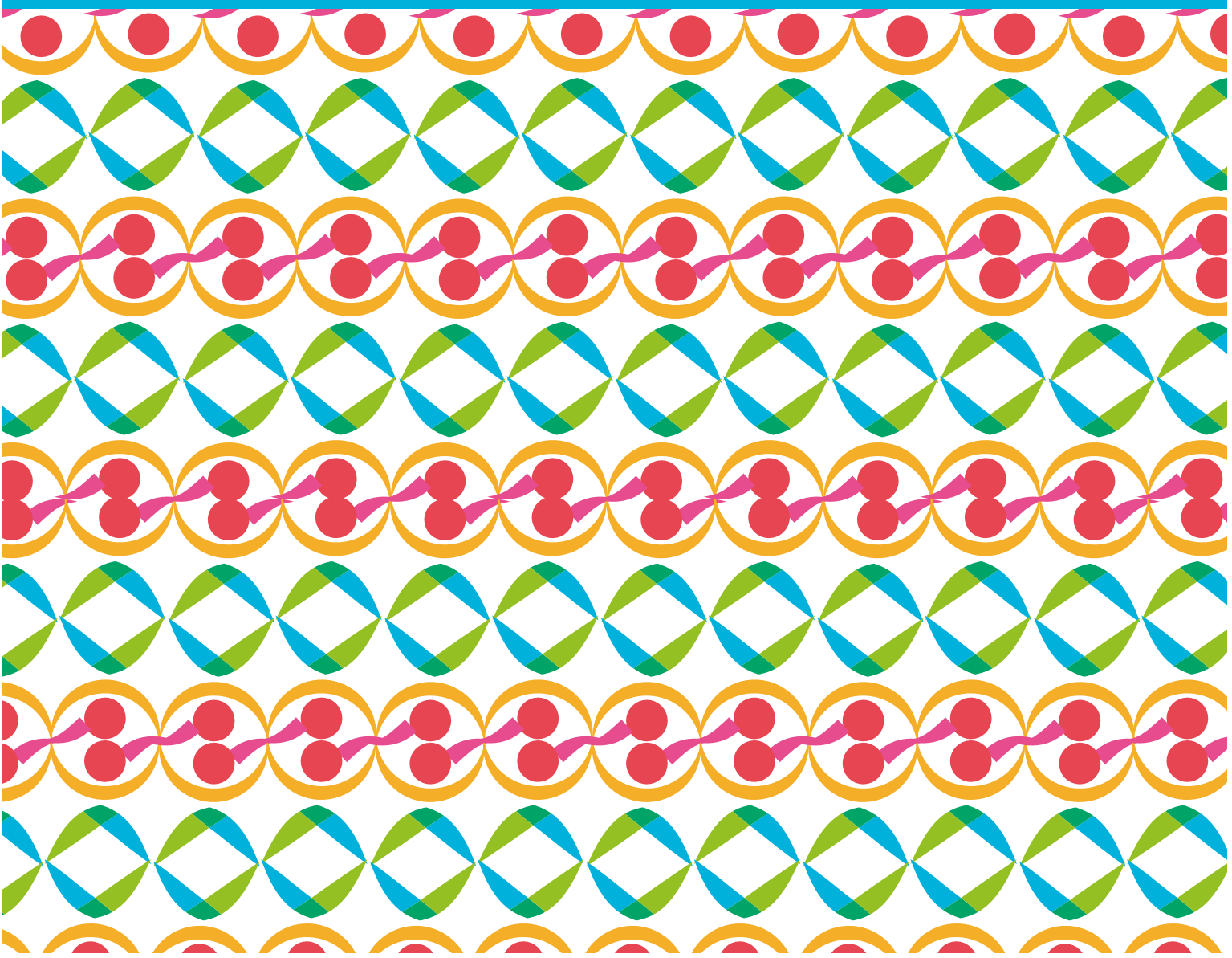




The Kids Voice

& Young Journalist Adventure



STAFF

Co-founder/Executive Director
Philip Appiah

Coordinator
Anabella Corridoni

Writers
Aditi Panda
Aizhan Yermekbayeva
Mahua Maharana
Anabella Corridoni

Design
Sofia Roan
Agustina Llobera

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Special edition: WOMEN IN GHANA

We wanted to do a special edition about women in Ghana because we think that the role of women has been change in the latest years in this country. Throughout the articles, you may learn a little more about the sacrifice that women have been done to enter the education system, health system, companies and still continuous being a mother in a traditional society as Ghana is.

The purpose of this magazine is to help and encourage young people to engage in journalism, improve their writing skills and showcase their creativity to the world and to promote activities of the youth. The magazine is the product of PAAJAF's Youth Journalism project. The Youth Journalism (YJ) is a program aimed to create young media outlets where there will be a more diverse range of young people who benefit from global news and may advance a career in journalism.

The YJ program is a great place to grow personally and professionally. Young people will have the opportunity to brainstorm story ideas, write, and create art. Participants can learn about journalism, graphic art, and photography as well as meet people in relevant professions and work with a mentor to develop further skills.

I hope you enjoy this edition as we enjoy writing it. We really appreciate your desire to collaborate with the youth in Ghana



Thank you.
Anabella Corridoni
Youth Magazine Coordinator



WHAT WE DO?

Providing Adolescents and Adults with Jobs for Advancement in the Future (PAAJAF) is a non-governmental organization (NGO) that focuses on providing: Basic facilities (Food, shelter, clothing), Information (Healthcare, Community building, Job training) and Education for underprivileged children, youth and women. It is a registered NGO with a Certificate of Recognition from the Department of Social Welfare in Ghana – Certificate Number D.S.W./4003 and Register General G21, 781 have affiliation with United Way Ghana, GlobalGiving, Global Health Council and Gift In Kind International

Base on our vision and mission, we have the following current programs gear towards meeting our goals: **Sponsor a child, Education, Teen Centre, Adult Education, Children's Networking, Youth Journalism, Health and Wellness Education, and Exchange Program.**

For the year 2011, we are delighted to inform you that we will be carrying on PAAJAF projects and are depending 100% on your donations both cash, in-kind and partnership. PAAJAF urgently requires an office space to coordinate a team of local and international volunteers and to manage programs of the foundation; an amount of \$13,500 is needed. Having an office will enable PAAJAF to: enlist local volunteers in a professional setting, meet with and support program participants, have contact with a variety of stakeholders engaged in PAAJAF work, use ICT and other equipment for global networking, and maintain an effective filing and storage system also to work on this magazine to provide you more stuff.

To see more about the contents of our programs please visit. www.paajaf.org

SPONSOR A CHILD PROGRAM

WHAT IS SPONSORSHIP?

Sponsorship is a very personal way to share your blessings with an impoverished child. Through regular contributions, you'll help improve a needy child's life with basic necessities, such as health care, education assistance, durable clothing and shoes, improved living conditions and more. Additionally, you being a burden sharer, your help will give a needy child an emotional and mental comfort because he or she has known that someone cares for him or her elsewhere.

I'M READY TO SPONSOR A CHILD TODAY. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Please, drop us email today, fill the form, write the name of the child you want to sponsor. An amount of \$1 per a day or \$30 per a month can bring life and hope to a needy child.

WHAT BENEFITS GO TO A SPONSORED CHILD?

Your sponsorship helps us provide a needy child with life's basic needs - education, health care, and nutritious food. PAAJAF steps further to do the following deductions from any fiscal contributions - 3% to General Fund for administration purposes and 2% for Educational infrastructure.

AM I THE ONLY SPONSOR FOR A NEEDY CHILD?

