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Bhutan: Human Trafficking

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HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Bhutan



Bhutan Tours & Travels [Digital image]. (n.d.). Retrieved February 4, 2018, from <https://www.intrepidtravel.com/us/bhutan>

Location: In Asia in the eastern Himalaya Mountains, south of China, between China and India. (CIA, 2017)

Population: 758,288 people (CIA, 2017)
Most inhabitants range from 25-54 years (CIA, 2017).

The ethnic groups present are Ngalop (Bhote) which is the most prominent group, ethnic Nepalese, & indigenous or migrant tribes (CIA, 2017).

Religion: Most prominent religion is Lamastic Buddhist, other religions include Indian-and-Nepalese-influenced Hinduism (CIA, 2017).

Human Trafficking

- In Bhutan, men, women, and children are extremely vulnerable to forced labor and sex trafficking (state.gov, 2016).
- Human trafficking has been a major problem in Bhutan and there has been a major increase in human trafficking along Bhutan's borders (Routledge, 2011).
- West Bengal has three neighboring countries, which includes Bhutan, through which young females are migrated to other places where rape and sex work among migrant women are prevalent (J Health Popul Nutr., 2008)

Political Structure

- Bhutan is a constitutional monarchy, which is when a monarch shares power with a constitutionally organized government (Britannica, 2017).
- Bhutan has 20 districts (CIA, 2017).
- The legal system is civil law based on Buddhist religious law (CIA, 2017).
- Bhutan has a hereditary monarchy but can removed by a 2/3 vote of Parliament (CIA, 2017).
- Bhutan has three branches of government and has a legal system based on English common law and Indian law (CIA, 2017).
- Political parties are highly discouraged and none operate legally in Bhutan (CIA, 2017).

Major Challenges

- **Internal**
 - Bhutan's problem stems from the lack of access to healthcare providers. Due to the limited amount of hospitals in Bhutan many individuals face difficulties of finding transportation and even affording healthcare (CIA, 2017).
 - In Bhutan the increase in HIV/aids has been attributed to the increase in human trafficking (Routledge, 2011).
- **External**
 - Bhutan and China face disputes and are negotiating on the establishment of a common boundary alignment in order to resolve territorial disputes (CIA, 2017).

Epidemiology

- Frequency
 - Especially frequent in young Bhutanese women (refworld, 2014)..
- Most affected group
 - Men, women, and children are extremely vulnerable to forced labor and sex trafficking (state.gov, 2016).
 - Almost one in every four sex workers (J Health Popul Nutr., 2008).
- Risk factors
 - HIV/aids (J Health Popul Nutr., 2008).

Identification

- Typically, in those who work as domestic servants and entertainers in karaoke bars (refworld, 2014).
- Those who live in a rural area (refworld, 2014).

Challenges

- The government of Bhutan denies any evidence of a human trafficking problem which caused difficulties in protection efforts (refworld, 2014).
- The lack of training and awareness of human trafficking continues to harm the government's response to cases (refworld, 2014).
- Bhutan's government does not have any systematic procedures in place to identify victims and refer them to protective care (refworld, 2014).

Suggestions

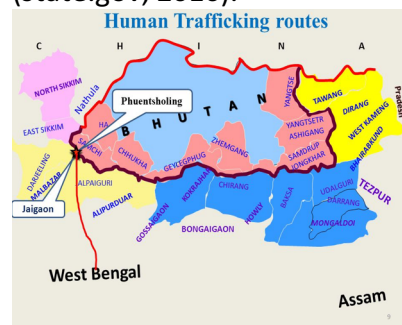
- Since the government needs to become aware that it clearly does have a human trafficking problem, providing testimonies and even showing the government where human trafficking most occurs can help them become more aware of the prevalence of human trafficking.
- Educating the inhabitants of Bhutan about the widespread presence of human trafficking and how to notice and avoid areas where it is most common.

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Types of Intervention

- In 2007, the Bhutan Labor and Employment Act of 2007 was established required that employment recruiters follow the same rules as employees and have all recruiters be licensed (state.gov, 2016).
- The National Council of Women of Canada organized programs around the country in order to increase public awareness on anti-trafficking laws, especially at industrial and construction sites in border districts (state.gov, 2016).



Scenario of Human Trafficking on Nepal & Bhutan Borders [Digital image]. (n.d.). Retrieved February 4, 2018, from <http://slideplayer.com/slide/9185309/>