ("Global law to punish sex tourists sought by Britain and EU," *The Indian Express*, 21 November 1997)

Multinational tour operators, hotel companies, airlines and travel agencies are setting up the tourism agenda for Goa, India and the world over. However, they ignore the host community. (Roland Martins, Jagrut Goenkaranchi Fauz, "While the

Locals Visit the Temple to Pray, You Will Have Bikini-Clad Women Moving Around," *Herald*, 4 October 1997)

Cases

December 1997, a nine-year-old girl from Pune was found living with a 54-year-old Swiss national in a Goa hotel for over nine months. A local NGO filed a complaint with the police and the girl was sent to an observation home. When contacted, her father said she was there with his consent. The man was released following an investigation. Inspector General, Goa Police, Mr. P.R.S. Brar said "paedophilia is a myth, it just does not exist." Ms. Mohini Giri, chair of the National Commission for Women met with the girl and said she had admitted to being sexually abused. (Meena Menon, "Tourism and Prostitution," *The Hindu*, 14 February, 1998)

In 1990 an orphanage owner in Goa was arrested for allegedly supplying children to British, French, German, Swiss and Scandinavian prostitution tourists. He was freed on bail and the case has still not gone to court. (Rahul Bedi, "Bid To Protect Children As Sex Tourism Spreads," *London's Daily Telegraph*, 1997)

The main frequenters of prostitutes in Goa are tourists, local men and college boys. United States "seamen" ask locals in Goa which bars to find prostitutes in. Taxi drivers take tourists from Delhi, Gujarat, Bangalore, Bombay and Punjab to brothels in Baina. Some men have taxi drivers bring prostituted girls from Baina back to their hotels in Panjim. The next morning, the taxi drivers rape the girls before taking them home. (taxi driver, Meena Menon, "Tourism and Prostitution," *The Hindu* 1997)

Policy and Law

Although prostitution is legal in India, brothel keeping, living off the earnings of a prostitute, soliciting or seducing for the purposes of prostitution are all punishable offenses. There are severe penalties for child prostitution and trafficking of women. (Robert I. Friedman, "India's Shame: Sexual Slavery and Political Corruption Are Leading to An AIDS Catastrophe," *The Nation*, 8 April 1996)

Since mid-1997 the International Monetary Fund's structural adjustment policy for India has given rise to the economic and sexual exploitation of women in export processing zones, where 70-80% of workers are young women. (Sujatha Fernandes, "Growing Women's Movement in India," *Green Left Weekly*, 20 July 1997)

The devadasi tradition, still prevalent in many parts of India, continues to legitimise child prostitution. A devadasi is a woman married to a god and thus sadasuhagan or married, and hence at all times blessed. As such, she becomes the wife of the powerful in the community. Devadasi is known by different names in different

states. In the Vijapur district of Karnataka, girls are given to the Monkey God (Hanuman, Maruti), and known as Basvi. In Goa, a devadasi is called Bhavin (the one with devotion), In the Shimoga District of Karnataka, the girls are handed over to the goddess Renuka Devi, and in Hospet, to the goddess Hulganga Devi. The tradition lives on in other states in South India. Girls end up as prostitutes in Bombay and Pune. The Banchara and Bedia peoples of Madhya Pradesh also practice "traditional" prostitution. (Farida Lambey, vice-principal of the Nirmala Niketan College of Social Work, "Devadasi System Continues to Legitimise Prostitution: The Devadasi Tradition and Prostitution," *TOI*, 4 December 1997)

Official Response and Action

After raiding Kamathipura, Mumbai's largest red district, Mumbai police 160 women were sent to the St Catherines Rescue Home. Many women were HIV positive and a large number were pregnant or already had children. (Sister Shiela, Mitu Varma, "India: Children of a Lesser God," *InterPress Services*, 27 October 1997)

In Goa, India there are at least 400 children in prostitution. After Ms. Mohini Giri, chair of the National Commission for women, visited and declared there to be rampant child prostitution in the area, police have conducted some raids in order to find prostituted children. Although police conduct raids, brothels receive tip-offs and hide the minors before raids are conducted. (Meena Menon, "Tourism and Prostitution," 1997)

Official Corruption and Collaboration

In Bombay, top politicians and police officials are in league with the mafia who control the sex industry, exchanging protection for cash payoffs and donations to campaign war chests. Corruption reaches all levels of the ruling Congress Party in New Delhi. Many politicians view prostitutes as an expendable commodity. (Robert I. Freidman, "India's Shame: Sexual Slavery and Political Corruption Are Leading to An AIDS Catastrophe," *The Nation*, 8 April 1996)