Most one-on-one sponsorship programs provide "supplementary care" for children living in poverty. However, the children being sponsored already have homes and families that are providing

their basic needs – though inadequate. Therefore, use donations to support such needy families for the sake of the sponsored child.

IF ONE IS COMMITTED TO A PARTICULAR LEVEL OF SPONSORSHIP, CAN HE/SHE GIVE MORE SOME MONTHS?

Yes, the additional money will be designated for the foundation's general fund. (Unless you specify to a particular project). The support we receive through the child sponsorship program is typically insufficient to cover the complete monthly support of a child. We also use those funds to cover operational expenses.

HOW LONG WOULD A SPONSORSHIP LAST?

Normally, sponsored children are coming from a very poor family, and would otherwise not be able to attend school without a package. Sponsored children generally continue school till higher secondary. After that, they have a solid basic education, and can work to earn money for self. Some are very bright and can continue up to the University. If a needy child cannot continue his or her study, PAAJAF would inform the sponsoring parent(s) about it.

HOW ARE CHILDREN CHOSEN FOR SPONSORSHIP?

Members in the community help identify the most vulnerable children in the area. Then, PAAJAF takes up fact finding research to ascertain the truth or otherwise of the claim. It is only when a child's level of need is considered to be critical then he or she is recommended for sponsorship. Even here, the

the consent of the families is requested for approval before PAAJAF can take it up.

AS A CHILD SPONSOR, WHAT WILL I RECEIVE FROM PAAJAF?

When one becomes a child sponsor, one will receive a Welcome Package from PAAJAF - letter of introduction from the sponsored child by PAAJAF. Each year, a sponsor shall receive a report detailing the progress of the sponsored child and the community project in general. This report also includes an updated photograph of the sponsored child.

CAN I VISIT MY SPONSORED CHILD?

A visit to your sponsored child and their community is a rewarding way to see the benefits of your contributions. You must contact PAAJAF at least three months before your intended departure date and before you make any travel arrangements.

SHOULD I WRITE TO MY SPONSORED CHILD?

PAAJAF strongly encourages you to write to your sponsored child. Children love to hear from their sponsors and often treasure the letters and photos that are sent. Please note that while your letters may reach your sponsored child within a few weeks, the response time can be quite long (up to six months, in some cases). When writing to your sponsored child, use the PAAJAF's address.

All correspondence must include:

PAAJAF's postal address (exactly as it appears).
Your sponsored child's name
Please do not write your address inside the letter.

CAN I SEND GIFTS TO MY SPONSORED CHILD?

You are welcome to send simple gifts with your letters and cards. Please send only flat items such as photos, bookmarks, stamps or stickers in an envelope not bigger than "6x9". (Please do not send parcels or cash.)

WHAT IF I CANNOT MAKE MY CHILD SPONSORSHIP PAYMENTS?

Should you be unable to make regular child sponsorship payments, please contact PAAJAF as soon as possible to explore the range of options available.

WHAT IF I NEED TO DISCONTINUE MY SPONSORSHIP?

If we realize that your circumstances may change and that you may no longer be able to sponsor your child. Simple inform PAAJAF about your situation need to discontinue.

To see who need your sponsorship visit our website www.paajaf.org



WOMEN: Access, Education and Empowerment Ghana Context

By Aditi Panda



List of abbreviations:

GDHS: Ghana Demographic and Health Survey
GPRS: Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy
CRPF: Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
ITU: International Telecommunication Union
PWD: Person with Disability
GPI: Gender Disparity Index
ESSP: Education Sector Strategic Plan
ESP: Education Strategic Plan

Introduction

The role of woman has undergone a drastic change from the past and presently the way in which society sees women today. A woman has the ability and choice to create her own life, own businesses, become what she has always dreamed, speak her mind, or balance a family and a career. If a woman puts in the effort, she is able to accomplish all a man can accomplish, or maybe even more. It is important to look back upon history and value the actions taken by woman in the 19th and 20th century to get society to where we are today. It is also crucial that we look at any woman's struggle from the womb to the tomb. She has to face a three tier discrimination even today one because she is a woman, two because she is not empowered and dependant and three if she is differently abled. She has to struggle for her existence and identity since she is born and has to face bias at all stages from the family and society.

A woman's road to success starts from access to drinking water, basic primary education, mobility, finance, livelihood and almost all the aspects of a society. Women in pre-modern Ghanaian society were seen as bearers of children, retailers of fish, and farmers. Women's level of education was positively related to physical but not to psychological access to health care. Residing in an urban area was positively related to both types of access. The transition into the modern world has been slow for women. On the one hand, the high rate of female fertility in Ghana in the 1980s showed that women's primary role continued to be that of childbearing. Resistance to female education also stemmed from the conviction that women would be supported by their husbands. In spite of modernization it is still feared that a girl's marriage prospects are dimmed if she is educated. After all

the obstacles are taken care of and the girl manages to make it to school the household responsibilities and parental attitude stops her from completing her education and become empowered to achieve her aim. A girl's problems and woes are added if she comes from a poor family and has to earn for her family at an early age. This is not all. A girl has to face more difficulties and hurdles if she is differently abled or disabled as the society calls her, and she struggles to access even the necessities like water, shelter and food. Education and protection follow later. A majority of women are fighting against discrimination and injustice even today in spite of so much said and done to improve the condition of women and Ghana is no exception. A high percentage of women are still going through this tirade everyday and both the civil society and the government has to take extensive strong measures to lessen the disparity and bias and improve the social status and importance of woman and help to change the traditional role of women which is still quite evident in the society.

Gender and Development Improving status of today's women in Society

Women are a cornerstone of the economic development of Ghana. *According to recent estimates, they provide approximately 70 per cent of agricultural labour and produce about 90 per cent of all food. However, women normally get predominantly employment in the informal sector or they occupy low-skill job as there are less training opportunities given to women. This is clear by considering the percentage of women in the wage employment or in the non-agricultural sector, which scores lowest among all regions of the world with a value of only 8.5 per cent. Women's physical and psychological access to health care was analyzed using the 2003 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS), a nationally representative study for monitoring population and health in Ghana. Female respondents from the 2133 cases in the couple's data set were used in this study. Women's level of education was positively related to physical but not to psychological access to health care. Residing in an urban area was positively related to both types of access. Matrilineal trend consistently showed positive effects on physical access. In addition to these demographic factors, both physical and psychological access were positively related to women's self-determination and women's right and ability to make real

choices about their lives including their health, fertility, sexuality, childcare and all areas where women are denied autonomy and dignity in their identities as women. Self-determination factors both mediated the effects of background factors on access and added explanatory power to the models. By contrast, the number of children per mother declined for women with post-elementary education and outside employment; with guaranteed incomes and little time at their disposal in their combined roles as mothers and employees, the desire to procreate declined there chances of getting a better treatment and benefits in the functional society.

In rural areas of Ghana where non-commercial agricultural production was the main economic activity, women worked on the land. Coastal women also sold fish caught by men. Many of the financial benefits that accrued to these women went into upkeep of the household, while those of the man were reinvested in an enterprise that was often perceived as belonging to his extended family. This traditional division of wealth placed women in positions subordinate to men. The persistence of such values in traditional Ghanaian society may explain some of the resistance to female education in the past as even today the women do not have control over their income. It is a myth when we talk about women empowerment. It is an irony but true that men still dominate and violate the sexuality, reproductive and social rights of women all over the globe. We might come across a few sensitive areas where the women are asked to give their opinion in important matters within the family or otherwise.

