



## PAMUN XVI RESEARCH REPORT—The question of modern slavery

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### Introduction of Topic

According to Merriam-Webster, a slave can be defined as “someone who is legally owned by another person and is forced to work for that person without pay”; as of the year of 1981, this form of slavery was formally abolished in all nations. That being said, there is a secondary definition of slavery which is “a person who is strongly influenced and controlled by something”; this form of control has become vastly prevalent worldwide, particularly in the workplace. Oftentimes individuals, or even groups of people at a time, can find themselves ‘trapped’ in a situation in which they are almost interminably indebted to a corporation, governmental establishment, boss, or any other figure of a higher authority. Oftentimes the debts incurred grow to be out of hand when the individual or individuals being penalised are in a state of desperation or economic instability to the extent that they find themselves bound to a draining or unjust contract that they initiated in hopes of bettering their lives or the lives of their loved ones.

Although instances of modern slavery are more prevalent in less developed countries (LDCs), it is to be noted that, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), even more developed nations (MDCs) are affected in some way. UNESCO defines the process of human trafficking to be “entrapment, recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons”, which is a multi-step process that occurs worldwide. Though all forms of modern slavery can be found anywhere, developed nations are more likely to be part of the transportation or destination part of trafficking, and also are known to house bigger businesses that oftentimes abuse their authority in creating a more corrupt workforce. The most common forms of modern slavery can be seen in the corporate world, particularly in the rapidly growing agricultural industry. A lot of the time, farmers initially form a partnership with bigger corporations in hopes to boost their business, but because of the standards imposed by the company, they generally fall into debt just to comply with what their employers are requiring of them. Due to legal loopholes and contracts, farmers in this situation often can’t just leave the business without facing legal consequences; even if there are no legal consequences, the economic difficulties are often too suffocating for most employees to handle, seeing as they are usually already being paid the bare minimum to support them and their families. These manipulative tactics can be seen not only in small farming companies, but as well as big industries such as Tyson and Perdue, and with

the vast amount of debt most farmers in these kinds of situations incur, they are obliged to do whatever their employers ask of them, oftentimes forcing people to go against their own ethics, or work more than what they should for the amount they're being paid.

Although modern slavery can happen to any type of person anywhere in the world, those most subjected to these kinds of conditions are immigrants, women, and children, as well as the socially and economically disadvantaged. Besides monetary manipulation, many people are also emotionally and physically forced into completing certain tasks which could be categorised as modern slavery. For example, many women and children around the world are forced into marriages and prostitution in which there is often a strong level of fear that keeps them bound in a lifestyle they do not wish to be leading; they are oftentimes dominated by people who are physically stronger than them, thus making it seemingly impossible for them to seek help for their predicament. Migrant workers or those who have a larger family to support are more susceptible to modern slavery because they are often in dire need of work, therefore meaning that they are willing to work for long hours in horrible conditions for wages that are incredibly minimal. With various forms of manipulation, corporations and employers can hold their employees on a tight leash and keep them in situations that the victims might not even fully recognise as unjust.

The most commonly recognised form of modern slavery by the United Nations is human trafficking, which is unfortunately incredibly widespread; the exact number of victims is unknown and vastly debated, but as of 2014, the number was around 2.5 million, with about 60% percent of those individuals being female. According to the Global Report on Trafficking in Persons published by the United Nation Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC), an estimated 79% of trafficking occurs for the purpose of sexual exploitation, making it the most prevalent form of trafficking, followed by forced labour which is to be an estimated 18%. Despite recent rises in awareness, human trafficking is still a prominent issue worldwide.