The mafia kidnapped a Dutch doctor compiling an ethnographic study for the World Health Organization. He was released three days later and warned to stop probing the links among politicians, the mob and prostitution. (Robert I. Freidman, "India's Shame: Sexual Slavery and Political Corruption Are Leading to An AIDS Catastrophe," *The Nation*, 8 April 1996)

Underage girls are rarely found in brothels because the pimps and owners receive tip offs from police about impending raids. (Meena Menon, "Tourism and Prostitution," *The Hindu*, 14 February, 1998)

In one brothel in Bombay, the police receive weekly bribes called *haftas* from the

madams. Cops harass the girls, take their money, and demand free sexual services. (Robert I. Freidman, "India's Shame: Sexual Slavery and Political Corruption Are Leading to An AIDS Catastrophe," *The Nation*, 8 April 1996)

South Central Bombay is home to the biggest organized crime family in Asia, run by Dawood Ibrahim. In 1992, 40 candidates in Bombay's municipal elections, and 180 of 425 legislators in Uttar Pradesh had criminal records. Shantabai, Bombay's most powerful madam controlled as many as 10,000 pimps and prostitutes' votes in a 1985 election. Bombay's sex industry has evolved into a highly efficient business. It is controlled by four separate crime groups: One in charge of police payoffs, another controlling money laundering, a third maintaining internal law and order, and the fourth procures women through a vast network stretching from South India to the Himalayas. Of the four mafia groups in Bombay, the most powerful is Mehboob Thasildar, the procurer of women. Thasildar opened a restaurant on the ground floor of a two-story, blocklong brothel he also owned, one of the biggest in Bombay, with more than 50 prostituted women. (Indian government sources, Robert I. Freidman, "India's Shame: Sexual Slavery and Political Corruption Are Leading to An AIDS Catastrophe," *The Nation*, 8 April 1996)

Action of NGOs

As of mid-1998, Sanlaap shelter in Sneha, India has 25 to 30 rescued prostituted children. 60% of the children rescued from prostitution are HIV positive. (Indrani Sinha, SANLAAP India, "Paper on Globalization & Human Rights")

NGO workers, who urge prostitutes to use condoms, have to get the Mafia's consent, and promise to ignore the child prostitution. (Shilpa, a 30-year-old social worker who has spent five years in the red-light district, Robert I. Freidman, "India's Shame: Sexual Slavery and Political Corruption Are Leading to An AIDS Catastrophe," *The Nation*, 8 April 1996)

Pornography

Most of phone sex numbers called from India are phone sex businesses run in the United States, Hong Kong and Australia. ("India cuts access to phone sex numbers," *Reuters*, 20 August 1998)

Official Response and Action

India has blocked access to international numbers used for phone sex. "These services are obscene...they are against the moral fibre of the country and a drain on foreign exchange," said Communications Minister Sushma Swaraj. She said the government had directed state-run monopoly international carrier, Videsh Sanchar Nigam Ltd (VSNL) to cut off the calls. The minister said many Indian government

phones were being misused to make calls to sex lines. Swaraj said that she hoped there would soon be technology to stop people accessing Internet pornography. ("India cuts access to phone sex numbers," *Reuters*, 20 August 1998)

Organized and Institutionalized Sexual Exploitation and Violence

50 million girls and women are missing from India's population, the result of systematic sex discrimination, such as abortion of female fetuses, which is officially banned. (United Nations report, Sonali Verma, "Indian women still awaiting independence," Human Rights Information Network: *Indi News Network Digest*, Volume2, Issue1648, 16 August 1997)

In 1990, more than 50 widows were burnt alive when their husbands' bodies were cremated in a ritual known as "sati," based on the belief that a Hindu woman has no existence independent of her husband. (Sonali Verma, "Indian women still awaiting independence," Human Rights Information Network: *Indi News Network Digest*, Volume2, Issue1648, 16 August 1997)

Although dowry is legally banned, at least 5,000 women are victims of "dowry murders," in which they are killed by their husband or his family because of "insufficient" dowries. At least 12 women "die" every day from brazier kitchen fires, which are typically concealed dowry murders. The dowry system has also led to an inflating female infanticide, especially among very poor families. Few of these cases are ever even brought to trial. (UNICEF, *United Press International*, 23 July 1997)

A very large percentage of marriages are arranged. "The custom of arranged marriage is a legitimized institution. In a majority of cases the bride has little or no say. She and the bridegroom are virtual strangers. In many rural communities the bridegroom does not even attend his own wedding. The sex act (between the two) is nothing but a rape. The Indian woman's acceptance of the inevitable has, sanctified this abhorrent practice, and, subsequently legitimized it." (Sudhir Vaishnav, "Legal Indian Rape: The new bride can be an unsuspecting victim of a legal rape," *Femina*, 17 September 1997)