The transition into the modern world has been slow for women. On the one hand, the high rate of female fertility in Ghana in the 1980s showed that women's primary role continued to be that of childbearing. On the other hand, current research supported the view that, notwithstanding the Education Act of 1960, which expanded and required elementary education, some parents were reluctant to send their daughters to school because the daughters were needed at homes and on the farms. Resistance to female education also stemmed from the conviction that women would be supported by their husbands. In some circles, there was even the fear that a girl's marriage prospects decreased when she became highly educated and qualified which the families do not prefer. The work of the woman goes unnoticed and unrecognized, as it does not contribute to the economy of a country. The society does not realize that if the women are unwell or incompetent or are not able to handle this multi responsibility the men will not be able to shoulder both the responsibilities equally well. This will definitely create an adverse impact on the balance of the society.

Disability is another major factor, which acts as a major obstacle in the development, living conditions and status of women all over the world with sporadic examples of grit and strength who have managed to carve a niche for themselves in the patriarchal society. The convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 13 December 2006. A major milestone for all persons living with disabilities around the world, it is the 8th Universal Convention on Human Rights of which majority of International Telecommunication Union (ITU) member States are signatories to the convention.

Article 9 of the CRPD defines ICT accessibility as an integral part of accessibility rights on par with transportation and physical

environment for PWDs. There are indeed so many challenges for PWDs and Especially women to realize their fundamental Human Right of access to information especially in the developing countries like Ghana.

These challenges include but are not limited to;

- Low education levels of PWDs especially in the developing countries like Ghana
- Absence of assistive technologies to help even the educated PWDs,
- The absence of clear intervention strategies by governments, local disability leadership and other stakeholders to save the situation and disinterestedness towards the affected women
- The fact that majority PWD women live in the most rural parts of Ghana and therefore cannot be helped

In spite of progress achieved, there is the need to accelerate the pace of implementing policies and programmes targeted at promoting gender parity for women at all levels.

Steps that can be jointly implemented by the government and civil society to Empower women

Strong proactive and gender mainstreaming measures must be implemented to improve the status of women globally. The most important step is to increase the education and awareness among the women about their rights by increasing the enrollment in schools. Ghana aims at a Gender Parity Index (GPI) of one for all levels of education and training under the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP). The Education Strategic Plan (ESP) was launched in 2003. However, Ghana's efforts towards promotion of girls' education started in 1990's*

Socio-cultural barriers to female enrolment in education in Ghana include poverty, direct cost of schooling, gender socialization, level of parental education and cultural and traditional practices, such as early marriage, customary fostering, puberty rites and Trokosi (female ritual slavery). Girls enrolled in school are more likely than boys to be withdrawn from school to help in household chores and family business. As a result, achieving equal access to education for boys and girls faces several challenges including:

- Implementing strategies for gender equality in education that take into account the need for changes in attitudes, values and cultural practices
- Expanding and strengthening incentive and scholarship schemes for girls improving the quality and relevance of basic education
- Increasing the transition rate for girls to senior secondary schools
- Sensitizing parents and communities about the importance of girl's education

Complexity of the workplace HIV/AIDS related discrimination of female employees



By Aizhan Yermekbayeva¹

Abstract

This article critically analyses the reasons why equality legislations in African countries despite notable improvements in the last decade could not eliminate unfair workplace discrimination of employees with HIV/AIDS status. It will also highlight stigma as one the main factors that lead to discrimination. As the situation varies from one country to another, the article is focused on the status of HIV infected female employees in developing countries in Africa, given the breadth of a spread of the epidemic and severity of human rights violations of female employees with HIV/AIDS. The article also divides organizations into several categories according to their standing on equal opportunity policies, and proposes a recommendation regarding policies to reduce and eventually eliminate discrimination against employees with HIV/AIDS status at workplaces.

Complexity of the HIV/AIDS-related discrimination and stigma

Nowadays many organizations are implementing HIV/AIDS policies and programs to prevent the spread of the disease and provide infected employees with necessary consultation and medical care.² However, workplace discrimination and stigma related to HIV/AIDS present a great obstacle for success of these programs. Successful implementation of HIV/AIDS programs are of significant importance for developing countries where the disease is spreading much faster. Therefore workplace discrimination against HIV/AIDS status has to be addressed to ensure the effective implementation of HIV/AIDS programs to reduce the epidemic.

Discrimination at work “is concerned with the unequal and inequitable treatment of some employees irrespective of their ability to perform their jobs”.³ The workplace discrimination remains an unpleasant fact. Employees can be unfairly discriminated on various grounds. In addition to being discriminated against

HIV/AIDS status, infected female employees may suffer multiple discriminations based on their gender and low social status in many traditional societies in Africa.⁴ Therefore it is particularly difficult to implement effective policies to eliminate discrimination against HIV status in developing countries as it builds on other embedded prejudices and stereotyping.

HIV and AIDS in general have very judgment-laden associations: promiscuity, drug use, homosexuality, poverty, prolonged illness and death. Therefore females infected with these diseases often blamed for their condition and accused of promiscuity. Despite the fact that most married women are infected by their unfaithful husbands. These judgment-laden associations lead to the complex reactions by other community members such as fear, intolerance, ignorance, verbal and physical aggression, sometimes, even murder.

HIV/AIDS-related discrimination and stigma at workplaces

Not surprisingly, people with HIV/AIDS are often rejected employment, fired from jobs, even those who are employed report social isolation and bullying at work due to HIV stigma. HIV/AIDS stigma is a process of labeling people who are infected with the disease and in some cases labeling their family and friends as well. Stigma inevitably leads to discrimination.

Workplace HIV/AIDS-related discrimination is not a new phenomenon. It has started soon after the endemic appeared. Therefore the increase in the attention to this issue in recent years should not be interpreted as an indication that there were less or no cases of discrimination at workplaces on grounds of HIV/AIDS status previously. More often they were considered to be perfectly justified and even necessary to protect those who are not infected. The rise of the issue of tackling discrimination of employees with HIV can be attributed to the following factors: **(a)** it is becoming more widely covered by variety of conferences and, hence, the media; **(b)** the global expansion of multinational enterprises led to internationalization of workplaces and spread of legal and HR practices of developed countries against discrimination into developing countries; **(c)** people are becoming more empowered to speak up and declare their rights at workplaces.

The current policy of mainstreaming preschool education in all basic schools has the potential to eliminate gender enrolment disparities at the primary level particularly since disparities are currently minimal at that level.

Other measures implemented to improve the state of women at the basic level include;

- Provision of material support including clothes, school stationary and food
- District and national level scholarship programmes for girls and training facilities to encourage skilled labour
- The implementation of gender differentiated capitation grants that provides relatively higher levels of funding to address gender disparities;
- Ensuring that separate sanitation facilities are available for females and adolescent girls in the place where they stay and work
- Eliminating gender stereotyping in educational materials and employment sector
- Encouraging the recruitment and deployment of female teachers to act as role models;
- Instituting systems / processes to ensure girl child security whilst at school and work place

The provision of incentives to encourage female enrolments has greatly enhanced and reduced the gender disparities existing. Donor assistance must also focus on funding initiatives aimed at improving access to and delivery of Technical / Vocational Institutions that seek to improve the relevance of education to employment opportunities.

Conclusion

In spite of progress achieved there is the need to accelerate the pace of implementing policies and programmes targeted at promoting gender parity in education at all levels which indirectly will reflect on the overall progress of women in Ghana and at the universal level. It is a universal thought that if the woman of the family is educated, the complete family gets socially, economically and morally empowered to sustain in the existing scenario.