It is to be noted that, although human trafficking and more “traditional” forms of subjective slavery still exist and are together still considered the most prevalent and known forms of slavery to date, other abuses such as unhealthy working conditions, sweatshops, and coerced labour of *any kind* is still a form of modern slavery that is vastly widespread. Despite de jure slavery being banned worldwide, the narrow mind sets and sheer ignorance of many people around the world allow de facto slavery to take place via legal loopholes and disregard for the law, thus exploiting workers with or without their knowledge or consent. Illegal works, such as trafficking, often receive more attention because they are easier to understand; when someone is exploited in the workplace, it becomes a bit more ‘vague’ and harder to

pinpoint exact problems and solutions, which is why more measures need to be taken to solidify the rights of every worker, rather than continuing to turn a blind eye to the more discreet injustices.

## Definition of Key Terms

### *Slavery*

The practice of owning slaves in accordance with the more historically accurate definition of slaves being a person or group of people 'owned' by another person or organisation and forced to work without pay.

### *Modern Slavery*

Also known as contemporary slavery, modern slavery is the present-day dilemma of slave 'owning' through means of manipulation or overpowering; according to Anti-Slavery International, one does not have to necessarily be considered the property of another person to meet the criteria for modern slavery, rather they fall under a category of people who are " forced to work - through mental or physical threat; owned or controlled by an 'employer', usually through mental or physical abuse or the threat of abuse; dehumanised, treated as a commodity or bought and sold as 'property'; and/or physically constrained or has restrictions placed on his/her freedom of movement".

### *Human Trafficking*

The abduction or coercion of a person or group of people whereupon they are subjected to exploitation under the 'ownership' of another person; all forms of the trafficking process are illegal, whether it be the capturing, movement, or exploitation of the victim.

## Background Information

Slavery has been a part of human society since ancient times; enslaving others has always been a sign of superiority and wealth, and has been used to define class separation in societies around the world. As time has gone on, human rights awareness began to change the mind sets of many, and nations began abolishing their de jure slavery. Although nations have abolished slavery, it is only until it is also made illegal that de facto slave entrapment and segregation can be put to an end. Thus, to

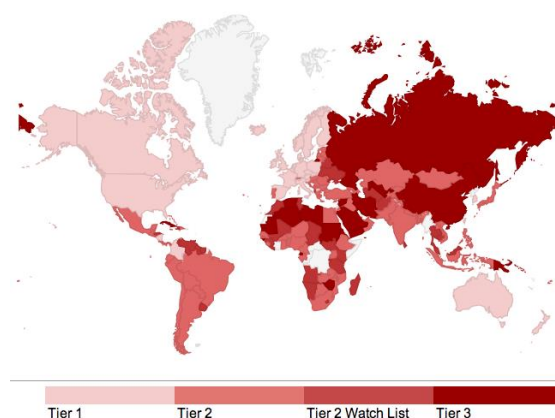
further curb the slavery, governments had begun to make any form of slavery illegal; Mauritania was the last country to abolish and make slavery a crime, so when they finally complied in 2007, slavery officially became illegal worldwide.

Due to the legislative banning of slavery on a global level, along with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights passed by the UN in 1948, the mind set of millions of people slowly began to change to reject the idea of enslavement as a society. That being said, there are still countless people that completely disregard international law and to this day, continue to enslave and traffic victims. According to The Global Slavery Index, in 2016 there is an estimated 45.8 million people trapped in some form of slavery worldwide; that statistic is still incredibly high despite the additional protocols and pacts passed and endorsed by the UN over the course of the past 16 years since the passing of the cohesive *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons*.

It has been mandated by the United Nations that nations need to work to lower their rates of trafficking and slave practice, which has led to nations such as Brazil and the United Kingdom to pass legislation of their own to lower their rates in their own country. That being said, nations that are less economically developed are oftentimes the most susceptible to the highest trafficking rates, yet they also lack the resources and the support to truly combat the slavery in their nation.

## Major Countries and Organizations Involved

It is to be kept in mind that modern slavery and human trafficking is an issue that impacts every nation in some way, but due to international measures that are being put in place, most nations are trying to combat the slavery and trafficking within their country; the nations listed here are the ones that are considered some of the worst offenders in accordance with the Global Slavery Index.