More than 5,000 women are murdered each year as the result of dowry killings in India. (Mindelle Jacobs, "Abuse of Women is Sadly Common," *Edmonton Sun*, 11 July 1998)

In 1993, in-laws killed about 16 women every day for dowry, although the government declared accepting dowry illegal in 1961. Women's groups say the number of cases reported is a fraction of the real figure. (Sonali Verma, "Indian women still awaiting independence," Human Rights Information Network: *Indi*

News Network Digest, Volume2, Issue1648, 16 August 1997)

During the armed conflict in Kashmir, Punjab and other Northeastern states women are victimized, raped, tortured, sexually abused and violated by military personnel, militants or insurgents, para-military units, rebel groups, religious sects, fundamentalist armed groups, warlords, state security forces, armed opposition groups, or terrorists and peace-keeping forces. (Indrani Sinha, executive director, "Paper on Globalization and Human Rights," SANLAAP)

In 1997, there were reports of Indian armed forces arresting, torturing and molesting women and girls in Kashmir. Every day the local newspapers report such incidences. (KASHNet, *Human Rights Information Network*, 14 August 1997)

Women and girls have been systematically brutalized and raped by Indian forces in house to house searches in Kashmir between October 1996 and December 1997. ("Rape and Molestation: A Weapon of War in Kashmir," *The Institute of Kashmir Studies*, 1998)

Official Response and Action

To halt child marriages, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in India has recommended compulsory registration of marriages to be added as an amendment to the Child Marriage (Restraint) Act. ("NHRC for amendments to Child Marriage Act," *Hindu Daily*, 17 August 1998)

A considerable number of child marriages, performed on April 29, 1998 (Akshay Thithiya day), were witnessed and took place without any obstruction from the authorities or members of the public in Bikaner and Jodhpur, India. (Senior Superintendent of Police, National Human Rights Commission's (NHRC) Investigation Division, "NHRC for amendments to Child Marriage Act," *Hindu Daily*, 17 August 1998)

The National Girl Child Week began in India on 23 September 1998 as part of a regional celebration of the rights of the girl child in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka to reaffirm commitment to the SAARC Decade of the Girl Child. The UNICEF India Country Office has identified high maternal mortality, low birth weight babies and discriminatory post-natal attention to boys in India as some of the major reasons for disparity in male-female child ratio. The week will highlight governmental, inter-governmental, and non-governmental efforts to end this disparity. ("Steps to strengthen rights of the girl child," *Hindu Daily*, 23 September 1998)

Cases

In September 1987, 18-year-old Roop Kanwar was forced to commit suttee. Cans

of ghee cooking butter were poured on her as she burnt to death on her husband's funeral pyre. Conch shells were blown like horns after she died. And a trishul was left as a symbol of the faith of the sati, or "true wife" in Sanskrit. In October 1996, all 38 defendants in the Kanwar cases were acquitted. Following this, more than 1,000 devotees staged a major festival at the Rani Sati temple in Jhunjhunu, in contravention of the 1988 Act, which prohibits glorification of suttee. The court refused to stop the nine-day event in late November and early December, but ruled there must be no direct reference to suttee, and that the rituals must be held outside rather than within the temple. Protesters violated this order, and filed a contempt petition. (Muku; Sharma, "Women Fight New Threats of Widow Sacrifice," 7 February 1997)

Indian armed forces stormed into the house of Kamal Dar, in Padshahi Bagh area and locked his daughter Madeeha in a separate room where she was subjected to severe torture for many hours. Kamal Dar said the person gave electric shocks to his 18-year-old daughter and molested her. The armed personnel also treated in a similar way another woman, wife of one Bashir Amad and mother of five children. They also molested two girls in Pahalgam. A group of security forces men in the village of Dehar Muna raided the house of Ghulam Muhammad and abducted her daughter, Raja Bano, at gunpoint. The girl was taken to a security camp. After her release she explains that she was interrogated for whole night and kept naked throughout the night. She also showed torture marks on her body. She was taken to hospital for medical examination. (police sources, KASHNet, Human Rights Information Network, 14 August 1997)

Maimun, 19 was gang-raped and attempts made to murder her following her love marriage to Idris, 28. A team from the National Commission for Women to investigate the torture of the young woman was attacked by nearly 1,000 villagers. Maumun's cousin had cut Maimun's abdomen and neck with a butcher knife, leaving her to bleed to death. (Piyush Mathur, "NCW members probing rape of girl attacked," *Times of India*, 16 August 1997)

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