One of the key objectives of the GPRS I (2003-2005) was to strengthen the private sector so as for it to act effectively as the engine of growth and prosperity. However, review of the sector after the implementation of GPRS I (2003-2005) revealed some critical challenges. They included both complexity and non-transparency of regulations, lack of information on existing regulations, falling but still fairly high interest rates, weak capacity and failure of government to formulate, implement, monitor and evaluate private sector policies, weak commercial dispute resolution system, insecurity and vulnerability in the informal sector where the youth and women predominate; weak linkages between the informal sector and the formal sector activities; and weak institutional and regulatory framework for small business administration.

In short, a successful and prosperous society needs a woman to evolve and bloom from her nutshell into a competent and strong person, which gives her the confidence and mental ability to work towards, progress and development of her family resulting in paving the path of global development.

¹ Aditi panda, Bhubaneswar, India
Wife, Mother and a student of Women Studies
Researcher and Counselor
*source-UNICEF & GRPS



Legislation is recognized as a main tool against discrimination and stigma.¹² Employees have been reinstated after being dismissed because of their HIV status and can seek protection at law courts in growing number of developing countries. Nevertheless, low status of female employees in most African countries often creates a major obstacle for speaking up and being heard in law courts. It should also be noted that legislation is rather effective in eliminating direct forms of discrimination. The cases when an employee is dismissed immediately after his/her HIV status was disclosed, and solely for that reason, can be interpreted as a direct discrimination. However the types and forms of discriminations differ. Direct discrimination is arguably easier to identify and therefore for the employers it is easier to take precautions to prevent it by implementing necessary policies. This may not be the case in the indirect form of discrimination where circumstances can be rather subtle and often it is difficult to prove at the law courts. Concerning the latter form, the description in the legislation and regulations are rather broad and vague. Which gives an employer an opportunity to disguise personal bias and prejudice under statement that (potential) employee does not meet requirements essential for position. Although the legislation empowers people with HIV/AIDS to protect themselves from discrimination, addressing it at workplaces and implementing necessary practices and policies remains a great challenge. Despite the fact that implementation of effective policies and practices is extremely important as HIV/AIDS pose a great obstacle to the development of African countries due to severe social, economic and cultural implications. The major segment of population in African countries hit by the epidemic is 15-49 years

old⁶ which is the most productive part of the labor force. Especially women with HIV/AIDS are targets for prejudice, they are considered unproductive and high maintenance, therefore employers are unwilling to hire them. Moreover female employees usually occupy a low-paid, unskilled workforce position, which makes them even more vulnerable to discrimination against both their gender and HIV/AIDS status. HIV is not a reason for employment termination. Most HIV infected employees remain productive for a very long time, especially when provided necessary medical care and assistance. The prejudices about HIV/AIDS infected women lead to lower productivity in all sectors and have a negative effect on the economic growth. Moreover it raises the number of unemployed and impoverished part of the population as nowadays women take the responsibility for being sole providers in ever increasing number of households.

In African countries, the challenge of protecting the rights of employees with HIV/AIDS is in the lack of basic knowledge about the epidemic. As HIV/AIDS are in the group of sexually transmitted diseases, it touches many subjects that are taboo in majority of traditional African societies. Therefore, employees with HIV often have to deal with social rejection and fear of their colleagues misinformed about the contagiousness of the illness. Even though HIV is not contagious in everyday contact, the life-threatening nature of it adds fuel to the fear of casual transmission. Some employees may choose to distance themselves from their HIV infected colleague as much as possible both at work and outside. Besides, female employees with HIV/AIDS are considered personally responsible for having the

disease due to the association of the disease with 'prohibited' and 'improper' behavior. Which makes illegal dismissal, and social isolation of such an employee justified consequences of one's 'improper' behavior.

Developing country's guidelines for prevention of HIV/AIDS-related discrimination at workplaces

In order to eliminate and prevent discrimination at work and beyond, organizations have to implement effective programs and policies. The variety and breadth of intervention programs vary across companies. Unfortunately, some organizations tend to focus more on formalities and documentation rather than effective implementation of HIV/AIDS programs. This approach creates a gap between policies and actual programs within an organization and can be perceived as an indication of ignorance of the management towards the human rights of employees. However it does not relate to every organization. Organizations can be divided into four categories regarding their position on HIV/AIDS practices as part of their equal opportunity (EO) policies: negative, minimalistic, compliant and proactive.⁷

The organization that does not make a claim of being an EO employer, has no equal opportunity policy, and even may not be complying with the law is identified as a **negative organization**. While the **minimalistic organization** is the one that claims to be an EO employer, however, does not have a written EO policy, has no procedure or initiatives, but will react to claims of discrimination as they arise. The **compliant organization**, on the other hand, has a written EO policy, has procedures or initiatives to comply with selected parts of good practice recommendations, however doesn't find necessary to implement the full range of good practice guidelines or monitor the process and the outcomes. Whereas the **proactive organization** monitors the impacts and outcomes of initiatives, has a written policy, which is supported by procedures and initiatives, and promotes equality using full set of good practice guidelines.

There are organizations that do not have any equality policies or have one, however, they are not followed by efficient procedures and practices to reinforce them. Initiatives in the proactive organization even with monitoring procedures may not have a positive impact without proper communication and promotion of equality policies. Therefore even if policies regarding HIV/AIDS discrimination are developed it may not be sufficient without raising awareness amongst employees and managerial staff. Organizations have to be even more diligent in implementing intervention programs related to multiple discrimination cases of female employees with HIV/AIDS. Monitoring process in case of HIV/AIDS at work, despite all controversies and criticism, is encouraged. Following procedures can be even more challenging due to variety of false beliefs and prejudices about HIV/AIDS. Consequently, it may become a cause of misconceptions about HIV/AIDS and misunderstandings.

General guidelines below can be provided for employers in implementing policies regarding HIV/AIDS discrimination of female employees.

Primarily, intervention policies should be implemented as an inseparable part of an equal opportunities policy. Which indicates that female employees should be given equal rights at workplaces and their performance has to be assessed according to their job

results and productivity, not their gender.

Vast majority of organizations' policies aimed at reduction of HIV/AIDS-related discrimination consist of promotion of condoms and education about HIV prevention, some organizations have broadened their policies and programs by including care and treatment for HIV infected employees, and provision of voluntary counseling and testing (VCT).⁸

It is of greatest importance to create awareness about HIV/AIDS discrimination and stigma, and its harmful effects. Including the forms, which discrimination and stigma can take, and that every person can help to reduce it. Creation of awareness also underlines provision of detailed information what does HIV/AIDS mean, their differences, how people can get an HIV/AIDS, how to prevent oneself and others from being infected, and other necessary information. Fear always prevails in workplaces and communities in general, where there is insufficient information. The lack of basic information leads to exaggeration of contagiousness of HIV and AIDS and conditions of people living with it, and other aspects related to HIV and AIDS. Consequently, anger and other negative feelings and emotions can arise. That cause discrimination and create a strained work atmosphere. HIV and AIDS have irreversible harmful effects for persons physical and mental health, therefore for employees suffering from it healthy work environment, support and solidarity of fellow co-workers is necessary. The issues of discrimination and stigma, and policies for the intervention have to be communicated to all levels of the organization.

Special trainings are highly encouraged to address the issue and it is more efficient to provide trainings separately for different levels of management and for employees in non-managerial positions. These trainings should cover the issues related to discrimination and stigma, train to recognize it and what measures to undertake to handle in cases of discrimination, and learn to develop efficient communication methods within all levels of organization and implement ways of reducing discrimination and stigma. Some people often discriminate without even realizing it, which indicates the need for special trainings to clarify the rules of conduct with their HIV infected colleagues.

