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edited by Elke Grawert

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Anisha Schubert

**Girl Trafficking
for Prostitution
in Nepal**

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Preface for Volume 3 of the enro + biz Studies Series

The enro + biz studies series is intended to elaborate on positions in development policies. It aims at supplying backgrounds on development issues to a critical and committed public. Most of the papers published in this series are theses of students in *Development Policy with Focus on Non-Governmental Organisations (enro)*. All of the authors have been working in NGOs and, in addition to the examination in a previous study of a broad spectrum of disciplines, they have passed the final exam in the post-graduate programme of *enro*. The publications focus on the juncture of practice and theory of development policy. They are meant to provide ideas and theory-guided assistance in arguing for organisations and institutions in the area of development.

Girl Trafficking for Prostitution in Nepal deals with one facet of modern slavery, a phenomenon which is growing at a frightening pace under the prevailing economic conditions of globalisation. Slave holders exert absolute dominance and control over people, using either violence or the threat of violence. A slave is deprived of any opportunity to decide for him- or herself. In contrast to colonial and ancient slavery, modern slaves are cheap and abundant so slave holders no longer make an effort to gain legal ownership status over a slave. Moreover, modern slaves are abandoned as soon as they no longer produce enough profit for their holders.

The estimated number of people presently enslaved vary between 27 and 200 millions worldwide. The bulk of these extremely impoverished people have sold themselves in order to pay for a real or contrived debt. Most of them are from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal, but slaves are kept all over the world. In European and American towns slaves are mostly unpaid domestic servants or prostitutes. War slavery and government slavery are other types. In the latter case, civilians are caught and forced to work as land clearers, carriers and construction workers. Frequently this kind of governmental slave labour provides the basis for big infrastructure projects, implemented by multinational concerns which transfer their profits to the developed countries. Another type of slavery is based on a fake contract. Trapped by the promise of a job, poor people in south-east Asia, Brazil, some Arab countries, India and Thailand are tricked into slavery, performing all kinds of unpaid labour and/or prostitution. A girl of 12 to 15 years of age may be bought for 800 to 2000 US-\$. The profit a brothel keeper makes from one girl may amount to 800 per cent annually for a period of five to ten years. If the girl has become too old, HIV-positive, or sick, she will be sent away.

Modern slavery is not an easy subject to research. Anisha Schubert had the opportunity to work in a rehabilitation centre for prostitutes who had returned to their native Nepal. Based on her observations and secondary literature, she delineates the routes where Nepalese girls are trafficked, identifies the actors who

profit from trafficking girls, and provides economical, socio-cultural and political reasons why this type of slavery has expanded. Preventive measures, interventions and a comprehensive strategy towards poverty alleviation and women's empowerment are presented as indispensable to fight the causes of the problem.

Bremen, May 2001

Elke Grawert.

German summary

Mädchenhandel ist eine der schlimmsten Formen von Menschenrechtsverletzungen, von Gewalt gegenüber Mädchen, von Kinderarbeit und der modernen Sklaverei. Es wird angenommen, dass jährlich 5000 bis 7000 Nepalesinnen in zumeist indische Bordelle gebracht werden, doch beispielsweise auch in Golfstaaten; über 20% sind unter 16 Jahre alt – die Tendenz ist steigend.

Anisha Schubert arbeitet das Phänomen Mädchenhandel systematisch auf und gibt eine realistische, umfassende Darstellung des Sachverhalts. Sie zeigt auf, wie Nepalesinnen auf unterschiedlichen Wegen in die Prostitution gelangen und wie verschiedene sozioökonomische und kulturelle Faktoren den Weg für den gegenwärtigen Mädchenhandel in Nepal geebnet haben. Neben Gründen wie extremer Armut in den ländlichen Gebieten, Mangel an Informationen und der niedrigen Stellung der Frau werden Mädchen auch im Namen von Tradition in die Prostitution gezwungen. Diese hat häufig lebenslängliche und lebensbedrohliche Konsequenzen für die psychische, körperliche und soziale Entwicklung. Vermehrt auftretende HIV-Infektionen haben das Leiden noch verschärft.

Die Autorin verdeutlicht, dass sich ein sehr breit gefächelter Personenkreis am Mädchenhandel beteiligt und in immensem Umfang finanziell profitiert. Zwar gibt es Möglichkeiten der Rückkehr nach Nepal, doch verschiedene Gründe, insbesondere die gesellschaftliche Stigmatisierung von Ex-Prostituierten und HIV-Infizierten, halten meist davon ab. Anisha Schubert stellt internationale und nationale Interventionsmöglichkeiten, sowohl präventive als auch auf Rehabilitation abzielende, vor und wägt Erfolge, Grenzen und Schwächen dieser Maßnahmen sorgfältig ab. Dies führt zu der Einschätzung, dass die Ursachen des Mädchenhandels nur mit fundamentalen gesellschaftlichen Veränderungen zu beseitigen sind.

**Dedicated
to
Durga Regmi**

**“Mine are the tears
that froze with the pain
Mine is the pain
that has no name”
*(Gathia, 1998)***

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