2013 map of human trafficking prevalence

## [UNODC \(United Nations Organisation for Drugs and Crime\)](#)

The UNODC works under the mandate of the *U.N. Trafficking Protocol* in an attempt to tackle the issue of human trafficking. Their main focus is to aid countries in creating comprehensive plans to curb

trafficking and seeing that said plans are followed through the training of criminal justice officials and providing the support needed to aid victims.

### [UNESCO \(United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation\)](#)

Similar to the UNODC, UNESCO also seeks to aid nations in the curbing of modern day slavery. One of UNESCO's main focuses is the "Project to Fight Human Trafficking in Africa", in which they attempt to promote and implement culturally sensitive plans to help end slavery and trafficking primarily in women and children throughout southern and western Africa. In addition, UNESCO conducts much needed research in order to create a comprehensive understanding of trafficking issues in various areas, as well as how trafficking ties into other issues such as HIV/AIDS and drug abuse.

### [ILO \(International Labour Organisation\)](#)

The ILO is a global organisation whose main goal is to give workers and employers a voice equal to the government. With that in mind, they are trying to raise awareness against any forms of forced labour, including slavery and trafficking. They seek to promote opportunities and rights for employees, while also harbouring a protection for their rights. In the past, the ILO has held workshops, spoken to governments, and endorsed legislation such as the *National Pact for the Eradication of Slave Labor*.

### [China](#)

Due to the prevalent increase of migration within China from rural to urban areas, many people are left vulnerable to human trafficking. In addition to the migrant population, which is already made up of an estimated 253 million people, there is also the estimated 58 million abandoned children that are left to look out for themselves, leaving them completely vulnerable to abduction. Due to their vulnerability, many women and children are sold off for sexual exploitation, though many people are often exploited in the work force. Since the poverty rates are quite high, many people are desperate enough to comply with inadequate working arrangements, leaving them trapped working long hours in horrendous conditions. The Chinese government has put forth efforts to end this exploitation by outlawing forced labour and issuing the 'National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking', but with the multiple governmental branches involved, progress has been quite slow and the problems are still widespread throughout the nation.

### [India](#)

Disregarding the ratio to the population, India has the highest number of modern slaves in the world. With a population as large as India's, it is difficult to say exactly how many people are being

exploited, but recent surveys suggest that about 1.4% of the population is currently living in modern slavery; that is roughly 18,400,000 people being subjected to modern day slave conditions. A survey conducted near the beginning of 2016 shows that many people throughout India are trapped in harsh working situations, most of which are actually illegal under Indian law. An example of this is bonded labour, in which people are forced to work without pay if they are unable to pay back a debt; even though this form of labour has been banned for decades, many people are still forced into bonded labour through threats and lack of law enforcement. Many people in agricultural and domestic services are often mistreated, while others in vulnerable positions are forced into begging or prostitution. Although the Indian government has indeed created legislation against forms of forced labour, and have laws preventing exploitation despite caste or socio-economic status, the population is too large to fully implement these standards.

## Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan has the second highest modern slavery rates in proportion to their population second to North Korea. An estimated 3.97% of the population is subjected to some form of slavery or trafficking, which is approximately 1,236,600 people throughout the country. According to cotton campaign surveys conducted in 2014, approximately 4 million adults were forced into the cotton industry, and it is suggested that some of the industrial slavery was state sponsored. In times since then, the government has taken action in attempt to curb the rampant slave issue throughout the country, but with the high vulnerability of the people, more enforcement appears to be necessary to create the progress Uzbekistan needs.

## Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
December 10th, 1948	The UN passes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
1981	Mauritania abolishes slavery, meaning that slavery is now abolished worldwide
2007	Mauritania makes slavery illegal, meaning that slavery is now illegal worldwide
December 12th, 2000	The UN signs and passes the <i>Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children</i>

December 25th, 2003	The <i>Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking In Persons, Especially Women and Children</i> is entered into force
2004	Brazil introduces the <i>National Pact for the Eradication of Slave Labour</i>
July 19-20, 2012	The ILO hosts a workshop to endorse the <i>National Pact for the Eradication of Slave Labor</i>
July 2014	The UN introduces a special rapporteur on human trafficking
July 30th, 2014	First 'World Day Against Trafficking in Persons'
March 26, 2015	The Modern Slavery Act 2015 becomes law in the UK
September 25-27, 2015	The Millennium Development Goals are renewed

## Relevant UN Treaties and Events

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, December 10th, 1948
- United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, January 8th, 2001 (*A/RES/55/25*)
- Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, December 25th, 2003
- National Pact for the Eradication of Slave Labour, 2004
- Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, November 2014
- The second Millennium Development Goals, September 27th 2015

## Main Issues

### Ethics and values

For years, the ideology of superiority has fuelled the slave market; when there is a feeling of superiority due to things such as ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, or gender, then there frequently comes a feeling of entitlement. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR) clearly states that

everyone on Earth has equal worth and has the right to equal treatment, yet despite having these universal rights in writing, it doesn't mean that the mind sets of people have completely evolved. It is to be kept in mind that less than 200 years ago, very influential nations such as the UK and the USA had yet to abolish slavery in its entirety, thus the idea of discrimination is still fairly fresh in people's minds and has yet to be fully changed. Inequality is the basis for a plethora of injustices, and this can be seen in statistics; for example, 1.9 million more females are considered to be victims of contemporary slavery than males, which shows a correlation between a perceived lack of rights and an increase of exploitation. The lack of equality in any field creates vulnerability, and as it shows with the higher numbers of children, women, disabled and disadvantaged people in slavery, vulnerability is a main key in the continuation of human exploitation. Perpetrators more often than not believe they have justification in their actions due to the perceived "power" they have; this continued stigma that some people are better than others is a theme that needs to be changed before equality can be achieved and all forms of slavery can truly come to an end.

### Abuse of authority

One of the biggest reasons modern slavery and trafficking are still able to exist today is because people of power are able to exploit those who are deemed weaker than they are. On a more domestic level, people with a physical advantage over someone else has the power of fear over their victims; women and children are most often the victims of modern slavery, and this is generally because they are considered more vulnerable. Without proper support, many people can also become entrapped through mental and emotional manipulation that those of higher power utilise because they know that through threats, their victim is a lot less likely to seek help to escape their situation.

On a corporate level, bigger companies often have strong power over their employees because generally employees are in desperate need for work, thus making them willing to work in poor conditions for little pay, and as frequently seen in the agricultural industry, workers are often kept in a vicious cycle that they either legally or economically can't escape.

### Lack of victim support

Lack of support, or oftentimes even acknowledgement, of slave victims is something that very strongly perpetuates the cycle of trafficking and slavery. Countless workers are stuck in a predicament where they can't speak out about their injustices because their employer is economically more powerful. Thus, in any legal case, the employee doesn't stand a chance because oftentimes courts don't consider labour entrapment a severe human rights issue, even though it oftentimes is.



As for trafficking victims and those trapped in severe slave conditions, they're put in a position where they have no one to turn to for help. A lot of the times trafficking victims are subjected to forms of prostitution, in which if they spoke out for help, they would be penalised instead of, or alongside, their employer. Without a system in which they can obtain the freedom they need, those in systems of modern slavery are often trapped. When someone is enslaved long enough, the emotional toll can become unbearable and for an extra glimpse of freedom, many victims become perpetrators to gain back some form of power in their lives, thus furthering this vicious cycle.

## Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

As the relevance of human rights has grown, speaking out against human slavery has grown throughout the years. It has been seen that legislation has been passed in all nations banning and making slavery illegal. Alongside the independent legislation of countries, the United Nations has also passed and endorsed international law attempting to completely outlaw modern slavery and trafficking. As of right now, all nations have some form of legislation against modern slavery, thus it is now an issue of ensuring that the legislation is properly implemented and upheld.