Most companies that have intervention programs consider VCT an inseparable part of it. The VCT is vital for the well-being of employees. However, employees often stigmatized and suspected to have HIV/AIDS for undergoing VCT, therefore it is highly recommended to conduct VCT outside the workplace when financial and organizational resources permit.

There is also an issue of employers and some employees' perceptions of making voluntary testing compulsory. Compulsory VCT can be a cause of discrimination and is a human rights violation. Testing and disclosure of an HIV status should remain a personal choice. And if HIV/AIDS stigma and discrimination cases are reduced, employees with HIV/AIDS will be more encouraged to undergo VCT and will feel safer to disclose their status.

Due to the fact that HIV/AIDS discrimination interventions touch upon subjects that are often taboo in most developing countries, organizations have to provide a suitable place for group discussions as part of the program. Discussion groups can be divided by gender of the employees if needed. HIV/AIDS-infected employees should be encouraged to participate in such discussion

to ensure a better understanding of their perceptions and experiences of being discriminated and stigmatized.

Intervention programs often overlook the importance of addressing the issue of social interactions at work. HIV/AIDS-infected employees often have to face social isolation and rejection, rumors and gossip. It is considered to be a private issue and to be an issue of employees with HIV/AIDS and their colleagues, not the company's in general. However such behaviors and social conducts are a part of discrimination and stigma. Fear of rumors and social isolation is often a cause of keeping an HIV status hidden, which re-enforces the 'silent nature' of the disease.

It is equally important to address the issues of multiple discriminations, especially the gender bias. The gender inequalities are a major issue in most African countries. Therefore HIV/AIDS discrimination intervention procedures at work should be supported by women empowerment and gender equality policies.

The concern of most companies about the financial side of the adoption of the HIV/AIDS prevention and intervention programs is another obstacle for their successful implementation at workplaces. Even though HIV/AIDS related issues cannot be avoided and these programs bring long-term benefits not only for a single company, but for the entire country. Companies can collaborate with healthcare organizations, relevant governmental institutions and NGOs in creating the program of HIV/AIDS discrimination interventions. Companies should take into consideration that their HIV/AIDS discrimination intervention program is a good PR campaign to create a positive image. In addition, organizations have to consider that any kind of discrimination creates a negative company image. Therefore before rejecting suggestions of developing policies and practices discrimination consequences have to be taken into account. Mishandling HIV/AIDS discrimination issues also creates a negative environment for investors, who are an important source of finance for private sector and enterprises in Africa,

Conclusion

Discrimination and stigma related to HIV/AIDS status have serious adverse effects on female employees at the workplaces due to their social status and stereotyping issues. However special policies and practices against HIV/AIDS-related discrimination and stigmatization at work provide female employees with the right to feel secure about their jobs, defending their human rights and dignity. Workplaces are important social institutions. Empowering infected female employees to disclose their status and speak up about issues of discrimination and forms it takes can help to reduce discrimination and stigma not only at work, but, eventually, in a society as a whole. It should be remembered that in the process of implementation of anti-discrimination policies organizations should pay an equal attention to the issues of social interactions at work, including measures to prevent ridicule and social isolation of female employees by management or/and peers. These measures underline special trainings for managers, peers, and provision of counselor services. Although most organizations perceive such practices to be time-consuming and rather expensive, there are plenty of examples of governmental support of such initiatives. Successful collaboration with NGOs, national and international health-care organizations make anti-discrimination practices cost a lot less and definitely, such efforts have significant long-term benefits. Clearly, benefits of the

Complexity of the workplace HIV/AIDS related discrimination of female employees

equal opportunities approach are appealing to managers. Especially after numerous potential advantages such as a wider pool of applicants, good company image, and possibility to attract new investors. These benefits also include reduction of the spread of the disease, and a chance to hire and retain specialist even if they are HIV/AIDS infected.

It should be noted that discrimination and stigma at workplaces stem from community-based discrimination and stigma. Consequently, it is recommended to encourage family members to be involved in VCT alongside employees with HIV/AIDS to create a dialogue for better understanding of dealing with HIV/AIDS.

1. Aizhan Yermekbayeva has attained her Master in HRM degree at Durham University Business School (UK). Currently works as an HR consultant in healthcare industry in Kazakhstan and writes for magazines and journals about human resources related issues in developing countries.

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Modern-day slavery:

Human trafficking in Ghana,

By Mahua Maharana ¹

Introduction

Estimated in 2004, the total annual revenue for human trafficking in the world is between US\$ 5 billion ² and \$ 9 billion, making it to be one of the most lucrative illicit 'business' comparable to illicit trades in drugs and weapons. In terms of numbers, the major victims of human trafficking are women and children who are forced into exploitative labour or prostitution. In 2008, the United Nations estimated nearly 2.5 million people from 127 different countries are being trafficked into 137 countries around the world. ³ The exact figures cannot be collated due to the illegal and underground nature of this crime and the varying definitions that are used by organisations and government bodies when examining this issue. Despite this, there is universal consensus that trafficking is increasing and that the vast majority of women are aged 25 or under. ⁴

The two main reasons why this business is thriving are, first, the deplorable living conditions of the victims and secondly, the demand that exists in the rich countries. It is in their shadow economies that the victims are exploited: as cheap labour in the restaurant trade or the sex industry, through forced marriage and illegal adoption or for the removal of organs. Human rights standards are trampled under foot in the process. The trafficked themselves know far too little about their rights or about the appropriate channels to take to assert them.



What is Human Trafficking?

Human trafficking is the illegal trade of human beings for the purposes of reproductive slavery, commercial sexual exploitation, forced labour, or a modern-day form of slavery. The United Nations adopted The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (also referred to as the Trafficking Protocol) in 2000. The Trafficking Protocol defines human trafficking as: "(a) [...] the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of

sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs; (b) The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used; (c) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered "trafficking in persons" even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article; (d) "Child" shall mean any person under eighteen years of age." The Trafficking Protocol entered into force on 25 December 2003. By June 2010, the Trafficking Protocol had been ratified by 117 countries and 137 parties.

DEFINITIONS RELATING TO TRAFFICKING

Trafficking is a process (not a singly defined act) and a dynamic phenomenon with constantly shifting patterns relating to economic circumstances. The terms are often used loosely. Some terms have been explained:

Sex trafficking has no universally accepted definition, but the term encompasses the organized movement of people, usually women, between countries and within countries for sex work with the use of physical coercion, deception and bondage through forced debt.

Child labour is a form of work that is likely to be hazardous to the physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development of children and can interfere with their education.

Trafficking in persons would mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by any form of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception and abuse of power. This involves the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for exploitation.

Exploitation is the use of people for prostitution (and other forms of sexual services), forced labour, slavery, servitude or the removal of organs

Debt Bondage is the status or condition arising from a pledge by a debtor of their personal services (or someone in their protection) as security for a debt, if the value of these services is not applied towards the liquidation of the debt and is probably the most widely used method of enslaving people.

Forced labour and slavery-like practices: "[t]he extraction of work or services from any person or the appropriation of the legal identity and/or physical person of any person by means of violence or threat of violence, abuse of authority or dominant position, debt-bondage, deception or other forms of coercion" (GAATW definition as cited by Chuang 1998).

Gender-based violence: violence which is directed against a woman because of her gender. It includes acts which "inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty" (CEADW Article 1).

People smuggling: the "procurement of illegal entry of a person into a State of which the latter person is not a national in order to obtain a profit" (United Nations Global Program Against Trafficking in Human Beings).

¹ Mahua attained her Masters in Modern History and Diploma in Social Service and Community Service. She worked as an insurance professional for 22 years and is a Life Associate of the Insurance Institute of India. Mahua now enjoys her retired life doing what she always wanted to, like embroidery, tending her potted plants, attending concerts, translating, writing and reading and is involved with voluntary activities. She is 52 and lives in Bhubaneswar, India with her husband and daughter.

² en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_trafficking

³ James, Claire & Alter Sandra, Ecpat Sweden, Trafficking of Young Women/Trafficking.pdf

⁴ en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_trafficking

⁵ James, Claire & Alter Sandra, Ecpat Sweden, Trafficking of Young Women/Trafficking.pdf

THE KEY PLAYERS IN THE ARENA

Governments: The responsibility for the protection of women's and girl's human rights lies first and foremost with the state.

Sex tourists: One key demand driving the trafficking of women is the increased popularity of the sex and tourism trades in the developing world. Myths surrounding particular cultures and their 'suitability' for sexual exploitation are commonplace so are myths around cure of STD through young virgins.

Organised crime syndicates: Trafficking is increasingly the domain of highly organised international crime syndicates, attracted by the high profits that can be made for very little risk.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOS): are crucial in addressing the trafficking of women and girls. The range of divergent views amongst NGOs has often resulted in uncoordinated approaches to challenging the practice of trafficking. Greater dialogue and coordination of activities are needed.

United Nations (UN): UN institutions and in particular bodies such as the United Nations Women's Development Fund (UNIFEM), The United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) and The United Nations Office on Drug Control and Crime (UNODC) have been central to the creation and monitoring of international conventions relating to trafficking.⁶

⁶ James, Claire & Alter Sandra, Ecpat Sweden, Trafficking of Young Women/Trafficking.pdf

THE VARIOUS CAUSES OF TRAFFICKING

- Globalisation and the Feminisation of Poverty
- Traditional and Cultural Practices
- Lack of Education and Employment Opportunities
- Discrimination based on Ethnicity or Minority Status
- Conflict, Refugees and Internal Displacement
- Selective Migration Policies
- Demand for Cheap, Submissive Labour
- Commercialisation and the Sex Industry
- Myths relating to HIV/AIDS and other STDs
- A Low-risk, High-profit Trade
- Trade and Border Controls
- Poor Enforcement of International Treaties and Legal Protection for Trafficked Women
- Perceptions of a life better elsewhere and poor information about risks

CONSEQUENCES AND ABUSES

The consequences and abuses are many, but some of the major ones are:

- Sexual, Physical and Emotional Abuse
- Poor working conditions and lack of health care
- Pregnancy and Abortion
- HIV/AIDS and STDs
- Reduced Ability to Reintegrate into Society
- Stigmatization by society
- Government apathy towards rehabilitation
- Pushed into further criminal acts like dealing with drugs

ECONOMIC OVERVIEW OF GHANA

Any discussion on human trafficking of any particular country is closely related to its economy, geographical position and the position of women in society and economy. The economy of Ghana has been listed as The World's Fastest Growing Economy in 2011 with an economic growth of about 20.146 % for the year 2011 in economic research led by Economy Watch with data coming from the IMF's tracker of GDP Growth in constant prices in the national currency. Ghana is a Middle Income Economy. The Republic of Ghana is located in West Africa, bordered by Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) to the west, Burkina Faso to the north, Togo to the east, and the Gulf of Guinea to the south. Well endowed with natural resources, Ghana has more than twice the per capita output of the poorer countries in West Africa. Ghana's labour force in 2008 totaled 11.5 million people. The economy continues to rely heavily on agriculture which accounts for 37.3% of GDP and provides employment for 56% of the work force, mainly small landholders. Manufacturing is only a small part of the Ghanaian economy totaling 7.9% of Gross Domestic Product in 2007. Successive governments still rely on foreign countries to undertake strategic infrastructural projects in the country and Ghana has been experiencing continued inflationary deficit financing, depreciation of the Cedi, and rising public discontent. Even so, Ghana remains one of the more economically sound countries in all of Africa. Tourism is a rapidly growing sector particularly among Europeans, Americans, and other internationals connected to the Ghanaian Diaspora abroad. Ghana's political and economic stability, low crime rate, and wide use of English make the country an attractive entry point to West Africa for foreigners.

Ghana is home to more than 100 different ethnic groups but has not seen the kind of ethnic conflict that has created civil wars in many other African countries. The official language is English; however, most Ghanaians also speak at least one local language. Urban centers are generally ethnically mixed due to migration to towns and cities in search of employment. Rural areas, with the exception of cocoa-producing areas that have attracted migrant labor, tend to reflect more traditional population distributions.

ROLE AND STATUS OF WOMEN

In the last census of 2000, the population of Ghana stood at 18,412,247 with women forming 51 per cent of the total population of Ghana. Women in Ghana, like their sisters in other African countries, have multifaceted roles both at home and at work. In spite of the important role played by the women of Ghana in the socio-economic sector, their contribution to the economy and social life has largely been ignored. Under Ghana's constitution, both women and men have equal status under the law. Despite these constitutional and legal guarantees, women still play subservient roles to men. Under the customary systems, women are expected to give precedence to men in all things, with the men taking all decision affecting the family. Women in pre-modern Ghanaian society were seen as bearers of children, retailers of fish, and farmers. In rural areas women worked the land and the coastal women sold fish caught by men. Many of the financial benefits that accrued to these women went into upkeep of the household but not necessarily that of the men. The traditional division of wealth placed women in positions subordinate to men. The transition into the modern world has

been slow for women and women's primary role continued to be that of child-bearing. But despite conventional resistances to educating women, women have risen to positions of professional importance in Ghana. Women have rights to equal pay and maternity leave with pay.⁸

HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN GHANA

Ghana is noted as a destination, transit and origin of human trafficking (HT). Research indicates that about 70% of human trafficking cases are internal with about 78% of victims being children aged between 6-15 years.⁹ The Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report stated that trafficking within the country is more prevalent than transnational trafficking and the majority of victims are children. Both boys and girls are trafficked within Ghana for forced labor in agriculture and the fishing industry, for street hawking, forced begging by religious instructors, as porters, and possibly for forced kente weaving. Over 30,000 children are believed to be working as porters, or Kayayei, in Accra alone. Annually, the IOM reports numerous deaths of boys trafficked for forced labor in the Lake Volta fishing communities. Girls are trafficked within the country for domestic servitude and sexual exploitation. The movement is either from rural to urban areas or from one rural area to another, as from farming to fishing communities. Ghanaian boys and girls are subjected to conditions of forced labor within the country in fishing, domestic servitude, street hawking, begging, and agriculture. Ghanaian girls, and to a lesser extent boys, are subjected to commercial sexual exploitation within Ghana. Internal labor traffickers are commonly freelance operators, and may be known to members of the source community. Uninformed parents may not understand that by cooperating with trafficking offenders, they may expose their children to bonded placement, coercion, or outright sale. Media reports during 2010, 50 Ghanaian women recruited for work in Russia and subsequently forced into prostitution. Women and girls from China, Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire, and Burkina Faso are subjected to forced prostitution after arriving in Ghana. Citizens from other West African countries are subjected to forced labor in Ghana in agriculture or involuntary domestic servitude. Trafficking victims endure extremes of harsh treatment, including long hours, debt bondage, lack of pay, physical risks, and sexual abuse. The TIP stated that trans-nationally, children are trafficked between Ghana and other West African countries, primarily Cote d'Ivoire, Togo, Nigeria, the Gambia, Burkina Faso, and Gabon for the same purposes listed above. Girls are trafficked for sexual exploitation from Ghana to Western Europe, from Nigeria through Ghana to Western Europe, and from Burkina Faso through Ghana to Cote d'Ivoire. Last year, Chinese women were trafficked to Ghana for sexual exploitation and a Ghanaian woman was also trafficked to Kuwait for forced labour. According to the report, Ghana does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking although it is making significant efforts to do so, despite limited resources. During the year, Ghanaian police intercepted a greater number of trafficking victims than the preceding year.