## Possible Solutions

### [Punishing the perpetrators](#)

As there is not just one cause of modern slavery, there isn't going to be a clear cut solution that solves all facets of the issue. That being said, one of the biggest problems with putting an end to modern slavery is ensuring that justice is served to the perpetrators. As of right now, many nations don't have the proper task force equipped to tackle the issue of modern slavery, thus it is imperative that countries, particularly those with a higher slave rate and higher population, have trained professionals that know how to search for and handle situations of trafficking and slavery.

Stopping human trafficking at the source is imperative, but not of much use if nothing happens after capturing the perpetrators of the offence. Legal courts need to ensure that they have the proper outline necessary to be able to properly sentence trafficking and slave offenders, which also being able to differentiate between the offenders and the victims.

## Aid for Victims

Currently, there isn't much outreach to victims of trafficking or modern slavery; without anywhere to go for help, victims are trapped feeling hopeless. If there was more awareness for victims of slavery and trafficking, there would be more outlets for them to receive help and it would help remove the negative stigma many victims currently face. A lot of the times, victims are faced with punishment for the work they had to do while enslaved, so there needs to be a way to ensure that those who suffered are treated as victims rather than perpetrators.

In addition to helping victims to escape the thresholds of slavery, there needs to be infrastructure put in place for when they are free. Oftentimes freed victims suffer from mental health issues and aren't fully prepared to cope with daily life outside of the conditions they had been subjected to. If someone was abducted, they may wish to return home, and seeing as victims have been known to be taken to countries that they aren't native to, they would be lacking the means necessary to return to their homeland. There are guidelines already put in place by the UN as for how victims should be reintegrated into society, but it is still an issue for how individual governments choose to implement said guidelines into their own societies.

## Informing

One of the greatest fuel for perpetrators of any injustice is ignorance; in order to really find closure in the realm of human exploitation, people need to be properly informed on the issue. Not only does the overall mind set of inequality need to change, but workers also need to be properly informed of their rights. The most vulnerable crowd for exploiters to target is the uneducated, thus if people are more informed on their basic human rights, as well as their worth in the workplace, then it will create a more vocal platform for people to stand up for themselves when faced with injustice. In addition to reinstating the rights of the people, the negative stigma around perceived minorities needs to change. If the superiority complex of genders, races, and socioeconomic statuses continues to exist, then there will always be slave businesses that feel entitled to be perpetrators; without the common theme that all human beings are created equal, there will always be excuses to slavery. Until people fully understand their rights and worth, with also fully implementing the concept of equality, there will be no moral obligation for slavery to end completely.

## Economic investigation

In 2013, it was estimated that modern slave business was making at least 32 billion US dollars each year; with this kind of revenue, economic incentives begin to take precedence over the legal and

moral atrocities associated with contemporary slavery in the minds of perpetrators and organisations that passively allow these injustices to take place. Though these economic 'rewards' may make slavery appear to be lucrative, this income actually takes revenue and creates losses for the wider, more legitimate, economy. Through under-the-counter business and weakened work forces associated with slavery, perpetrators not only avoid added costs, such as taxes, to themselves, but the lack of health amongst workers also means that there is a decrease in work productivity. With this, it is evident that nations who turn a blind eye to the mass amounts of slave activity in their nation in hopes of economic gain are only hurting themselves, but until sound research and statistics can be found for a more persuasive argument, economic based governments are unlikely to change how they react to slavery within their country. Surveillance of state imposed forced labour, as well as further investigation of larger, potentially corrupt, industries should be implemented by reliable outside organisations so that the legitimacy of workers and their conditions is upheld; economic sanctions is also a way in which other countries and independent organisations can cut off monetary sources to crime leaders and governments that allow high rates of slavery to run rampant in their country. By finding ways to disperse the economic benefits to slavery, it would create an incentive to discontinue and fight slavery, rather than expand the industry.

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