The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MOWAC) has the mandate to coordinate activities on human trafficking. Trafficking units are established in both the Police and the Ghana Immigration Service while several NGOs and stakeholders have projects to combat human trafficking. However, all these are scattered and uncoordinated.

It is for this reason that MOWAC is collaborating with Rescue Foundation Ghana (RFG) with support from the British High Commission to develop a national database on stakeholders and interventions being undertaken to combat trafficking of persons in Ghana.

The Government of Ghana does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so, despite limited resources. Ghana increased its law enforcement efforts by prosecuting and convicting an increased number of traffickers, including the first convictions relating to forced child labor in the Lake Volta fishing industry. The Ghanaian Police partnered with Interpol to host regional training for law enforcement officials from Anglophone Africa, and the government took steps to establish four regional anti-trafficking units to manage cases more effectively at the regional level. In August 2009, the president appointed new members to the Human Trafficking Management Board, which had been disbanded when the previous government left office in January 2009. However, the government did not demonstrate increased efforts to ensure that victims receive adequate protection, such as funding a shelter for trafficking victims, or increasing assistance to NGOs or international organizations to provide trafficking victim care. Despite these achievements, the government demonstrated weak efforts in prosecuting and punishing trafficking offenders or ensuring that victims received adequate care; therefore, Ghana is placed on Tier 2 Watch List. The TIP report recommends that Ghana increases efforts to prosecute and convict trafficking offenders, including those who subject children to forced labour in the Lake Volta fishing industry and those who force Ghanaian children and foreign women into prostitution. It further recommends to Ghana to establish additional victim shelters, particularly for sex trafficking victims; continue to apply Trafficking Victim Fund monies to victim care; and train officials to identify trafficking victims among women in prostitution and to respect victims' rights.

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GHANA'S COMMITMENT AGAINST
human trafficking

*The Government of Ghana has shown commitment
by taking action in the 3Ps of anti-human trafficking.*

Prosecution

The Government of Ghana demonstrated improved antihuman trafficking law enforcement efforts during the last year. Ghana prohibits all forms of trafficking through its 2005 Human Trafficking Act (HTA), which prescribes a minimum penalty of five years' imprisonment for all forms of trafficking. This penalty is sufficiently stringent and commensurate with penalties prescribed for other serious offenses, such as rape. In July 2009, the Ghanaian parliament passed a law amending the definition of trafficking to give the HTA uniformity with the language of the 2000 UN TIP Protocol. The Ghana Police Service (GPS) maintains an

Protection

The government demonstrated overall improved victim protection efforts during the year. The government did not employ formal procedures for the identification of victims among vulnerable groups, such as women in prostitution or children at work sites, though it did show increased efforts at ad hoc identification of such victims. The government continued to operate dedicated trafficking shelters for victims of forced labor – in Osu and Medina in the greater Accra region and in the Atebubu Amant District Assembly in the Brong Ahafo region – but lacked shelter facilities for victims of sex trafficking. Ghanaian authorities referred most identified victims to shelters operated by NGOs. According to the AHTU, victims received protective support during and after trials, and prosecutors took their statements behind closed doors to ensure their safety and conceal their identity. With the Interior Minister's approval, a trafficking victim may remain permanently in Ghana if deemed to be in the victim's best interest, though no victims were given such residency earlier. There was no formal referral process to transfer victims in protective custody to other facilities. The government provided some training to law enforcement officials on identification of trafficking victims. The government encouraged victims to assist in the investigation and prosecution of traffickers, though many victims were children afraid to provide testimony. The government provided assistance to its nationals who may have been trafficked, with an eye to rehabilitation and reintegration into the life of the country. Some victims were given capital to start businesses and others were supported to continue schooling or learn a trade. The government sustained partnerships with local and international NGOs to rescue and rehabilitate forced child laborers in fishing or mining during the reporting period.

Prevention

The Government of Ghana demonstrated renewed efforts to prevent trafficking. It conducted anti-trafficking education campaigns and workshops to prevent trafficking during the reporting period. Counter-trafficking officials spoke regularly with anti-trafficking messages on radio talk shows and on television. The Ghana Immigration Service maintained a task force responsible for patrolling the borders and ports to expose crimes related to human trafficking. The government developed a draft for a national plan of action covering human trafficking. The Accra Metropolitan Assembly demolished Soldier Bar, a brothel in Accra known to have employed children in prostitution. Ghana is not a party to the 2000 UN TIP Protocol. A 17-member national steering committee that will oversee the implementation of the national intervention data base project for combating human trafficking in Ghana has been inaugurated in Accra. The database will serve as a source of information on human trafficking for planning and implementation of projects in the sector.¹⁰

8 www.About.com, *Religion in Ghana. Position of Women in Society*
9 www.mowacghana.net
10 <http://allafrica.com/stories>, *womensphere*



COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

- To address the problem of Human Trafficking the Ministry with support from the UN Systems, IOM and the Danish Embassy in Ghana, have adopted the following interventions:

Enactment of a Human Trafficking Act, 2005 (Act 694) which proscribes, punishes perpetrators of human trafficking and provides for the rescue, rehabilitation and reintegration of victims of human trafficking;

Establishment of Human Trafficking Secretariat to coordinate activities of the Management Board and other related issues on human trafficking;

Inauguration of a Human Trafficking Management Board (HTMB) to provide technical advice to the Minister on initiatives to tackle human trafficking in the country;

Production of documentaries on human trafficking to sensitize and create awareness on the dangers associated with trafficking.

Information, Education and Communication materials have been designed on human trafficking. These materials highlight the nature of trafficking, hazards associated with the phenomenon, prosecution of offenders, and victim protection messages.

Between 2009/2010 the capacities of over 151 law enforcement officers, including the police, immigration, CEPS, Navy, the judiciary and prosecutors have been built on emerging issues relating to human trafficking;

Establishment of Community Child Protection Committees (CCPCs) throughout the country to serve as surveillance groups against acts relating to child protection in general and dealing with human trafficking in communities;

Community sensitization and advocacy activities to create awareness on the nature and hazards associated with this crime and to solicit the support of families and communities in addressing human trafficking have been extensively embarked upon;

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COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

To address the problem of Human Trafficking the Ministry with support from the UN Systems, IOM and the Danish Embassy in Ghana, have adopted the following interventions:

- Establishment of 5 Anti-Human Trafficking Units within the Ghana Police Service in selected regions to handle human trafficking cases; (Central region, Ashanti Region, Upper East Region, Greater Accra Region and Western Region
- Establishment and launch of a National Database on Human Trafficking (NDHT) in collaboration with Rescue Foundation with support from the British High Commission.
- About 19 human trafficking cases have been prosecuted so far. This is expected to serve as deterrent to both perpetrators and would-be perpetrators,
- About 625 victims have been reintegrated in their communities in the form of formal education, skills training, micro-credit, etc
- An estimated number of 671 victims have received some form of rehabilitation such as medical services, feeding, clothing, etc
- About 12,268 persons have received some form of training in prevention, protection and prosecution of human trafficking cases

conclusion

Human Trafficking is one such issue which cannot be combated by any country in isolation. The United National Global Initiative for Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT) was conceived to promote the global fight on human trafficking. The Global Initiative against Human Trafficking is based on a simple principle: human trafficking is a crime of such magnitude and atrocity that it cannot be dealt with successfully by any government alone. This global problem requires a global, multi-stakeholder strategy that builds on national efforts throughout the world. UNODC efforts to motivate action launched the Blue Heart Campaign against Human Trafficking on March 6, 2009. The campaign encourages people to show solidarity with human trafficking victims by wearing the blue heart.

Actions taken to combat human trafficking vary from government to government. Some have introduced legislation specifically aimed at making human trafficking illegal. Governments can also develop systems of co-operation between different nations' law enforcement agencies and with non-government organizations (NGOs). Many countries have come under criticism for inaction, or ineffective action. Criticisms include the failure of governments to properly identify and protect trafficking victims, immigration policies which potentially re-victimize trafficking victims, or insufficient action in helping prevent vulnerable people from

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becoming trafficking victims. A particular criticism has been the reluctance of some countries to tackle trafficking for purposes other than sex. Another action governments can take is raising awareness of this issue. This can take three forms.

- First, in raising awareness amongst potential victims, particularly in countries where human traffickers are active.
- Second, raising awareness amongst police, social welfare workers and immigration officers to equip them to deal appropriately with the problem.
- Finally, in countries where prostitution is legal or semi-legal, raising awareness amongst the clients of prostitution to watch for signs of human trafficking victims.

The ongoing abuses of human rights and the growing social and economic inequality within and between countries has led to an environment in which many women have few choices and resources, and are thus vulnerable to being lured, misled or forced through kidnapping and rape into being trafficked. This is a worst kind of crime against humanity and has to be fought with all our might. With individual efforts, networking, NGOs coordinating, governmental commitment, and international forum – together we will have to fight for a free and safe world.

SALAVERY

TROKOSI ritual servitude in GHANA

By Anabella Corridoni

Introduction

Although slavery was abolished many decades ago, teenagers in Ghana are victims of an old way of slavery known as Trokosi, in which young girls are subjected to forced labor and sexual servitude.

Trokosi is a system based on traditional religious belief. According to the UN this system is discriminatory against women and children and violates human rights. As the victims are young girls (named trokosis), the vulnerable members of the society, the system is increasingly being criticized and condemned.

To eradicate this religious practice, government approved a 1998 law which established that ritual or customary servitude mandating a three-year prison sentence on conviction. Nevertheless, many young girls are victims of this system yet. Women's organizations such as the National Council on Women and Development (NCWD) and the federation of International Women Lawyers (FIDA) have proposed legislation to outlaw the system completely. The process to abolishing the system and rehabilitating the victims has been slow².

This system exists also in Benin, Togo and Nigeria. In 2008, the UN reported that Trokosi continues in at least 23 fetish shrines (the places where the system is practiced) in Ghana³.

In Ghana, it is practiced by the Ewes in the Volta region and by their counterparts in Togo and Benin. In this practice, young girls, usually under the age of 10 and sometimes as young as three, are given to village fetish shrine priests as sexual/domestic slaves in compensation for offenses allegedly committed, or debts incurred, by a member of the girl's family, or as payment for favors sought from the shrine⁴.





The Trokosi System

The word Trokosi comes from the Ewe words "tro", meaning deity or fetish, and "kosi", meaning female slave⁵. Trokosi means "slave of gods"

The trokosi is sort of a living sacrifice, who by her suffering is thought to save the family from trouble. Virgin young girls are sacrificed with the purpose of obtain family redemption. Victims became slaves in traditional shrines. Trokosis have been denied education, health care and usually suffer a life of hardship and stigmatized by society. Although many girls finish their period of servitude, may not start a social life again because the society rejects trokosis girls. The period of servitude varies from a few months to life. In some cases it involves payment of a heavy fine to the shrine, which can require many years of hard labor or even a lifetime of service to pay. When the Trokosi returns to her family, but her life is still controlled by the shrine for the rest of her life. In conclusion, girls not only suffer slavery, they continue suffer after being free.

Type of service

The system consists in the practice of rape or obligatory sex with the priest and elders of the shrine. In most shrines it is considered a duty of the shrine slaves to have obligatory sex with the priest and sometimes the elders. As a consequence shrine slaves often end up with an average of four children while in servitude, many of them by the priest or elders of the shrines

The service could be perpetual or lifetime and limited service. Shrine slaves serving for a lifetime have no hope of ever getting free unless outsiders intervene on their behalf. In some shrines, in some areas, and for some alleged crimes, the service is limited to a specific number of years. In other cases, a substantial fee is exacted from the shrine slave or her family. The girls work to try to earn that fee, but in reality the fee is so high and their means of paying it so low that there is virtually no hope of ever paying off the debt that has been laid on them. Some shrines have taken so many slaves that they cannot contain them all. Some slaves become unattractive or useless to the priest. In these cases trokosis may be given what is called "temporary" release⁶, which means slave may live outside but the important decisions are still controlled by the shrine.

¹ Buenos Aires, Argentina. BA in International Relations. University teacher of International Law.

² African women and children, crisis and response; Edited by Apollo Rwomire; 2001.

³ Trafficking in Persons Report 2009 published by US government

⁴ The Trokosi System, Mark Wisdom, FESLIM, 2001, p. 3-4

⁵ www.trokosi.com

⁶ Revealed Myths about Trokosi Slavery

What happen when a trokosi dies or runs away?

In this case, she needs to be replaced. Their replaced will be provided by the same family. The new slaver should be a virgin girl as young as possible.

Conclusion

Not is too much that I can say about this old system. The true is that there are many virgin girls in Ghana suffering as a consequence of this "religious system". Furthermore, families suffer their entire life for an old crime or misbehavior providing young girls as Trokosis.

Is really important the work that NGO's and International Organizations are doing in the fight for the human right's recognition of the most vulnerable member of society. It would be very helpful if government and society do the same.

YOUNG
ARTIST
PROMOTIONBERIMA
YAW

Berima Yaw is a Ghanaian young singer. He uses music to express his feelings, fears, desires and hopes... He got into music industry when he received the inspiration five years ago through the call from God. He was then a plumber and a footballer by profession.

Beremah, first gospel album was launched in March 2011 with the title "Ma Kuma" literally My Heart. The album has seven tracks with other thirty songs writing yet to be recorded. He is a very creative artist and all the songs were written by him.

Why his album was title "Ma Kuma"?

He believed to the call of God and was inspired to give this title to the album because he had to exercise patience when he received the call to be in the industry. He also wants to advice and encourages friends, siblings and parents to practice patience when they are looking for what we don't have yet and the heart is the catalyst.

If you want to hear Berima's music please follow the link:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JUCFOYUtlk>

YOUR collaboration is very important to help the talented young artists like Beremah to reach their dreams...you can start to help them now!!!

“Dear **Friends,**
I want to encourage
you all those in the
Lord and have accepted
Christ as their personal
saver should
try as much as
POSSIBLE
to continue and hold firmly
THE FAITH
they have gotten and
those have not yet,
SHOULD
LOOK FOR HIM.
One thing
we should bear in mind is that,
THE HEART
and mind
is the vehicle.
If we are looking things
we don't have in hand,
PATIENCE MUST BE
EXERCISED.
God BLESS
YOU ALL”



